

## What BCDES is doing?

**BCDES is committed to protecting families from lead in drinking water.** BCDES has been complying with EPA's lead and copper regulations since 1992.

**BCDES does not have any lead water mains in its water systems.**

Lead solder was banned in the 1980's but was commonly used in home construction in the 1960's and 1970's. Most of the homes in BCDES' service area are newer construction that should not have lead solder.



The Lead and Copper Rule (LCR) is based on a "treatment technique" requirement in which the lead action level is a trigger - the action level is not a health based standard. The Lead and Copper Rule provides a framework for utilities to:

- determine if their corrosion control program is effective at limiting lead exposure;
- take additional steps to protect public health;
- and ensure consumers are notified if the utility finds lead above the action level in the community.

Monitoring under the LCR takes place at worst-case sampling locations, as samples are taken of water standing overnight in homes where lead pipe or lead solder is present. BCDES monitoring has found that

some individual homes have exceeded the treatment-based action level for lead. Customers whose homes have exceeded the treatment-based action level for lead were given instructions on how to reduce lead in their drinking water.

BCDES staff continues to participate in the lead issues discussions through agencies such as EPA and AWWA (American Water Works Association). BCDES staff have participated in EPA stakeholders meetings and other association meetings regarding current lead in drinking water issues such as sampling and public education.

## What can You do?

At high levels, lead can have serious health consequences. State and federal health agencies can provide resources that help consumers protect themselves from all sources of lead contamination.

Concerned consumers can take additional steps to limit exposure from drinking water:

- **Flush your water tap** if the water in the faucet has gone unused for more than a few hours. Let the cold water run from the tap until it feels noticeably colder before using it for drinking or cooking (this may take two minutes or more). Drawing water for drinking or cooking after another high water use activity such as bathing or washing your clothes will shorten the time needed for flushing. If you have a lead service line, you may need to flush for a longer time.
- **Use only cold water** for cooking and drinking. If you need hot water, draw it from the cold water tap and heat it on the stove. Boiling water

**does not** remove lead.

- To see if you have lead solder, scratch pipes with a key. Lead solder looks dull but becomes shiny when scratched.

If still unsure, have a licensed plumber determine if your home contains lead solder, lead pipes or pipe fittings that contain lead. A plumber can also determine if your home has a lead service line connecting your home plumbing to BCDES' water main. The presence of these materials does not mean you have lead in your water, but the potential exists.

Consumers who choose to use a home filter device should realize that most do not remove the lead at all. Before you purchase a home filtering device, you should verify the manufacturer's claim. A good resource to assist you is NSF International ([www.nsf.org](http://www.nsf.org)).

Determine if lead is indeed present at levels of concern to you in your home by having your water tested by a state-approved laboratory. Testing usually costs between \$16 and \$50. Call the BCDES laboratory for a list of labs that can provide testing.

## For More Information

The drinking water community is committed to protecting public health. While the vast majority of water utilities do not exceed the lead action level, the drinking water community is continuing to explore ways to reduce the number of people exposed to lead in drinking water.

Customers can consult a variety of sources for additional information:

A family doctor or pediatrician can perform a blood test for lead and provide information about the health effects of lead.

Butler County Building and Zoning at 887-3205 can provide information about building permit records that should contain the names of plumbing contractors that plumbed your home so you can inquire about the materials used in your home.

BCDES can provide you with information about your water supply. If you have questions or concerns, call our Customer Care Center at 887-3066 or visit our website at [www.butlercountyohio.org/des](http://www.butlercountyohio.org/des)

To get more information about lead, please visit the following websites.

- [www.epa.gov/safewater/lead/leadfactsheet.html](http://www.epa.gov/safewater/lead/leadfactsheet.html)
- [www.epa.gov/opptintr/lead/lead/pdfe.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/opptintr/lead/lead/pdfe.pdf)
- [www.awwa.org/advocacy/straighttalk](http://www.awwa.org/advocacy/straighttalk)



**Please share this report with renters or others who do not receive water bills. If you need more copies, please call BCDES's Customer Care Center 887-3066.**



# The things you need to know about **LEAD**

Butler County Department of  
Environmental Services  
130 High Street  
Hamilton, Ohio 45011  
www.butlercountyohio.org/des



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## What is lead?

Lead is a common, natural and often useful metal that is found throughout the environment and is used in products found in and around our homes, such as:

- lead based paint
- household dust
- food
- certain types of pottery porcelain and pewter
- soil
- water

When injected at high levels, lead can have serious health consequences.

## How does lead get into water?

Lead is unusual among drinking water contaminants in that it seldom occurs naturally in water supplies like rivers and lakes. Lead in drinking water does not come from water leaving the treatment

plants or in BCDES's water mains. **Lead enters drinking water primarily as a result of contact with materials containing lead in the household's plumbing.**

## Common sources of lead in drinking water

BCDES has no known mains or service lines made of lead up to the service connection. Some older homes may have lead lines on the customer's side of the meter or within their home. Testing has shown that a few homes in our service area

water are faucets made of brass and chrome-plated brass, lead-based solder used to join copper pipe, and in some cases, pipes made of lead that connect home to the water main.



have elevated levels of lead originating from the household's plumbing.

The most common sources of lead in drinking

When water stands in lead pipes or plumbing fixtures containing lead for several hours or more, the lead may dissolve into your drinking water. This means the first water drawn from the tap in the morning, or later in the afternoon after returning from work or school, can contain higher levels of lead.

