

09.07-06/09/88-0221

Public notice to all Base water system customers

The United States Congress amended the Safe Drinking Water Act in 1986 (Public Law 99-339). One requirement of this act is that all people using a public water system should be notified of the potential for exposure to Lead through the water distribution system and the plumbing in individual homes. All public water systems are required to make this notification even if there is no evidence of lead contamination and the drinking water complies with standards established by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

What are the health effects of lead?

The EPA sets drinking water standards and has determined that lead is a health concern at certain levels of exposure. There is currently a standard of 0.050 parts per million (ppm). Based on new health information, EPA is likely to lower this standard significantly.

Part of the purpose of this notice is to inform you of the potential adverse health effects of lead. This is being done even though your water may not be in violation of the current standard.

The EPA and others are concerned about lead in drinking water. Too much lead in the human body can cause serious damage to the brain, kidneys, nervous system, and red blood cells. The greatest risk, even with short-term exposure, is to young children and pregnant women.

What can I do about lead?

You can take two immediate steps.

The first step is to refrain from consuming water that has been in contact with your home's plumbing for more than six hours, such as overnight or during your work day. Before using water for drinking or cooking, 'flush' the cold water faucet by allowing the water to run until you can feel that the water has become as cold as it will get. You must do this for each drinking water faucet (taking a shower will not flush your kitchen tap). Buildings built prior to about 1930 may have service connectors made of lead. Letting the water run for an extra 15 seconds after it cools should also flush this service connector. Flushing is important because the longer water is exposed to lead pipes or lead solder, the greater the possible lead contamination. The water that comes out after flushing will not have been in extended contact with lead pipes or solder.

The second step is to never cook with or consume water from the hot-water tap. Hot water dissolves

lead more quickly than cold water, so do not use water taken from the hot tap for cooking or drinking and especially not for making baby formula. If you need hot water, draw water from the cold tap and heat it on the stove. Use only thoroughly flushed water from the cold tap for any consumption.

What is Camp Lejeune doing about lead?

Camp Lejeune is taking several measures to reduce lead concentrations in the Camp Lejeune drinking water. Camp Lejeune monitors lead concentrations and other possible contaminants at all six of Camp Lejeune's plant distribution points. The last required testing disclosed lead concentrations at 0.005 ppm, well below the current EPA standard. In fact, EPA has proposed a lower standard for lead, 0.020 ppm, and Camp Lejeune's limits would be well below this proposed stricter standard. Camp Lejeune is currently negotiating a contract for a private, North Carolina and EPA qualified laboratory to conduct lead testing in 1988. Camp Lejeune is also implementing the recent changes in the Safe Drinking Water Act. These changes require the use of 'lead-free' pipe, solder and flux in the installation or repair of plumbing connected to a public water system. Camp Lejeune will only utilize 'lead-free' pipe, solder, and flux in the future and will contractually require private contractors to utilize the same 'lead-free' materials.

Should I seek alternative sources of drinking water if I work or live aboard Camp Lejeune?

No. Camp Lejeune's water is quite safe to drink by all. As explained earlier, the lead concentrations at Camp Lejeune are well below the existing EPA standards, and well below the EPA's much stricter proposed standard. Testing of the drinking water for other contaminants is conducted on a regularly scheduled basis by the Base Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs Division (NREAD). The base NREAD laboratory is state certified for such water monitoring should be taken wherever you drink water, whether on- or off-base.

If you desire further information regarding your water supply, please contact the Assistant Chief of Staff, Facilities at 451-3034 or 3035 (on-base) or the EPA (on- or off-base) at 1-800-426-4791 or order the pamphlet Lead and Your Drinking Water from the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency, Washington, D. C. 20460.