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WATER WORKS

# Enhanced Lead Communications FAQ for Schools

*GCWW has various treatment practices in place, including corrosion control that prevents lead from leaching into the drinking water. Your water is safe!*

## What has prompted more review of lead in water systems across the nation? More specifically, lead service lines within water systems?

Recent crises involving elevated levels of lead in drinking water in **Flint, MI**, and **Sebring, OH** along with other US cities have reached prominence on a national level. Prompted by these events, federal and state regulators are reacting to quickly review current regulations concerning lead in drinking water to enact prompt changes for water systems across the Country.

In addition, this increased awareness of lead in drinking water has resulted in **public attention to school water systems** and the potential for lead exposure in schools as well. Schools are a focus since young children are at higher risk of adverse health consequences from lead exposure.

## Why is Greater Cincinnati Water Works (GCWW) meeting with schools regarding lead service lines?

Recent review of records has identified a few schools within the Greater Cincinnati area with a lead service line on the school property. Greater Cincinnati Water Works is taking a proactive approach regarding this issue and working regularly with groups, businesses, and residents to deliver solutions within our community. GCWW is meeting with each school to identify any active lead service lines and to discuss options to reduce risk at the school.

## What has GCWW been doing regarding this issue?

For nearly 200 years, GCWW has been a dependable provider of safe drinking water for the region and has always met or exceeded all of the state and federal health standards for drinking water and uses state-of-the-art water treatment processes that include multiple barriers to protect public health.

GCWW's water plants employ various treatment processes, such as sand filtration, Granular Activated Carbon (GAC), Powdered Activated Carbon (PAC), and ultraviolet (UV) light to remove and treat for natural and man-made contaminants from our drinking water. It is one of the first in the nation to use a combination of all four treatment methods. GCWW also treats the drinking water specifically to minimize the amount of lead that may leach into the drinking water-- this treatment process is called corrosion control. This process ensures there is no lead in the water as it leaves GCWW treatment plants and minimizes the chance that lead can be picked up from home plumbing. More than 600 daily tests ensure that all of the treatment processes GCWW applies are effective.

Since 1971, GCWW has been removing the public portion of lead service lines from the system. To date, 38% of these lead service lines have been removed from the system, leaving approximately 16,000 publically owned lead service lines in the system to be removed. Lead service lines exist in all 52 neighborhoods in City, and some have already been removed in each neighborhood. GCWW will continue to remove the public portion of the lead service lines in the water system.

Given the national issue of lead, GCWW takes the risk of lead exposure very seriously and is embarking upon an enhanced program to combat the risk in a two-tiered approach. This approach involves Tier 1- Education and Communication and Tier 2- Complete Removal of Lead Service Lines. Partnering with special customer segments such as schools, daycares, hospitals, nursing homes, churches, restaurants, and entertainment venues involves Tier 1 and 2 solutions.



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## Where can I find out more information about sampling in schools?

While there is no federal law requiring testing for drinking water in schools, except for schools that have their own water supply, the United States Environment Protection Agency (USEPA) provides the **3Ts for Reducing Lead in Drinking Water in Schools Guidelines document** (3Ts document). USEPA developed this document because the Agency is concerned about the potential for elevated lead levels in drinking water in schools. USEPA recommends schools follow the practices outlined to better understand the water quality within school facilities. Greater Cincinnati Water Works supports this recommendation and is partnering with schools and daycares to further explain the document and help them complete the practices outlined to understand the water quality within their facilities.

Facilities managers and other school personnel should thoroughly read the 3Ts document and understand the various steps needed to complete the recommendations.

## Is there a cost to the school to partner with GCWW?

There is no financial cost for your school to partner with us, however, if you have to replace your lead service line, a portion of the cost (for the public portion of the line) will be covered by GCWW and the other portion will need to be covered by the school (for the private portion of the line). School staff should expect to spend some time completing a plumbing profile as well as collecting samples. Some additional costs may occur if a remediation plan is needed.

## Are any other partners involved?

GCWW has partnered with the Cincinnati Health Department and Hamilton County Public Health. Both of these health departments may be involved if lead is detected in facilities.

## Where should I sample in the schools?

The 3Ts document explains where you should sample; each drinking and cooking outlet within the school facility should be sampled. Please review the 3Ts document to further understand the sampling protocol.

## When should I sample in the schools?

You should sample in the schools when students are attending. Sampling during the summer, weekends, and vacation periods when buildings are vacant is not the ideal time to try to determine the water quality within your buildings.

## Where can I get sampling bottles?

GCWW will provide sample bottles/kits for you. These kits will either be mailed to you or you can arrange to pick them up.

## How much will the samples cost?

GCWW will not charge the school for sample analysis. This service is provided to help schools and other premises understand their water quality.

## Who can analyze the samples for me?

Greater Cincinnati Water Works can analyze the samples for your school. GCWW is certified and has been analyzing these types of samples for over 30 years.

## How long will it take to get the sample results?

It normally takes GCWW 2-3 weeks to analyze your samples and provide the results back to you. However, this timeframe may increase depending on the volume of workload at any given time.

## What happens if the sample results are higher than the action level?

GCWW will call and explain your results to you and to arrange follow-up sampling to identify the exact source of the lead. GCWW will also discuss possible short and long term actions that can be taken to mitigate and/or eliminate exposure from the source.

## Will I get my results in writing?

Yes, GCWW will provide your results in writing.



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## What should I tell the families and parents at the schools about the samples?

Performing sampling and eliminating sources of lead are very positive steps that can show that you are being very proactive in protecting the health of children. The 3Ts document provides additional information about how to communicate with families regarding your program including testing and the results of tests. Please review the document and determine which communications method works best for your school community (staff, parents, students).

## What will GCWW do with the sample results?

GCWW maintains the sample records in house, and all sample results will be reported to the state as special sample s. The state may wish to inquire further with the GCWW and/or school regarding the results. The results of the samples are considered public record and may be released via public records requests made to the GCWW and/or other City departments and offices. GCWW will also share the high results with the Cincinnati Health Department and other Health departments where applicable. GCWW will notify any school if a public requests has occurred with GCWW.

## What will GCWW share with the media if asked?

GCWW will share that schools and the water utility are partnering to assist schools in understanding the water quality at their school facilities. The results of the samples are considered public record and may be released via public records requests made to the GCWW and other City departments and offices. If the media asks for the sample results, GCWW will have to provide the results. However, GCWW will stress the importance of privacy and that sharing the results may discourage others in sampling. This is not desired and the utility will work to discourage the media in publishing any results.

## What can you expect from GCWW as your partner?

### As a partner, you can expect the following from GCWW:

- Initial meeting with maps explaining GCWW knowledge of your school property and potential lead service lines
- A copy of the 3Ts for Reducing Lead in Drinking Water in Schools Guidelines document
- A GCWW liaison will be assigned to you to answer your questions and move the process along
- Answer questions regarding the 3Ts document
- Assistance in identifying sources of lead in the school drinking water system
- Sample kits to sample drinking and cooking outlets; follow-up sample kits if needed
- School sample analysis
- Discuss sample results with school rep(s)
- Provide written copy of results
- Assistance with communication materials for the school community (staff, parents, students)
- Assistance with media, if needed

## What is GCWW expecting from the school?

- Removal of active lead service line(s) or elimination of active lead service line via connection to another non-lead line on property
- A thorough plumbing profile, to identify sources of lead and to identify all outlets that can be used for drinking or cooking
- Collection of samples following the sampling protocol outlined in the 3Ts document
- Follow-up sampling if needed
- Steps to eliminate sources of lead identified
- Communications regarding sampling and results to the school community
- Implementation of remediation plans, if needed



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## Bottom-line, what should you consider and proceed with?

*\*Assuming start time is June 2016*

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Remove the lead service line to eliminate this known source of lead in water</li> </ul>	Summer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review the USEPA 3Ts for Reducing Lead in Drinking Water in Schools Guidelines</li> </ul>	Upon Receipt
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Begin the "Teaching" phase of the 3T by involving key school staff in this process</li> </ul>	Summer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete a plumbing profile within your school facilities to further understand the drinking and cooking outlets within your facilities and to develop a sampling plan. This is helpful as fixtures within your facilities may contain lead and will need to be addressed with a well-defined remediation plan if needed</li> </ul>	Summer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>When students return to school, sample each drinking and cooking outlet within the school</li> </ul>	August/September
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review and share results of testing with school community</li> </ul>	Shortly After Sampling/Results Reviewed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Follow-up testing, if needed</li> </ul>	Right after initial testing, if needed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement a remediation plan, if needed</li> </ul>	After initial testing or follow-up testing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communicate progress and changes to remediation plan with the school community when they occur</li> </ul>	After initial testing or follow-up testing, as changes occur with remediation plan



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