

filters. Be sure to maintain and replace a filter device in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions to protect water quality.

5. Test your water for lead. Call us at 814-629-5631 x 1114 to find out how to get your water tested for lead.



6. Get your child's blood tested. Contact your local health department or healthcare provider to find out how you can get your child tested for lead, if you are concerned about exposure.

7. Identify and replace plumbing fixtures containing lead. New 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 8% lead to be labeled as "lead-free."

WHAT HAPPENED? WHAT IS BEING DONE?

Every three years the North Star School District is required to test its drinking water for Lead and Copper Levels. The October 2013 test indicated that certain taps in the building contained higher than allowable levels of lead.

The District is developing a corrosion control treatment feasibility study with an environmental engineering firm. This study will determine how best to treat our water to lower the amount of lead in the water coming from those taps.

Standard operating procedures have been put in place, at the advice of the PA DEP, where all water faucets that will be used for drinking or cooking will be run for three minutes each morning. This will eliminate water from the system that may have increased levels of contaminate due to prolonged exposure to the fixtures.

Lead in Drinking Water

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Call us at 814-629-5631 x1114 or visit our Web site at www.nscougars.com. For more information on reducing lead exposure around your home/building and the health effects of lead, visit EPA's Website at www.epa.gov/lead, or contact your health care provider.



The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the **North Star East Middle School** are concerned about lead in your drinking water. Although most homes have very low levels of lead in their drinking water, some homes in the community have lead levels above the EPA action level of 15 parts per billion (ppb), or 0.015 milligrams of lead per liter of water (mg/L). Under Federal law we are required to have a program in place to minimize lead in your drinking water by **April 2015**.

This program includes:

1. Corrosion control treatment (treating the water to make it less likely that lead will dissolve into the water);
2. Source water treatment (removing any lead that is in the water at the time it leaves our treatment facility); and
3. A public education program.

We are also required to replace the portion of each lead service line that we own if the line contributes lead concentrations of more than 15 ppb after we have completed the comprehensive treatment program. If you have any questions about how we are carrying out the requirements of the lead regulation please give us a call at

814-629-5631 x 1114

This brochure also explains the simple steps you can take to protect yourself by reducing your exposure to lead in drinking water.

Important Information about Lead in Your

Drinking Water: The North Star Middle

School found elevated levels of lead in drinking water in its building. 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.

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 it can be released later in life. During pregnancy, the child receives lead from the 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, food, and cosmetics. Other sources include exposure in the work place and exposure from certain hobbies (lead can be carried on clothing or shoes). Lead is found in some toys, some playground equipment, and some children's metal jewelry.

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 8 percent lead to be labeled as "lead-free."

When water is in contact with pipes and plumbing containing lead for several hours, the lead may enter drinking water. Homes built before 1988 are more likely to have lead pipes or lead solder.

EPA estimates that 10 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 can receive 40 to 60 percent of their exposure to lead from drinking water.

Don't forget about other sources of lead such as lead paint, lead dust, and lead in soil. Wash your children's hands and toys often as they can come into contact with dirt and dust containing lead.

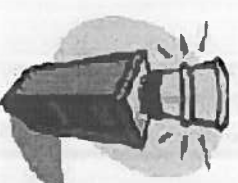
STEPS YOU CAN TAKE TO REDUCE YOUR EXPOSURE TO LEAD IN YOUR WATER

1. **Run your water to flush out lead.** Run water for 15-30 seconds to flush lead from interior plumbing or until it becomes cold or reaches a steady temperature before using it for drinking or cooking, if it hasn't been used for several hours.

2. **Use cold water for cooking and preparing baby formula.** Do not cook with or drink water from the hot water tap; lead dissolves more easily into hot water. Do not use water from the hot water tap to make baby formula.

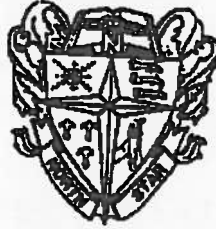
3. **Do not boil water to remove lead.** Boiling water will not reduce lead.

4. **Look for alternative sources or treatment of water.** You may want to consider purchasing bottled water or a water filter. Read the package to be sure the filter is approved to reduce lead or contact NSF International at 800-NSF-8010 or www.nsf.org for information on performance standards for water



North Star School District
1200 Morris Avenue
Boswell, Pennsylvania 15531-1231
Phone (814) 629-5631 Fax (814) 629-6181
E-mail: nsadm@nscougars.com

Dr. Shawn L. Kovac
Superintendent
Mr. Eddie L. Denner, PRSBA
Business Manager
Mrs. Diana L. Duvall
Board & Superintendent's Secretary



Mr. Louis M. Lepley
High School Principal
Mr. Thaddeus A. Kiesnowski
Middle School Principal
Mrs. Renee L. Lepley
Central Elementary School Principal

December 3, 2013

Dear Parents and Guardians:

Attached to this cover letter is a brochure concerning lead in drinking water. This brochure is being sent to you as a mandate from the Pennsylvania Dept. of Environmental Protection.

Every three years, the school district is required to have the water tested at the Middle School for lead and copper. This test is required because we utilize a well at the Middle School for our drinking water. The water that is tested must sit in the pipes and plumbing fixtures for a minimum of six hours. We then must capture the water that first comes out of the faucet to test. Our tests for lead and copper conducted in October came back indicating elevated levels of lead in SOME of the areas tested. Enough of the areas tested came back with elevated readings that the school district was mandated by PA DEP to send out the brochure attached to this letter.

The initial testing did not include any water fountains or potable water stations. Actually, the testing sites were classroom and bathroom faucets where students and/or staff would not normally be obtaining their drinking water.

Since that initial report, I had all the water fountains and the kitchen tested for lead levels. We conducted two tests. We had the extended test where the water was held in the pipes and fixtures for six hours, and we also conducted the test after the water was let run for a period of time. ALL tests for the water fountains and kitchen area came back with lead levels well within the acceptable limits of 15 parts per billion (ppb). I have posted the actual results on the District website.

I am sure your next questions are, What does this mean for my child? What are you doing to ensure the safety of my child? What is the problem and how are you going to fix it? I will do my best to answer those questions.

What does this mean for my child?

Our testing, conducted by a certified lab and reported to PA DEP, indicates that our sources of drinking water such as fountains and the kitchen sink DO NOT have elevated levels of lead in the water. Additional tests have shown that our "Raw Water", water that comes straight from the well, does not have elevated levels of lead. Therefore, students can continue to drink

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the water as they normally would. I have instructed the custodians to flush the lines each morning before school begins. This will remove any water that has been in the pipes overnight. Although, according to our testing, this is not necessary, we are doing so out of an abundance of caution until we can identify why some of our faucets are indicating an elevated lead level.

What are you doing to ensure the safety of my child?

After the PA Dept. of Environmental Protection informed the District of the testing results, we immediately began testing all the areas where students and staff could possibly access drinking water. We are pleased to report that ALL of these areas came back well within the 15 ppb limit set forth by the Department of Environmental Protection.

However, out of an abundance of caution, I have instructed our building and grounds crews to flush the pipes of all standing water each morning at the middle school. Any water that would have been sitting in the pipes overnight will have been drained before the students arrive. Tests have indicated that this reduces the lead levels to less than 1 ppb which is significantly lower than the allowed 15 ppb.

What is the problem and how are you going to fix it?

The water at the Middle School goes through a series of treatments to soften the water before it is distributed throughout the building. During that process the pH level is lowered. This makes the water somewhat more corrosive. Therefore, as the water sits in some of the less used plumbing fixtures, it can cause lead and copper to leach into it from older plumbing fixtures. Again, this problem was NOT found in our drinking fountains or kitchen sink.

The District has hired an engineering firm to conduct a Corrosion Control Feasibility Study. This study will determine why we have elevated levels of lead in certain areas of the building. The Corrosion Control Study will also recommend steps the District needs to undertake to fix this issue. The district will then take such steps.

Your last question may be, then what areas of the Middle School did come back indicating higher than expected lead levels? Areas that see occasional use of the water system, such as the library workroom and the lab faucets in science rooms 212 and 304, came back higher than the 15 ppb level. Although concerning, these areas were not areas where students would normally be drinking the water. They and other similar areas will be marked to clearly indicate that the water should not be utilized for drinking at this time.

Please be assured that we are not taking this matter lightly nor are we leaving any stone unturned. The district is acting quickly to identify the problem in order to get it fixed. We have conducted many more tests than required by PA DEP to ensure that the water your children are drinking is safe. Please check our website for additional information. We will keep you informed as we progress through each step in this process.

Sincerely,


Dr. Shawn Kovac,
Superintendent