

WHAT HAPPENED? WHAT IS BEING DONE?

During triennial, once every three years, water testing conducted at Port Everglades in July 2016, we discovered that there were elevated levels of lead in the drinking water in two buildings (Public Works – 2101 Eisenhower Blvd and Administration Building 1850 Eller Drive). As soon as we became aware of the issue, we began taking corrective actions.

We are in the process of hiring a nationally recognized water consultant to conduct a study of the entire water distribution system and other appropriate corrective actions. This work is ongoing and includes implementation of a lead corrosion control study of the water distribution system and recurring sampling and testing of the water for lead. The study will recommend corrective actions that the Port will implement in consultation with the Broward County Health Department. The study will be completed in the near future.

Additionally, the Port is replacing old plumbing fixtures, such as faucets and water fountains, which were allowed to contain up to eight percent lead prior to January 4, 2014, in buildings found to have elevated levels of lead with new fixtures that are certified to be lead free in accordance with the Reduction of Lead in Drinking Water Act.

HEALTH EFFECTS OF LEAD

Lead can cause serious health problems if too much enters your body from drinking water or other sources. It can cause damage to the brain and kidneys, and can interfere with the production of red blood cells that carry oxygen to all parts of your body. The greatest risk of lead exposure is to infants, young children, and pregnant women. Scientists have linked the effects of lead on the brain with lowered IQ in children. Adults with kidney problems and high blood pressure can be affected by low levels of lead more than healthy adults. Lead is stored in the bones and it can be released later in life. During pregnancy, the child receives lead from the mother's bones, which may affect brain development.

SOURCES OF LEAD

Lead is a common metal found in the environment. Drinking water is one possible source of lead exposure. The main sources of lead exposure are lead-based paint and lead-contaminated dust or soil, and some plumbing materials. In addition, lead can be found in certain types of pottery, pewter, brass fixtures, food, and cosmetics. Other sources include exposure in the work place and exposure from certain hobbies (lead can be carried on clothing or shoes).

The Reduction of Lead in Drinking Water Act, requires plumbing fixtures manufactured after January 4, 2014 to be "lead free" and have a maximum lead content of 0.25 percent lead. Prior to the passage of the Reduction of Lead in Drinking Water Act, brass faucets, fittings, and valves, including those advertised as "lead-free," were allowed to contain up to 8 percent lead. Consumers should be aware of this when choosing fixtures and take appropriate precautions.

The Port receives its water from the City of Fort Lauderdale. The water supplied by the City of Fort Lauderdale does not contain lead. When water is in contact with distribution system pipes (owned by the Port), or service lines (i.e., the property owner's pipe that connects to the Port's piping) or the property owner's plumbing (i.e., faucets and piping within the property owner's building) that contains lead for several hours, the lead may enter drinking water.

Buildings built before 1986 are more likely to have plumbing containing lead. New buildings may also have lead; even "lead-free" plumbing may contain some lead.

EPA estimates that 10 to 20 percent of a person's potential exposure to lead may come from drinking water. Infants who consume mostly formula mixed with lead-containing water can receive 40 to 60 percent of their exposure to lead from drinking water.

Don't forget about other sources of lead such as lead paint, lead dust, and lead in soil. Wash your children's hands and toys often as they can come into contact with dirt and dust containing lead.

STEPS TO REDUCE EXPOSURE TO LEAD IN DRINKING WATER

1. FLUSH YOUR SYSTEM.

Let the water run from the tap before using it for drinking or cooking any time the water in a faucet has gone unused for more than six hours. The longer water resides in plumbing, the more lead it may contain. Flushing the tap means running the cold water faucet for about 15-30 seconds. Although toilet flushing or showering flushes water through a portion of the plumbing system, you still need to flush the water in each faucet before using it for drinking or cooking. Flushing tap water is a simple and inexpensive measure you can take to protect your health. It usually uses less than one or two gallons of water.

2. USE ONLY COLD WATER FOR COOKING AND DRINKING.

Do not cook with, or drink water from the hot water tap. Hot water can dissolve more lead more quickly than cold water. If you need hot water, draw water from the cold tap and then heat it.

3. USE BOTTLED WATER.

The steps described above will reduce the lead concentrations in your drinking water. However, if you are still concerned, you may wish to use bottled water for drinking and cooking.



FOR MORE INFORMATION

Call us at (954) 468-3509 or visit our website at:
www.porteverglades.net/our-community-role/water-update

You may also call the Broward County Information Line at “311”

For more information on reducing lead exposure around your building and the health effects of lead, visit the EPA’s website www.epa.gov/lead or contact your health care provider.



Lead in Drinking Water



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