

PRESS RELEASE DRINKING WATER NOTICE IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT LEAD IN DRINKING WATER FROM REND LAKE INTERCITY WATER SYSTEM

Recent drinking water quality monitoring conducted by Rend Lake Intercity Water System, State Water system ID# IL0555100, has found elevated levels of lead in drinking water in some of the homes that are direct customers of the system. Each city and water district conducts their own water quality sampling and reporting. However proactive public education for all regional, State, and U.S. water users is still important. Although the primary sources of lead exposure are lead-based paint and lead contaminated dust or soil, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency estimates that 10 to 20 percent of a person's potential exposure to lead may come from drinking water.

The Rend Lake Intercity Water System is concerned about the health of its customers because lead can cause serious health problems if too much enters your body from drinking water or other sources, especially for pregnant women and children 6 years and younger. 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. 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.

During the most recent monitoring cycle, two sample points with known lead plumbing components were found to contain elevated levels of lead even though the source water from the lake did not contain any lead. These levels occurred in the first flush of water that was in contact with the home plumbing components and unused for an extended period of time between 2 and 4 days. Follow up sampling indicated that the levels dropped after the first flush of water and that concentrations remained below the lead action level when the water from the faucets were routinely used. All cities, water districts, and schools routinely monitor for lead. Although thousands of samples have been taken to monitor water quality in the past and will continue to be taken in the future, public education and the removal of lead plumbing components in homes is always desirable. In response to the recent findings, the Rend Lake Intercity Water System is conducting public education about lead plumbing components in homes, health impacts associated with lead, and simple actions in your home that can minimize exposure from lead in plumbing components.

There are 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.**
- 3. Do not boil water to remove lead.** Boiling water will not reduce lead.
- 4. Look for alternative drinking water sources or treatment of water.** You may want to consider purchasing bottled water or a water filter.

5. Test your water for lead. Call us at the number listed below to find out how you can test your water 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.

There are several actions that Rend Lake Intercity Water System is taking to address this lead in drinking water concern. These actions include conducting public education about lead plumbing components in homes, health impacts associated with lead, and simple actions in your home that can minimize exposure from lead in plumbing components. In addition to public education efforts, the Rend Lake Intercity Water System is increasing monitoring in homes known to contain lead plumbing components and is adjusting pH and hardness parameters when warranted by test results for further improvement of corrosion protection.

Call Rend Lake Intercity Water System at 618-439-4394 or visit our Web site at rendlake.org to find out how to get your water tested for lead or for more information on steps Rend Lake Intercity Water System is taking to address the lead action level exceedance. For more information on reducing lead exposure around your home/building and the health effects of lead, visit EPA's Web site at www.epa.gov/lead or contact your health care provider.