



# CITY OF ADAK, ALASKA

## ADAK MUNICIPAL UTILITIES

PWS: AK2260595

Dear Adak Municipal Utility Customer,

In 2013 we conducted a Lead/Copper testing program of the water distribution system. Due to multiple factors, we performed a follow-up test in 2014 sampling other locations throughout the system not previously sampled. We found that two locations not previously sampled exceeded EPA levels of lead. We provided public notice to the affected customers at the time we received the results however the City of Adak is complying with EPA federal guidelines require quarterly public notice in your utility bill and annual public education such as this one to be distributed.

As you may be aware, the City, with the assistance of ADEC and the USDA will be performing significant construction to the water system this summer. Part of this work is disconnecting major sections of the system that have not been used in over a decade and/or are in areas that are not habitable. By having stranded water in our system it can affect the water quality. Once we have downsized the system the City will conduct new testing to better understand the quality of water in the active system. This will be done in part to make sure improvements and solutions are implemented without causing unnecessary expense to you the customer while also ensuring problems are corrected. Please be assured that the City is doing everything it can to make sure that the water system is safe and in compliance with all Federal and State regulations. We recommend you read the following information and contact us with any questions you may have.

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

The following explains the health effects of lead and simple steps you can take to protect yourself by reducing your exposure to lead in drinking water. The United States Protection Agency (EPA), ADEC Drinking Water Program and the City are concerned about lead in your drinking water. As recently as December 2014, testing 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.

#### **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 throughout the environment in lead - based paint, air, soil, household dust, food, certain types of pottery porcelain and pewter. Drinking water is also a possible source of lead exposure. Most sources of drinking water have no lead or very low levels of lead. Most lead gets into drinking water after the water leaves the local well or treatment plant and comes into contact with plumbing materials containing lead. These include lead pipes, lead solder, as well as faucets, valves, and other components made of brass

#### **HOW LEAD ENTERS OUR WATER**

Unlike most drinking water contaminants, lead is unusual in that it seldom occurs naturally in water supplies like rivers and lakes. 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-plated brass faucets, and in some cases, pipes made of lead that connect your house to the water main (service lines). In 1986, Congress banned the use of lead solder containing greater than 0.2% lead, and restricted the lead content of faucets, pipes and other plumbing materials to 8.0%. 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 after returning from work or school, may contain higher levels of lead. Flushing tap water is a simple and inexpensive measure you can take to reduce your exposure.

#### **WHAT WE ARE DOING**

Although some locations have low levels of lead in their drinking water, some taps within the distribution system have lead levels above the EPA action level of 0.015 mg/L for Pb based on 90th percentile level of tap water samples. An action level exceedance is not a violation but can trigger other requirements that include water quality parameter (WQP) monitoring, corrosion control treatment (CCT), source water monitoring/treatment, public education, and lead service line replacement (LSLR) if applicable. Under Federal law we are required to have a program in place to minimize lead in your drinking water. This program includes:

1. We will restart sampling our lead/copper testing, after the improvements to the water system are complete, so we can closely monitor the lead levels in our water system. Your continued participation and support in our monitoring program is very important.

2. Corrosion control treatment evaluation for inclusion in our new water treatment plant (treating the water to make it less likely that lead will dissolve into the water)
3. A public education and public notice program.

### **STEPS TO REDUCE EXPOSURE TO LEAD IN DRINKING WATER**

Lead in drinking water is primarily from materials and components associated with service lines and home plumbing. The City of Adak is responsible for providing high quality drinking water, but cannot control the variety of materials used in plumbing components. Therefore, when your water has been sitting for several hours, you can minimize the potential for lead exposure by flushing your tap for 30 seconds to 2 minutes before using water for drinking or cooking.

Lead levels in some homes or buildings can be higher than others. Testing the water is essential because you cannot see, taste, or smell lead in drinking water. If you are concerned about lead in your drinking water, you may want to have your water tested. For more information on getting your water tested for lead, please call the City Manager's office at 907-592-4500. If a water test indicates that the drinking water drawn from a tap in your home contains lead above 0.015 mg/L or if you suspect that your plumbing system components may contain lead, then you should take the following precautions:

#### **1. FLUSH YOUR SYSTEM.**

Flushing tap water is a simple and inexpensive measure you can take to protect your family's health. The longer water resides in your home's plumbing, the more lead it may contain. Flushing usually uses less than one or two gallons of water. When your water has been sitting for several hours, you can minimize the potential for lead exposure by flushing your tap for 30 seconds to 2 minutes before using water for drinking or cooking.

Although toilet flushing or showering flushes water through a portion of your home's plumbing system, you still need to flush the water in each faucet before using it for drinking or cooking. To conserve water, fill a couple of bottles for drinking water after flushing the tap, and whenever possible use the first flush water to wash dishes or water plants.

#### **2. USE ONLY COLD WATER FOR COOKING AND DRINKING.**

Try not to cook with, or drink water from the hot water tap. Hot water can dissolve more lead more quickly than cold water. If you need hot water, draw water from the cold tap and heat it on the stove.

#### **3. REMOVE LOOSE SOLDER AND DEBRIS FROM PLUMBING MATERIALS.**

Remove loose solder and debris from the plumbing materials installed in newly constructed homes, or homes in which the plumbing has recently been replaced. To do this, remove the faucet strainers from all taps and run the water from 3-5 minutes. Thereafter, periodically remove the strainers and flush out any debris that has accumulated over time.

#### **4. IDENTIFY AND REPLACE LEAD SOLDER.**

If your copper pipes are joined with lead solder replace the lead solder with lead-free solder. Lead solder looks dull gray, and when scratched with a key looks shiny.

#### **5. HAVE AN ELECTRICIAN CHECK YOUR WIRING.**

If grounding wires from the electrical system are attached to your pipes, corrosion may be greater. Check with a licensed electrician or your local electrical code to determine if your wiring can be grounded elsewhere. DO NOT attempt to change the wiring yourself because improper grounding can cause electrical shock and fire hazards

#### **IF LEAD LEVEL PERSISTS**

*The steps described above will reduce the lead concentrations in your drinking water. However, if a water test indicates that the drinking water coming from your tap contains lead concentrations in excess of 0.015 mg/L after flushing, then you may want to take the following additional measures:*

#### **6. PURCHASE OR LEASE A HOME TREATMENT DEVICE.**

Home treatment devices are limited in that each unit treats only the water that flows from the faucet to which it is connected, and all of the devices require periodic maintenance and replacement. Devices such as reverse osmosis systems or distillers can effectively remove lead from your drinking water. Some activated carbon filters may reduce lead levels at the tap. However, all lead reduction claims should be investigated. Be sure to check the actual performance of a specific treatment device before and after installing the unit.

#### **7. PURCHASE BOTTLED WATER FOR DRINKING AND COOKING.**

### **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

You can consult a variety of sources for additional information: Your family doctor or pediatrician can provide you with information about the health effects of lead and how to get your child's blood tested. The Adak Medical Clinic may be able to provide this testing, if interested contact them directly. DEC Drinking Water 1-800-770-2137 can provide you with information about your water supply, and a list of local laboratories certified by the State for testing water quality. For more information on lead call National Lead Information Center at 1-800-424-LEAD or the EPA Safe Drinking Water Hotline at 1(800) 426-4791; or visit the EPA website on lead at [www.epa.gov/lead](http://www.epa.gov/lead).