

TOP TEN QUESTIONS ON LEAD IN PRIORITY AREA

1.) Question: Why are you testing for lead in the drinking water now?

Answer: The Navy already conducts testing for lead under established guidelines in the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA). Current data indicates water quality at our youth program sites and childcare facilities is within SDWA guidelines, which establishes national health-based standards for drinking water to protect against both naturally-occurring and man-made contaminants that may be found in drinking water.

The Navy decided to implement new standards that exceed Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recommendations. This will ensure an exceptional and effective program that is uniformly consistent at all worldwide Navy installations.

In the United States, EPA recommends, but does not require, testing for lead in drinking water in schools and day care centers. By adopting the EPA recommendations as policy, the Navy believes its new policy is in the best interest of the children, parents, and staff we serve.

The safety of our children is a top priority. By taking this proactive approach to the identification and elimination of potential sources of lead in facilities that cater to children, the Navy believes it is adding additional measures to ensure the health and wellbeing of our children.

2.) Question: If testing and monitoring the quality of drinking water is not specifically mandated by state or local law, why should a Navy child care center devote resources to do so?

Answer: The Navy is committed to the safety and health of our personnel and their family members. We are committed to ensuring our drinking water meets both the Navy's and Environmental Protection Agency's standards; and we will provide the best possible level of care that our service members and their families deserve.

3.) Question: What is a "high priority area?"

Answer: High priority areas are facilities that provide services to children, such as primary and secondary schools, Child Development Centers (CDCs), 24/7 group homes, recreation centers, Youth Centers, and community centers operated by the Navy.

4.) Question: Are my children at risk? Where can I have my child tested for lead exposure?

Answer: No health problems have been reported to us by any staff members or parents of children using one of our facilities. Current data indicates that our youth program sites and child care facilities are safe. Parents who have children enrolled at the Child Development Centers, or the centers' staff, who have concerns about their health, should contact their health care provider.

5.) Question: Have any health problems been reported?

Answer: No health problems have been reported to us by any staff members or parents of children using one of our facilities.

6.) Question: What is the Environmental Protection Agency's recommended acceptable level of lead?

Answer: The EPA's recommended acceptable level is 20 parts per billion (ppb) or less. To put that into perspective, one part per billion it is equivalent to one drop of water in an Olympic sized swimming pool.

7.) Question: What preventative measures are being taken at those locations until you can test them?

Answer: Employees are trained on precautionary procedures that are taken at our child care facilities. This includes measures such as:

- Use only cold water for food and beverage preparation. Hot water will dissolve lead more quickly than cold water and is likely to contain increased lead levels. If hot water is needed, it should be taken from the cold water tap and heated on a stove or in a microwave oven.
- Running the water before drinking and/or staff could run the water before children arrive, so they are drinking water that has not been in contact with the faucet interior since faucets are often a source of lead in drinking water.
- All formula at our childcare centers is pre-mixed and does not use water from the facility.

8.) Question: Why are we just now being informed of this testing program?

Answer: This proactive testing at Navy installations in the Northwest Region is taking place Sept. 26-28, 2014. We worked to educate all Child Development Center and Youth Center staff, and to notify all parents of children who use the Navy child care facilities of this testing. We will inform all parents and staff members of the results as soon as they are available.

9.) Question: Who is conducting the water sampling test?

Answer: The Navy's Environmental technicians or trained contractor personnel collect the samples. The water is tested by an independent, certified laboratory and takes approximately 3-4 weeks before results are returned.

10.) Question: What will the Navy do if the test results are positive for the presence of lead?

Answer: If, for some reason, the test results are positive for lead, the Navy will immediately secure those particular water fixtures to minimize exposure to that water source. The Navy would also take immediate action to conduct additional testing to identify the problem and take corrective actions to fix the problem. There are also routine short-term and long-term control measures that the Navy will take to help mitigate the problem until it can be permanently fixed. Parents with children at that particular facility will be notified of the results and the corrective actions being taken to fix the problem and minimize exposure to that water source.