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## **SUEZ Water New Jersey Hackensack**

**PWSID# NJ0238001**

### **IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT LEAD IN YOUR DRINKING WATER**

#### **Introduction**

SUEZ found elevated levels of lead in drinking water in some homes/buildings. Lead can cause serious health problems, especially for pregnant women and young children. Please read this information closely to see what you can do to reduce lead in your drinking water.

Specifically, 108 samples were collected at residences served by SUEZ Hackensack between July 16, 2018 and December 12, 2018, and 15 of the results exceeded the Lead Action Level of 15 ppb.

#### **Health Effects of Lead**

Lead can cause serious health problems if too much enters your body from drinking water or other sources. It can cause damage to the brain and kidneys, and can interfere with the production of red blood cells that carry oxygen to all parts of your body. The greatest risk of lead exposure is to infants, young children and pregnant women. Scientists have linked the effects of lead on the brain with lowered IQ in children. Adults with kidney problems and high blood pressure can be affected by low levels of lead more than healthy adults. Lead is stored in the bones and can be released later in life. During pregnancy, a child receives lead from a mother's bones which may affect brain development.

#### **Sources of Lead**

Lead is a common metal found in the environment. Drinking water is one possible source of lead exposure. The main sources of lead exposure are lead-based paint and lead-contaminated dust or soil, and some plumbing materials. In addition, lead can be found in certain types of pottery, pewter, brass fixtures, cosmetics, imported spices and other food. Other sources include exposure in the workplace and exposure from certain hobbies, like shooting ranges.

Lead enters drinking water primarily as a result of the corrosion, or wearing away, of materials containing lead in the water distribution system and household plumbing. These materials include lead-based solder used to join copper pipe, brass and chrome-brass faucets, and in some cases, pipes made of lead that connect houses and buildings to water mains (service lines).

Brass faucets, fittings and valves, including those advertised as "lead-free", may contribute lead to drinking water.

The law currently allows end-use brass fixtures, such as faucets, with up to 0.25 percent lead to be labeled as “lead-free”. However, prior to January 4, 2014, “lead-free” allowed up to 8 percent lead content of the wetted surfaces of plumbing products including those labeled National Sanitation Foundation (NSF) certified. Consumers should be aware of their current fixtures and take appropriate precautions.

The EPA estimates that up to 20 percent of a person’s potential exposure to lead may come from drinking water. Infants who consume mostly formula mixed with lead-containing water may receive 40 to 60 percent of their exposure to lead from drinking water.

When water stands in lead pipes or plumbing systems containing lead for several hours or more, the lead may dissolve into your drinking water. This means the first water drawn from the tap in the morning, or later in the afternoon if the water has not been used all day, may contain elevated levels of lead.

### **Steps you can take to reduce exposure to lead in drinking water**

1. **Test your water for lead.** Customers can contact an independent laboratory to have their water tested for lead. The NJDEP maintains a list of certified laboratories. To access this list, please visit <https://www13.state.nj.us/DataMiner>. Once there, click **Search by Category** then select **Certified Laboratories** from the Report Category drop down box. Then click on the **Submit** button and under Certified Laboratories choose **Drinking Water Certified Lead Labs**.
2. **Run the water and flush out lead.** Let the water run from the tap before using it for drinking or cooking any time the water in the faucet has gone unused for more than six hours. The longer the water resides in plumbing the more lead it contains. Flushing the tap means running the cold water faucet for about 15 to 30 seconds. Although toilet flushing or showering flushes water through a portion of the plumbing system, you still need to flush the water in each faucet before using it for drinking or cooking. Flushing tap water is a simple and inexpensive measure you can take to protect your health. It usually uses less than one gallon of water. For those with lead service lines or until you determine if you are served by one, let the water run from the tap based on the length of the lead service line and the plumbing configuration in your home.
3. **Use cold water for cooking and preparing baby formula.** Do not cook with or drink water from the hot water tap. Hot water can dissolve lead more quickly than cold water. If you need hot water, draw the water from the cold tap and then heat it. Do not use water from the hot water tap to make baby formula.
4. **Do not boil water to remove lead.** Boiling water will not reduce lead.
5. **Remove and clean aerators/screens on plumbing fixtures.** Over time, particles and sediment can collect in the aerator screen usually found at the tip of indoor faucets. Regularly remove and clean aerators screens and remove any particles.
6. **Look for alternative sources or treatment of water.** You may want to consider purchasing bottled water or a water filter if there is lead in your home. Be sure the filter is approved to reduce lead or contact NSF International at 1-800-NSF-8010 or [www.nsf.org](http://www.nsf.org) for information on performance standards for water filters. Be sure to maintain and replace a filter device in accordance with the manufacturer’s recommendations.
7. **Proper and routine maintenance of water softeners.** It is very important that residents manage their water softeners appropriately. Not properly maintaining your water softener could have a negative impact on the corrosivity of the water in your home.

- 8. Get your child tested.** Contact your local health department or healthcare provider to find out how you can get tested for lead if you are concerned about lead exposure. Your family doctor or pediatrician can perform a blood test for lead and provide you with information about the health effects of lead.

### **What is being done?**

In order to address potential lead issues, SUEZ enhanced its corrosion control treatment – considered industry best practice -- in 2017 to reduce scale and lead and copper deposits. Since that time, the company has carefully monitored the levels of corrosion control and continues to evaluate the treatment and will make adjustments as necessary. SUEZ is also continuing to test homes throughout its system and to further optimize corrosion control within the system.

SUEZ has been replacing lead service lines in its service territory for a number of years and now as required under the Lead and Copper Rule, will upgrade its program to replace at least 7 percent of all its lead service lines per year. During lead service line replacement, we are required to offer to replace the property-owner's portion of the lead service line; however, we are not responsible for the cost. The portion of the service line that runs from our water mains to your property line is owned by the utility, including the pipe connecting the water main to the service line, which is often referred to as a gooseneck or a pigtail. The remaining portion that extends from your property line into your home or business belongs to the property owner. Property owners are encouraged to check their portion of the lines for lead and we are asking you to notify SUEZ at 1-800-422-5987 if a lead service line is identified so we can update our records.

SUEZ is also taking these steps:

- SUEZ has established a new water quality website – [www.SUEZWQ.com](http://www.SUEZWQ.com) -- to provide information about this exceedance.
- Customers who are/might be served by a utility-owned lead service line or their service line is connected to the water main by a lead gooseneck, based on SUEZ's records, can request a free test of the water from their lead service line or lead gooseneck (flushed sample). Customers should call or email SUEZ's customer service center at 800-422-5987 or [sueznjcustserv@suez-na.com](mailto:sueznjcustserv@suez-na.com).
- Following this sampling conducted by SUEZ, if the water result from the utility owned lead service line/lead gooseneck (flushed sample) is above the lead action level of 15 parts per billion (ppb), a one-time free water pitcher with a WQA-certified filter that removes lead will be provided to a customer.
- Customers who do not have a utility-owned lead service line or lead gooseneck, can visit [www.SUEZWQ.com](http://www.SUEZWQ.com) or call SUEZ's customer service center at 800-422-5987 for information on how to get their water tested for lead by a NJ certified laboratory at their own expense.
- Customers can find out if they may be served by a utility-owned lead line or if the utility-owned service line material is unknown, by checking their online account, visiting [www.SUEZWQ.com](http://www.SUEZWQ.com) or [www.mysuezwater.com/njwg](http://www.mysuezwater.com/njwg), or calling or emailing customer service center at 800-422-5987 and [SUEZnjcustserv@suez-na.com](mailto:SUEZnjcustserv@suez-na.com). SUEZ will not have information on whether or not the property-owner's portion is lead and whether or not a utility owned lead gooseneck is present. SUEZ customer service representatives are available to answer questions, including those about lead service lines and testing.

For more information about this facility's water supply and what is being done to reduce lead levels, please call us at 1-800-422-5987. Please also call this number to obtain a translated copy of the public education materials or to request assistance in the appropriate language.

**Por favor llamar 1-800-422-5987 para obtener una copia traducida de los materiales de educación pública**

**o para solicitar asistencia en español.**

For more information on reducing lead exposure around your home/building and the health effects of lead, visit the EPA's website at [www.epa.gov/lead](http://www.epa.gov/lead), call the National Lead Information Center at 1-800-424-LEAD or the Safe Drinking Water Act hotline at 1-800-426-4791 or contact your health care provider or visit New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's website at <https://www.state.nj.us/dep/watersupply/dwc-lead-consumer.html>.

This notice is being sent to the SUEZ Water New Jersey Hackensack, New Jersey Public Water Supply (NJPWS) Identification Number NJ0238001.

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