

Sunnyside Elementary

Conducts Sampling for Lead in Drinking Water

Why was Testing Conducted?

Red Wing Public Schools is committed to protecting the health of students, teachers and other citizens served by our district. Under Minnesota Statutes, section 121A.335, [Lead in School Drinking Water \(https://revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=121A.335\)](https://revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=121A.335), schools are required to conduct testing for lead in their drinking water.

The statute requires public school districts and charter schools to:

- Develop and adopt a plan for sampling lead in drinking water;
- Implement the plan;
- Remediate any taps that are 5 parts per billion or more; and
- Communicate results to parents and the public.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) requires public water systems to provide water that is minimally corrosive. However, some schools find through testing that water samples from their drinking water fixtures have contained relatively high levels of lead. The lead usually comes from the plumbing inside the schools, including fittings, solder, water coolers or drinking water taps.

Results of our Testing

Following instructions given in a Minnesota Department of Health guidance document, [Reducing Lead in Drinking Water \(PDF\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/docs/pbschoolguide.pdf)

<https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/docs/pbschoolguide.pdf>

and one from the Environmental Protection Agency,

[3Ts for Reducing Lead in Drinking Water Toolkit \(https://www.epa.gov/ground-water-and-drinking-water/3ts-reducing-lead-drinking-water-toolkit\)](https://www.epa.gov/ground-water-and-drinking-water/3ts-reducing-lead-drinking-water-toolkit)

At Sunnyside Elementary, on December 28th, 2023, we tested 41 water taps; 5 taps tested above 5 parts per billion of lead.

To reduce exposure, we have taken the following steps: one fixture was removed and four fixtures were identified as handwashing use only. The next time we will test for lead is 2028.

How Lead Enters our Water

Lead enters drinking water primarily as a result of corrosion, or wearing away, of materials containing lead in the water distribution system and in building plumbing. These materials include lead-based solder used to join copper pipes, brass, and chrome-plated brass faucets. Pipes, fittings, and fixtures are required to meet the 0.25% definition of lead free since January 2014 as required by Congress in the Reduction of Lead in Drinking Water Act. However, even the plumbing materials meeting these new requirements are subject to lead corrosion. When water stands in lead pipes or plumbing systems containing lead for several hours or more, lead may dissolve into the drinking water. This means the first water drawn from the tap in the morning *may* contain elevated levels of lead. The actions we are taking are intended to both reduce the amount of lead in our plumbing and to address lead corrosion.

Health Effects of Lead

Lead is found throughout the environment in lead-based paint, air, soil, household dust, food, certain types of pottery, porcelain and pewter, and water. There is no known safe level of lead exposure. Lead in drinking water, although rarely the primary source of lead for an individual, can increase a person's total lead exposure, particularly the exposure of children under the age of six. Children younger than six years old are most at risk due to their rapid rate of growth and ongoing brain development. Pregnant women and their fetuses are especially vulnerable to lead exposure since lead can significantly harm the fetus, causing lower birth weight and slowing normal mental and physical developments.

Contact Information

A copy of our test results is available at our district office and on our website: [Sunnyside Water Testing Results \(https://assets-rst7.rschoolday.com/rst7files/uploads/sites/795/2024/02/28110925/2023-Sunnyside-Lead-in-Water-Testing-Results.pdf\)](https://assets-rst7.rschoolday.com/rst7files/uploads/sites/795/2024/02/28110925/2023-Sunnyside-Lead-in-Water-Testing-Results.pdf) For more information about water quality in our schools, please contact Alan Gaylor, Building and Grounds Director at Red Wing Public Schools, at avgaylor@rwps.org For information about water quality and sampling for lead at home, contact your local water supplier, or state drinking water agency. You may find additional information about lead at: [MDH Lead Program \(https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/lead/index.html\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/lead/index.html).