

Education and Communication Toolkit: Reducing Lead in Drinking Water

A TECHNICAL GUIDANCE AND MODEL PLAN FOR MINNESOTA'S PUBLIC SCHOOLS

This Toolkit provides resources to:

1. Assist school district and charter school staff, school board members, parents, legislators, consultants and other affected and interested audiences in becoming educated regarding the requirements of lead legislation. The legislation requires public school districts and charter schools serving students from kindergarten through grade 12 to accurately and efficiently test for the presence of lead in water and report the results of this testing.
2. Assist those assigned with communicating the results to the public including parents and guardians. It includes easy-to-use communication templates, resources, and tips. Communication should be timely. Communicating test results to the community within 30 days of receipt of results or after remediation is recommended.
3. Assist child cares who choose to voluntarily test for the presence of lead in water and communicate results to parents and community.

NOTE: You may want to consider translating pertinent documents as needed. Please follow your School District/Charter School translation policy.

Key Messages

- There is no safe level of lead so reducing all sources is important;
- Schools must test for the presence of lead at all taps used for drinking and cooking;
- It's important for parents and guardians to know about their school's lead testing results, therefore schools must communicate results;
- Schools must implement recommended strategies to reduce lead in drinking water;
- Final decisions on specific interventions to reduce lead exposure in individual facilities are made by local school districts based on guidance from MDH and MDE; and
- MDH encourages some level of response be taken for any plumbing fixtures identified as producing a detectable level of lead. Best management practices should continue until subsequent testing indicates no lead is present in the water.

Background and Informational Resources

Background and informational resources specific to the Technical Guidance and Model Plan available to inform a variety of audiences as follows:

- Minnesota Statute Regarding Lead in School Drinking Water
 - [Lead in School Drinking Water \(https://revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=121A.335\)](https://revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=121A.335)
- Full Technical Guidance and Model Plan
 - [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)
- Executive Summary of Technical Guidance and Model Plan
 - [Executive Summary: Reducing Lead in Drinking Water \(PDF\) \(https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/docs/execsummary.pdf\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/docs/execsummary.pdf)
- Talking Points for School Leaders
 - [Testing for lead in school drinking water \(PDF\) \(https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/docs/talkpoints.pdf\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/docs/talkpoints.pdf)

Communication Tools

The following are resources specific to the Technical Guidance and Model Plan prepared to assist you with informing a variety of audiences. When lead results are elevated, communicating test results should occur within 30 days of receipt of results or after remediation steps have been taken.

INSTRUCTIONS: The letter/press release/newsletter templates have been formatted as a fillable form to allow for personalization. They are offered as examples of potential content you may want to consider as you communicate results/inform parents, etc. You can adjust, delete, or copy and paste any text to fit your needs.

- A. Set your cursor in Letterhead/Logo fillable space area and insert your Letterhead/Logo.
 - B. Advance to the next fillable space by pressing the Tab key. Cursor must be in a fillable space to advance to the next fillable space.
 - C. Continue pressing the Tab key to move to the next fillable space. Insert appropriate information.
 - D. Save information for distribution.
- Sample Planning Checklist
 - [Commissioner's Model Plan: Model Plan Checklist \(Word\) \(https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/docs/planchlist.docx\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/docs/planchlist.docx)
 - Sample letters to Parents and Staff
 - Sample letter #1: Longer format; General discussion

- [Sample letter #1 \(Word\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/docs/sampleltr1.docx)
(<https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/docs/sampleltr1.docx>)
- Sample letter #2: Shorter format; Focused on specific results
 - [Sample letter #2 \(Word\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/docs/sampleltr2.docx)
(<https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/docs/sampleltr2.docx>)
- Additional Text/Items to consider:
 - Although our school district/charter school is taking reasonable steps to reduce lead exposure, there is no safe level of lead. Parents can take further steps at home to reduce exposure. For more information see: [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>).
 - If your school district cannot immediately remedy elevated lead levels, we encourage you to send this notice without delay. In that case, we suggest describing the reason for the delay in implementing a permanent solution and the interim measures you will take to provide safe drinking water until the problem can be addressed.
- Sample news article
 - [Sample newsletter \(Word\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/docs/samplenewsletter.docx)
(<https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/docs/samplenewsletter.docx>)
- Sample press release
 - [Sample press release \(Word\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/docs/sampleprssrelease.docx)
(<https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/docs/sampleprssrelease.docx>)
- Sample school web page
 - [St. Paul Public Schools \(https://www.spps.org/Page/3483\)](https://www.spps.org/Page/3483)
 - [Minneapolis Public Schools](https://facilities.mpls.k12.mn.us/lead_in_water_safety_plan)
(https://facilities.mpls.k12.mn.us/lead_in_water_safety_plan)

Other Ideas to Consider

- Develop social media messages
 - Use Key Messages when developing social media posts, tweets, and Instagram messages.
- Develop contact information list
 - Develop a contact list of local resources: public health agencies, public water systems, and other available resources.

- Include information about lead testing and communication requirements in the list of required annual Notifications sent to parents (Asbestos, Pesticide, Indoor Air Quality, and other Notices).
- Plan to refer questions about health concerns to health care providers.

General Resources

The following are general resources you may find helpful (i.e., not specific to new legislation).

- Lead infographic/flyers
 - [Testing for lead in school drinking water \(PDF\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/docs/schoolwater.pdf)
(<https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/docs/schoolwater.pdf>)
 - [Types of actions that can be taken when results for lead are elevated \(PDF\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/docs/typeaction.pdf)
(<https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/docs/typeaction.pdf>)
- Lead Quick card bookmark and signs
 - [Water: Get the Lead Out \(PDF\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/docs/leadbkmrk.pdf)
(<https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/docs/leadbkmrk.pdf>)
 - [Do Not Drink Signs \(PDF\)](https://www.health.ny.gov/environmental/water/drinking/lead/docs/donotdrinksigns_lead.pdf)
(https://www.health.ny.gov/environmental/water/drinking/lead/docs/donotdrinksigns_lead.pdf)
- Tips and Resources for parents
 - [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>)
- Risk Communication Information
 - [Risk Communication Summary \(PDF\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/docs/riskcomm.pdf)
(<https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/docs/riskcomm.pdf>)
 - [Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry](https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/publications_risk_comm.html)
(https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/publications_risk_comm.html)
- Environmental Protection Agency Lead Manual
 - [Environmental Health Protection Agency Lead Manual](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>)
- Additional webpages

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- [Lead in Drinking Water in Schools and Childcare Facilities-EPA \(https://www.epa.gov/dwreginfo/lead-drinking-water-schools-and-childcare-facilities\)](https://www.epa.gov/dwreginfo/lead-drinking-water-schools-and-childcare-facilities)
- [Lead in School Drinking Water-Washington State \(https://www.doh.wa.gov/CommunityandEnvironment/DrinkingWater/Contaminants/Lead/LeadinSchools\)](https://www.doh.wa.gov/CommunityandEnvironment/DrinkingWater/Contaminants/Lead/LeadinSchools)
- [Lead in Drinking Water-Massachusetts \(https://www.mass.gov/lead-in-drinking-water\)](https://www.mass.gov/lead-in-drinking-water)
- [Water Quality - Portland Oregon Schools \(https://www.pps.net/Page/5378\)](https://www.pps.net/Page/5378)
- [Lead in School Drinking Water - Vermont Department of Health \(https://www.healthvermont.gov/environment/school/lead-drinking-water-schools\)](https://www.healthvermont.gov/environment/school/lead-drinking-water-schools)

Contact Information

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To obtain this information in a different format, call: 651-201-4700.