

SAFE DRINKING WATER – CHECKING FOR LEAD



The United States Navy is committed to protecting the health of their Sailors, civilian staff, and their families by providing safe drinking water. Drinking water quality, including testing for lead, is monitored throughout the installation. It is Navy policy to follow Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) optional guidelines for testing and sampling of water outlets from which children may drink at primary and secondary schools, Child Development Centers (CDCs), Navy operated Group Homes, and youth centers.

WHAT IS NSA NAPLES DOING?

- NSA Naples is implementing a water testing program for Schools, Child Development Centers (CDCs), Youth and Teen Centers, and playground areas, in compliance with recent Navy guidance. Sinks, faucets, fountains, and hose bibs will be tested for lead with results made available to the public.
- This will be an ongoing program to add an additional level of assurance that children are drinking safe water. The program includes yearly updates and complete retesting every five years.

WHAT IS LEAD?

- Lead is a naturally occurring metal and was historically common in plumbing materials and water service lines.
- People are most often exposed to lead by eating or drinking contaminated products. Examples of sources of lead include (old) paint, batteries, solder, and corrosive water conditions.

WHAT ARE THE HEALTH RISKS OF LEAD EXPOSURE?

- High lead exposures can lead to adverse health effects. This testing program aims to protect young children as they can be more easily affected by ingesting lead.
- Young children grow and absorb lead into their bodies more rapidly than adults. Anemia, or low blood cell levels are one the first signs of over exposure to high lead levels. If untreated, severe, prolonged, high exposures can impair a child's mental and physical development.
- EPA estimates that drinking water can make up 20% or more of a person's total lead exposure.
- Infants who consume mostly mixed formula can receive 40% to 60% of their exposure to lead from drinking water.

HOW DOES LEAD GET INTO A FACILITY'S DRINKING WATER?

- Even though the drinking water at Carney Park, Capodichino and Support Site meets federal, local and overseas lead level standards, a facility may still encounter elevated lead levels at an outlet or spigot. This is usually caused by corrosion of plumbing materials that contained lead.
- While Navy construction standards prohibit use of lead-containing materials, this program is designed to ensure the historically most common sources of lead in the water distribution system are indeed lead free. The sources being tested include plumbing pipes, solder, water coolers, drinking fountains, and faucets.
- While many factors could contribute to the presence of lead in drinking water, this program will ensure the continued delivery of safe water in the priority areas.

HOW MUCH LEAD IS TOO MUCH?

- EPA set a guidance level of 20 parts per billion (ppb) in childcare settings to protect children who are exposed to lead in their primary source of drinking water.
- NSA Naples tests using the EPA recommended sampling procedure for childcare facilities. We collect first-draw samples from water outlets. This procedure maximizes the likelihood of detecting the highest concentrations of lead. The testing procedure is designed to identify specific faucets or fountains that would require remediation within the childcare facility.

WHAT IS REMEDIATION?

- Remediation refers to both short- and long-term actions taken to reduce the levels of lead in drinking water.
- If sampling results show lead levels exceeding 20 ppb, water outlets will be immediately taken out of service until remediation actions are completed.

WHERE CAN I FIND MORE INFORMATION?

- NSA Naples Environmental Director, at (081) 568-6644 can provide you with information about your facility's water supply.
- NSA Environmental Health Officer at (081) 811-6299 can provide you with information about health effects of lead.
- More information on the health effects of lead can be found on EPA's website at www2.epa.gov/lead.