

Agawam Public Schools



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Dear Agawam Junior High School Students, Staff, and Parents/Guardians:

Because Agawam Public Schools believes in a proactive approach to all forms of safety, our district volunteered to work closely with state agencies to ensure that lead and copper levels in the water at all of our schools meet safety standards. During recent lead and copper samplings, some faucets at several of our schools had lead and copper levels that slightly exceed the Massachusetts Action Level for lead and the Massachusetts and Federal Action Level for copper in water at schools, preschools, and child care facilities. We take these results very seriously and are working immediately to safeguard the health of students, faculty, and staff.

Lead is not primarily in our drinking water, but rather was found in plumbing and fixtures where hand washing takes place within some of our schools; thereby resulting in an increase in the lead content. Likewise, copper is not primarily in our drinking water, but rather was found in the plumbing and fixtures where hand washing takes place.

We would like to inform you about our plans to reduce potential exposure to lead and copper in the water at the junior high school, which were identified as having levels higher than state standards. To safeguard our students and other sensitive individuals (including women who are pregnant or nursing), our district is working closely and cooperatively with the Mass. Department of Environmental Protection and others by taking the following action steps:

1. We have shut off all fixtures with lead or copper levels over the Action Level and will replace them with new fixtures.
2. We have developed a flushing and sampling plan at outlets (faucets, water fountains, etc.) where students and staff get water for drinking, beverage preparation, and cooking.
3. Because flushing rids water of lead and copper contaminants, we are implementing a flushing and water usage plan to safeguard against lead and copper exposure from water in those schools found to be above the Action Level for lead and copper. This includes daily flushing of water fountains and/or faucets at sinks found above the Action Level and limitation of water consumption to cold-water faucets for food and beverage preparation.
4. We will determine the cause of this lead and copper Action Level exceedance and evaluate the adequacy of our existing corrosion control system. In most cases, the cause of lead in water is due to brass fixtures. We will develop and put into place a corrective action plan as quickly as possible and follow with additional testing and consultation.
5. Through periodic reports, we will keep you informed as to the progress of our efforts. These reports will serve to let you know what has been done and what is being done to safeguard against lead and copper exposure from drinking water at our schools.

In closing, the water system at our schools is not unlike water systems found in other buildings. Older plumbing systems and fixtures, especially, can contain lead or solder that can allow lead to enter tap water. These plumbing systems also contain copper. Because the safety and health of our students, faculty, and staff is paramount, our district will continue to monitor the water supply at all schools and will ensure that all safety standards are met. If you have any questions regarding this information, please contact the town's Health Department Agent, Kathy Auer, at kauer@agawam.ma.us or the Mass. Department of Public Health at www.mass.gov/dph/environmental.health.

Sincerely,

Steven P. Lemanski
Superintendent of Schools

"Put Children First"