



Legislation Text

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170131 SUBSTITUTE 2

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Substitute resolution relating to Health Department recommendations for avoiding lead exposure. This resolution directs the Health Department to provide ongoing community updates to inform the public that:

1. Occupants of buildings where lead service lines are present should adequately flush water lines after prolonged periods of stagnation to reduce potential lead hazards, but the use of NSF/ANSI Standard 53 certified lead filters is the most thorough means of lead-water safety.
2. At-risk populations of women and children living in buildings where lead service lines are present, including women who are pregnant, may become pregnant (women ages 15-45) or who are breastfeeding, and children up to the age of 6, should drink and cook only with water that has been filtered with an NSF/ANSI Standard 53 certified lead filter.

These updates shall include updating all drinking water safety, lead awareness, lead poisoning prevention and relevant pregnancy and prenatal care initiatives, websites, social media messaging, printed materials, outdoor and media advertisements and campaigns under the authority of the Health Department.

The use of water filtration systems certified to remove lead according to NSF/ANSI Standard 53 shall be promoted to the public as the most thorough means of lead-water safety. The Health Department shall include in any discussion of flushing drinking water by running taps a warning to the public of the risk of lead exposure involved in failing to adhere to flushing guidelines.

This resolution further directs the Health Department to issue written recommendations to Milwaukee-area obstetricians, pediatricians and public and private healthcare facilities and partner agencies, including Women, Infants and Children clinics and Federally Qualified Health Centers, that:

1. Infants and children up to the age of 6 should be assessed for lead exposure and tested for lead according to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Wisconsin Department of Health Services guidelines. When at risk for lead, infants and children up to age 6 should be tested at minimum annually.
2. Women who are pregnant, may become pregnant (women ages 15-45), or are breastfeeding, as well as infants at birth, should be assessed for lead exposure and tested for lead according to American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists guidelines.

Whereas, Lead exposure poses a significant threat to public health and safety, with infants, young

children, and pregnant women being at the greatest risk of adverse health impacts from lead exposure; and

Whereas, According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, there is no known identified safe blood lead level, and childhood lead exposure can cause damage to the brain and nervous system, slowed growth and development, learning and behavior problems, and hearing and speech problems; and

Whereas, According to the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG), lead is readily transferred from pregnant women to their unborn children, is detectable in an unborn child's brain as early as the end of the first trimester, and is associated with several adverse outcomes, including gestational hypertension, spontaneous abortion, low birth weight, and impaired neurodevelopment; and

Whereas, While Milwaukee Water Works sources, treats and delivers drinking water throughout the city that is high-quality, safe, healthy and lead-free, lead service lines and plumbing can introduce lead into drinking water; and

Whereas, Approximately 74,600 properties in the city, including 68,300 residential properties comprising 54.2% of all residential properties in the city, receive water through City-owned lead service lines, and according to Milwaukee Water Works, a property with City-owned lead service lines is likely to also have privately-owned lead service lines; and

Whereas, Various initiatives are being planned or are in progress to remove and replace City-owned lead service lines, to encourage property owners to remove and replace privately-owned lead service lines, plumbing and fixtures, to subsidize the costs of the removal and replacement, and to provide free or reduced-cost lead filters for the water taps of such households in the meantime; and

Whereas, The Health Department currently advises families who may live in homes with a high risk for lead in drinking water to reduce the risk of exposure by following these steps:

1. Flushing drinking water by running faucets on cold for a minimum of three minutes (or longer if necessary) until the water is noticeably colder.
2. Using only cold water for cooking and drinking, and considering purchasing bottled water for drinking and cooking from a known lead-free source.
3. Periodically inspecting and removing aerators from faucets and rinsing out any debris, which may include particles of lead.
4. Using drinking water filters that are certified to remove lead.
5. Replacing lead service lines or interior plumbing.

; and

Whereas, The Health Department currently recommends that any households with residents or visitors that include pregnant or breastfeeding women, or children under the age of 6, should also:

1. Only use bottled water from a known lead-free source or cold, filtered tap water (using an NSF/ANSI Standard 53 certified water filtration device) to make formula, concentrated juices, and for cooking and drinking. If using water directly from the faucet, only cold water that has been well-flushed for a minimum of three minutes should be used.
2. Have blood lead levels tested. The Health Department advises parents and health care providers to follow the “3 before 3” guidance by testing children for elevated blood lead levels 3 times before the age of 3. Health care providers or the Health Department should be consulted for further information.

; and

Whereas, According to Dr. Marc A. Edwards, a leading expert in the field of lead in drinking water, flushing water for 1-2 minutes, somewhat short of the full 3 minutes recommended by the Health Department, can actually increase the amount of lead in tap water compared to an initial draw; and

Whereas, According to a 2004 study, although flushing lowered the blood lead levels for individuals whose tap water contained at least 5 ppb lead, the majority of subjects considered flushing to be an unsustainable health preventative behavior in the long term, and it was difficult for some, particularly children, to judge time when flushing; and

Whereas, ACOG recommends that risk assessment of lead exposure should take place at the earliest contact with pregnant and lactating women, and blood lead testing should be performed if a single risk factor is present, including consumption of lead-contaminated drinking water (i.e., women whose homes have leaded pipes or source lines with lead); and

Whereas, Pregnant women, children and parents may not have access to accurate information about the presence of City- or privately-owned lead service lines, plumbing and fixtures at all times and locations so they can make informed decisions about the risk of lead exposure from drinking water on a case-by-case basis; and

Whereas, The City of Milwaukee recognizes that all residents of the community need access to information on how best to protect themselves and their children from lead in drinking water; and

Whereas, As a result of its outreach, research, and discussions, the Water Quality Task Force developed a number of recommendations for making the City of Milwaukee’s drinking water safer for all residents, including a recommendation to promote and support lead-removing water filtration systems as the most thorough means of lead-water safety, and that the use of lead-removing water filtration systems should be emphasized to the public in City informational efforts and be afforded adequate resource prioritization by the City; and

Whereas, The Water Quality Task Force also recommended that measures should be taken to ensure that women of childbearing age, expectant mothers, families of formula-fed babies, and young children have lead-removing water filters in their homes and that they are provided with education regarding why and how to use filters; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, By the Common Council of the City of Milwaukee, that the Health Department is directed

to issue a media advisory and subsequently provide ongoing community updates to inform the public that:

1. Occupants of buildings where lead service lines are present should adequately flush water lines after prolonged periods of stagnation to reduce potential lead hazards, but the use of NSF/ANSI Standard 53 certified water filter is the most thorough means of lead-water safety.
2. At-risk populations of women and children living in buildings where lead service lines are present, including women who are pregnant, may become pregnant (women ages 15-45) or are breastfeeding, and children up to the age of 6, should drink and cook only with water that has been filtered through an NSF/ANSI Standard 53 certified water filter.

; and, be it

Further Resolved, That these updates shall include updating all drinking water safety, lead awareness, lead poisoning prevention and relevant pregnancy and prenatal care initiatives, websites, social media messaging, printed materials, outdoor and media advertisements and campaigns under the authority of the Health Department; and, be it

Further Resolved, That the Health Department shall ensure, in any such community updates, including relevant education materials provided with City water bills, that the use of water filtration systems certified to remove lead according to NSF/ANSI Standard 53 are promoted to the public as the most thorough means of lead-water safety; and, be it

Further Resolved, That the Health Department shall include in any discussion of flushing drinking water by running taps a warning to the public of the risk of lead exposure from failing to adhere to flushing guidelines; and, be it

Further Resolved, That the Health Department is directed to issue written recommendations to Milwaukee-area obstetricians, pediatricians and public and private healthcare facilities and partner agencies, including Women, Infants and Children clinics and Federally Qualified Health Centers, that:

1. Infants and children up to the age of 6 should be assessed for lead exposure and tested for lead according to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Wisconsin Department of Health Services guidelines. When at risk for lead, infants and children up to age 6 should be tested at minimum annually.
2. Women who are pregnant, may become pregnant (women ages 15-45), or are breastfeeding, as well as infants at birth, should be assessed for lead exposure and tested for lead according to American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists guidelines.

; and, be it

Further Resolved, That the Health Department shall continue to promote the recommendations described above until this resolution is rescinded or amended by future Common Council action.

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Dana J. Zelazny
November 10, 2017