

August 31, 2018

**FREQUENTLY
ASKED QUESTIONS
CONCERNING WATER TESTING**

Why Test School Drinking Water for Lead?

High levels of lead in drinking water can cause health problems. Lead is most dangerous for pregnant women, infants and children under six years of age. Exposure to high levels of lead during pregnancy contributes to low birth weight and developmental delays in infants. In young children, lead exposure can lower IQ levels, affect hearing, reduce attention span, and hurt school performance. At very high levels, lead can even cause brain damage. To protect public health, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) suggests that schools and daycare facilities test their drinking water for lead. If lead is found at any water outlet at levels above 15 parts per billion (ppb), EPA recommends taking action to reduce the lead.

Which of the buildings were effected? How many sinks used as drinking water sources were taken out of service? How many fountains were taken out of service?

Tested Buildings	Number of effected sinks	Number of effected fountains
Columbia Elementary	2	8
Franklin Elementary	4	7
Lafayette Elementary	12	4
Hammond High	1	0
Miller Facility	6	21
Gavit Middle/High	0	0
Scott Middle School	1	4
Lincoln Elementary	1	0
Morton High School	1	2
Area Career Center	0	3
Clark Middle/High	0	3

In all the above buildings, all drinking water sources (sinks and water fountains) were tested.

Which of the buildings were not tested and why?

The following schools were not tested:

Administration Center
Warehouse
Transportation Center
Eggers Middle School (remodeled under current standards)
Edison Elementary School
Harding Elementary School
Hess Elementary School
Irving Elementary School
Jefferson Elementary School
Kenwood Elementary School (remodeled under current standards)
Maywood Elementary School
Morton Elementary School
O'Bannon Elementary School
Wallace Elementary School

These buildings were not tested because they were built after 1986 or are not used for instructional purposes. In 1986, building codes changed to prohibit the use of lead-containing components in water systems intended for human consumption. We will include non-instruction buildings in the next water testing.

What is School City of Hammond doing?

1. While exceeding the action level does not require provision of alternative drinking water sources, beginning August 28, 2018 we are providing water from safe sources.
2. We have removed from service all taps with lead levels over the action level.
3. We are implementing a public information process that will include distribution of outreach material to all students, parents, teachers, staff and local officials.
4. We are working with our consultant in development of a sampling plan to conduct testing at outlets (faucets, water fountains, etc.) where students and staff get water for drinking, beverage preparation and cooking.
5. We are developing a flushing and water usage plan to safeguard against lead exposure from drinking water in the school at outlets that are found to be above the action level for lead. This will include the daily flushing of water fountains and/or faucets at sinks and the limitation of water consumption to cold-water faucets for food and beverage preparation.
6. We will undertake efforts to determine the cause of this lead action level exceedance and investigate if there is a corrosion issue. We will develop and put into place a corrective action plan as quickly as possible following additional testing and consultation.
7. Through periodic reports, we will keep you informed as to the progress of our efforts. These reports will serve to let you know what has been done and what is being done to safeguard against lead exposure from drinking water at our school(s).
8. We will replace the faucets and drinking water fountains that exceeded the lead action level.

Should we be concerned about the City's drinking water?

The School City of Hammond has verified with the City of Hammond that the water supply for residents, schools and businesses is safe. The water purification plant and the entire circulatory system are routinely tested, both internally and by the Indiana Department of Environmental Management, and shows no elevated levels of lead or other harmful chemicals.

Should we be concerned about our water in our homes?

Buildings built before 1986 often used various components in the construction of water systems and piping that contained lead. For that reason, if you live in a home that is older than 1986, you may decide to have your personal water systems tested. (After 1986, building codes were changed prohibiting use of lead-containing components in water systems intended for human consumption.)

School City of Hammond has indicated that it will conduct a second round of water testing. When will that second round of water testing be completed?

The School City of Hammond's recent test included two water sample draws for testing. The results from the first samples were received on August 28. The second samples from the recent draw are currently being analyzed with the results anticipated to be received by the School City of Hammond's consultant within the next week. Upon receipt, our consultant will provide recommendations with regards to additional action plans and testing.

There are still operating water fountains in my child's school, do I need to be concerned?

There were several water fountains that were not affected in many schools. Because they were not affected, they have not been taken out of service. The water from these fountains is safe to drink.

If I have concerns about whether my child has been exposed to high levels of lead, what resources are available for lead testing?

If there was a need for testing children, the Indiana Department of Environment Management would authorize the Lake County Health Department to do testing for students. IDEM is not recommending testing for children at this time.

Parents can opt to take their children to Lake County Health Department (located in Crown Point) or East Chicago Health Department. Parents may also request private testing from their child's physician.

Where can I get more information about my child's health or about making sure the water in my home is safe?

The Lead & Healthy Homes is a division of the Indiana State Department of Health.

<https://www.in.gov/isdh/26550.htm> They have more information about testing for children under the age of 7. Risk factors that may help you determine if testing is warranted can be found on the Lead & Healthy Homes website here: <https://www.in.gov/isdh/27286.htm>

Lead & Healthy Homes Division can also provide more information about concerns with level of lead in older homes.

Finally, the Indiana State Department of Health has a lead hotline: 1-800-382-9480