

SAFE DRINKING WATER – CHECKING FOR LEAD



The United States Navy is committed to protecting the health of their sailors, civilian staff, and 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) guidelines for testing and sampling of water outlets from which children may drink at childcare centers.

WHAT IS NAVAL BASE VENTURA COUNTY DOING?

- Naval Base Ventura County (NBVC) will test water from sinks, faucets, fountains, and hose bibs at all Navy childcare facilities in 2014.
- Test results will be made available at locations where testing was conducted as soon as possible.
- This is an ongoing program that will include yearly updates and complete retesting every five years.

WHAT IS LEAD?

- Lead is a common metal found throughout the environment in:
 - lead-based paint
 - air
 - soil
 - household dust
 - food
 - certain types of pottery, porcelain and pewter, and
 - water
- Lead can pose a significant risk to your health if too much of it enters your body.
- Lead builds up in the body over many years and can cause damage to the brain, red blood cells and kidneys.

WHAT ARE THE HEALTH RISKS OF LEAD EXPOSURE?

- The greatest risk is to young children and pregnant women.
- Lead amounts that are normally not harmful to adults can affect the normal growth and development of children.
- Infants who drink formula mixed with drinking water can receive up to 60% of their lead exposure from the drinking water.
- EPA estimates that drinking water can make up 20% or more of a person's total lead exposure.

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

- Even though drinking water is treated and may meet federal, state, local and overseas standards, a facility may still test positive for elevated lead levels at the outlet or spigot due to lead in plumbing materials.
- The most common cause is corrosion of materials containing lead in the water distribution system, such as plumbing pipes, solder, water coolers, and faucets.
- Many factors contribute to corrosion, including the acidity of the water, and when water stands in the plumbing system for prolonged periods of time.

HOW MUCH LEAD IN DRINKING WATER IS TOO MUCH?

- EPA set a guidance level of 20 part per billion (PPB) at childcare facilities to protect children who are exposed to lead in drinking water on a regular basis.
- One Part per Billion equals about 1 drop of water in an Olympic-size swimming pool—approx. 666,000 gallons.
- EPA recommends that childcare facilities collect first-draw samples from water fountains and outlets, because the highest concentrations of lead can be found when water remains in plumbing overnight.
- When sampling results show lead levels exceeding 20 ppb, those fountains and outlets are taken out of service until corrective action is complete.

WHAT IS CORRECTIVE ACTION?

- Corrective action refers to both short- and long-term steps taken to reduce the levels of lead in drinking water if test results indicate that there is a lead issue at a childcare facility.
- EPA's childcare facility sampling protocol was designed to identify specific fountains and faucets that require corrective action, such as water cooler replacement.

WHERE CAN I FIND MORE INFORMATION?

- NBVC Public Affairs Officer at (805) 989-9234 can help you find answers, or you can submit your questions using the online form at: <http://www.navyregionsouthwest.com/go/inquiry/4275>
- Use this Navy website for more details and information: www.navyregionsouthwest.com/go/doc/4275/2202261
- More information on the health effects of lead can be found on EPA's website at <http://www2.epa.gov/lead>