



MEMORANDUM

LEGISLATIVE REFERENCE BUREAU

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To: Ald. James A. Bohl, Jr.
From: Dana J. Zelazny, Legislative Reference Bureau
Date: October 7, 2016
Subject: LEAD TESTING OF DRINKING WATER BY VARIOUS CITY DEPARTMENTS

This memo is in response to your request of September 19, 2016, regarding lead testing in water supplies by various city departments.

Milwaukee Water Works

Milwaukee Water Works (MWW) tests the City’s water supply as it exits water treatment plants for a variety of contaminants, including lead. MWW also tests the tap water from 50 city residences for lead triennially, as part of the City’s EPA monitoring requirements. All of the 50 residences are single family homes; none are charter schools or licensed daycare facilities.

According to Superintendent Carrie Lewis, MWW has not tested water supplies for lead at any public schools, charter schools or licensed daycares in Milwaukee.

Health Department

Historically, the Health Department has not tested drinking water supplies for lead contamination; rather, lead testing focused on paint, windows, etc., that were known sources of lead poisoning. Approximately three months ago, the Health Department added testing a home’s tap water for lead contamination to the Health Department’s “Environmental Health and Lead Risk Assessment” for residents found to have an Elevated Blood Lead (EBL) level. Whether or not a person’s home water supply is tested depends on the resident’s age, actual EBL level, and other factors, according in part to the chart below:

Blood Lead Result	Milwaukee Health Department Response
5 - 14 µg/dL	All Results / All Ages
	Letter with test result mailed to family
15 - 19 µg/dL	Child <73 months with Venous Draw
	Public Health Services Assistant Home Visit
20+ µg/dL	Child <73 months with Venous Draw
	Public Health Nurse Case Manager Home Visit
	Environmental Health and Lead Risk Assessment
45+ µg/dL	All Results / All Ages
	Immediate Milwaukee Health Department lead poisoning response
	Public Health Case Manager Home Visit
	Environmental Health and Lead Risk Assessment

The Health Department is being certified by the WI Department of Natural Resources to perform water-lead testing. The certification is expected to be finalized within the next month, and will reduce costs currently incurred from using a third-party to perform the tests. The Health Department has also hired an Environmental and Disease Control Specialist dedicated to testing lead in water, community outreach, data collection and analysis and collaborating with Water Works. This position will work with daycares, utility and DPW construction projects.

Licensed Day Care Facilities

The State daycare licensing body (Department of Children and Families) does not require a daycare to test its water supply for lead contamination unless the water is supplied from a private well. The City is in discussions with the State about whether to roll lead-water testing into the daycare licensing process. The Health Department supports this policy, since it would shift the cost of testing for lead from the City to the State, or at least to the daycare applicants.

The City recently received a \$1 million loan from the Department of Natural Resources to begin replacing lead service lines, in addition to other funds dedicated to this purpose in the 2017 Proposed Budget. In the next month or so, the Health Department plans to start testing the water supply at each of the City's licensed daycare facilities that are known to have lead supply lines (approx. 380). Of these, 377 are licensed to provide care for children ages 3 and under, the period when children are most vulnerable to lead poisoning. The test results will determine the priority schedule for replacing lead service lines at the daycares.

Milwaukee Public Schools

On September 9, 2016, Milwaukee Public Schools announced that, out of an abundance of caution, a district-wide effort to conduct precautionary testing of drinking water in schools had begun over the 2016 summer recess. According to correspondence from MPS, the drinking water in all MPS schools is being tested for lead contamination. The water samples will be collected by MPS staff and sent to a contracted laboratory for testing. The analysis will be performed according to methodologies outlined by the City of Milwaukee Health Department and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

According to Mr. Wendell Willis, Chief Operations Officer, "MPS is not aware of any interior lead plumbing lines, and there has been no disassembly of solder connections or individual plumbing fixture components for material analysis."

The targeted timeline for completion was initially Fall 2016, but this appears to have been pushed back somewhat. According to MPS, no cost analysis has been performed in the initial rush to conduct the tests, and test results will be made public after all data has been validated and verified.

City of Milwaukee Charter Schools

According to Ms. Gayle Peay, Administrator for the Charter School Review Committee (CSRC), the CSRC does not require new or existing City of Milwaukee charter schools to test their water supply for lead contamination. Likewise, the current charter school application form merely requires applicants to certify that their facilities are building code-compliant, and that any notices of health or safety code violations are remedied. According to Ms. Peay, the CSRC has no plans in place to require new or existing charter schools to test their water supply for lead, but a representative will be attending future Water Quality Task Force meetings to stay abreast of this issue.

If you have any other question related to this matter, please let me know.
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