

Attention: Owners of Municipal and Non-Municipal Year-Round Residential Drinking Water Systems

Re: Release of Community Lead Testing Program: Round 1 (December 2007 – April 2008) Results

I am pleased to present the test results from the winter 2007/08 community lead testing program, a component of O. Reg. 170/03 under the Safe Drinking Water Act, 2002. The regulation was amended in July, 2007 in order to address elevated levels of lead in drinking water that were detected at the tap. The regulation requires testing twice per year by owners of municipal and non-municipal residential drinking water systems in Ontario. The results summarized in this report represent the findings of the first round of testing.

These results come from a detailed analysis of over 37,000 plumbing and 5,100 distribution samples. The findings clearly indicate that the majority of samples taken met Ontario's standard for lead levels in drinking water.

The data gathered in the first round of testing gives us a preliminary picture of the concentrations of lead in drinking water across the province. Results for subsequent rounds of testing will also be released.

The results from the winter 2007/08 round of testing indicate four key findings (see the attached report for details):

The vast majority of municipal residential drinking water systems plumbing and distribution samples met the provincial standard:

- 97.6 per cent of all plumbing samples (from pipes inside homes or buildings) met the Ontario Drinking Water Quality Standard (ODWQS) of 10 micrograms per litre (ug/L).
- 97.6 per cent of municipal distribution samples (from pipes leading to homes or buildings) also met the standard.

The vast majority of non-municipal year-round residential plumbing systems plumbing and distribution samples met the provincial standard:

- 99.1 per cent of all plumbing samples met the Ontario Drinking Water Quality Standard (ODWQS) of 10 micrograms per litre (ug/L).
- 99.6 per cent of non-municipal year-round residential distribution samples met the standard.

Geographic distribution of exceedances:

- The majority of drinking water systems throughout the province met the standard.
- There were no broad geographical trends with respect to systems where exceedances were detected.

Voluntary sampling:

- Although public participation in the lead testing program is voluntary, the numbers of plumbing samples submitted by municipalities generally met submission requirements. In the case of non-municipal year-round residential systems, the number of samples submitted were well below submission requirements.
- Some municipal systems and a number of non-municipal systems applied for and were granted relief for a partial reduction in the number of samples required by the regulation, due to insufficient numbers of volunteers or lack of sampling locations. To this end, the Ministry of the Environment will continue to work with the local drinking water systems and the public to encourage greater voluntary participation in the community lead testing program.

The attached report represents the first round of sampling for the community lead testing program. Subsequent sampling will determine if large municipalities will be required to undertake additional actions, which could include initiation of a corrosion control program.

Providing safe drinking water is a shared responsibility, and the Ministry of the Environment will continue to work with system owners and operators on all aspects of the program. If you have any questions, please contact the ministry's Public Information Centre at 416-325-4000 or 1-800-565-4923 or by e-mail at picemail.moe@ontario.ca. Should you need additional information about lead in drinking water, see the ministry's Drinking Water Ontario website at www.ontario.ca/drinkingwater.



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