



## Maine Public Drinking Water Commission

December 2, 2016

Subject: Sampling for Lead in School Drinking Water

Dear Water Utility Colleagues,

The Maine Rural Water Association, Maine Water Utilities Association, and the Maine Public Drinking Water Commission have joined forces on a project to encourage all schools to voluntarily test their drinking water for the presence of lead. Elevated levels of lead in drinking water can cause permanent adverse health effects, especially in children. The State's Drinking Water Program, which oversees all public water systems in the State, is assisting us with technical and financial support for this project.

Our Associations represent Maine's drinking water community whose purpose is to provide safe and reliable drinking water each and every day. Water utilities (water districts, departments or water companies) provide high quality, safe water to Maine schools. In most cases, elevated lead levels are likely to originate from internal plumbing and fixtures within a school. Testing schools' water is an important first step to determine if elevated lead levels are present. If elevated lead levels are found, the next step is to eliminate or reduce lead sources. In some cases, adopting a daily morning routine of flushing the water at regularly used taps may prove an effective strategy for temporarily reducing lead levels within a drinking water system.

Current federal regulation does not require sampling for lead in schools that get their water from a water utility. As a result, the water quality inside these schools is largely unknown. Over the past year, some schools, water utilities and towns have voluntarily collected and tested water samples from selected schools, but many schools, about 350, have not yet been tested for lead.

To close this testing gap, we invite you to join us in this important project. Your participation is entirely voluntary. The incentives we are offering below, however, will only be available until April 1, 2017.

**1. Contact the Schools you serve:** We have created a list of water utilities and the corresponding schools they serve including the school contact information. This list can be found on the State Drinking Water Program's Lead in Drinking Water webpage at [www.medwp.com](http://www.medwp.com).

**2. Letter from Utilities to Schools:** We have provided a draft letter that you may use to contact schools to offer assistance. This letter can be found on the State Drinking Water Program's Lead in Drinking Water webpage at [www.medwp.com](http://www.medwp.com). If elevated lead levels are found in a school, that school will be responsible for correcting any problems and conducting additional sampling, if necessary. Water utilities are not responsible for planning or conducting any additional sampling in the schools or implementing any necessary remedial work, such as replacing faucets or fountains.

**3. Sample Collection Guidance:** Sampling collection and post-sampling guidance for utilities and schools is available at the State Drinking Water Program's Lead in Drinking Water webpage at [www.medwp.com](http://www.medwp.com). It is important that samples are carefully collected according to the protocols described in the guidance to ensure reliable test results. After samples are collected and tested, results will be sent only to schools.

**4. Free Testing and Shipping for up to 10 Samples per School:** The State's Drinking Water Program will pay for the costs to analyze up to 10 lead samples collected from each school. The sampling kits will include postage paid labels to cover the costs of shipping the kits to the laboratory for analysis. None of the testing costs for the first 10 samples will be passed

onto utilities or schools. Any additional testing will need to be paid by schools. In some cases, additional sampling may be needed and schools should be prepared for this.

5. Order up to 10 Test Kits: Water utilities (and schools) can access this free testing by contacting the State's Health and Environmental Testing Laboratory at (207) 287-1716 and ordering up to 10 sample kits per school. Additional kits can be ordered at a cost of \$20 per sample kit.

6. Public Educational Materials: We have provided frequently asked questions that may help you in communications with school officials on the lead rule, sampling process and results interpretation. You may download these materials from the State Drinking Water Program's Lead in Drinking Water webpage at [www.medwp.com](http://www.medwp.com).


We encourage you to reach out to the schools you serve. You as drinking water professionals and school officials likely do not have your expertise and knowledge about sampling for lead. Any assistance you could provide will help to protect children's health. We appreciate that you will be going beyond what is required of you by federal or State laws and rules.

Please contact any, or all of us should you have any concerns or questions about this project.

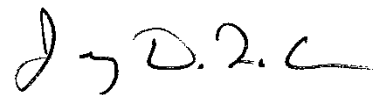
Sincerely,



Kirsten Hebert, Executive Director  
Maine Rural Water Association  
[kirstenh@mainerwa.org](mailto:kirstenh@mainerwa.org)



Bruce Berger, Executive Director  
Maine Water Utilities Association  
[bberger@mwua.org](mailto:bberger@mwua.org)



Jeffrey LaCasse, Chairman  
Maine Public Drinking Water  
Commission  
[JLaCasse@KennebecWater.org](mailto:JLaCasse@KennebecWater.org)