



City of South Haven

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Testing for Lead and Copper in Our Community

Background:

Recent news from around the country and close to home in Flint, MI have justifiably raised concern regarding the presence of lead in the water coming from the faucets in our homes, schools, and places of work. The most recent evidence shows us that elevated levels of lead in public drinking water systems are likely a result of the combination of several factors. These conditions may include different source waters, different treatment techniques, different finished water chemistry, distribution system materials, and in-home plumbing materials. In South Haven, it is important to note that while we brought a new water filtration plant online in 2011, our source water, treatment process, and finished water chemistry have remained unchanged.

The Lead and Copper Rule (LCR):

In 1991, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency published the Lead and Copper Rule pursuant to the Safe Drinking Water Act. The rule was intended to protect public health by minimizing the amount of lead (Pb) and copper (Cu) in drinking water, primarily by reducing water corrosivity. It was understood at this time that the Pb and Cu entering drinking water systems came primarily from the corrosion of Pb and Cu containing plumbing materials.

Lead and Copper Testing in the South Haven Water System:

The South Haven public drinking water system, serving South Haven, parts of Covert, Casco, and South Haven Township, has been proudly and responsibly sampling for lead and copper at our customer taps since the LCR came into effect. Before the first sample was drawn, a sampling plan was developed in conjunction with State and Federal regulators intended to target areas of the highest potential concern. Factors considered were age of the homes sampled, plumbing materials, and the presence of lead service lines. It is of great importance to note that as of the 1994 LCR Sampling Plan, **there are no known lead service lines in the entirety of the South Haven System.** Currently our system collects and analyzes 20 samples, every 3 years. Before each sampling period, our entire sample plan must be reviewed, updated, and approved by the State. Our monitoring frequency is determined by historic results and our treatment strategy.

Understanding our Results:

Unlike other regulated contaminants in drinking water, a Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) for Pb and Cu is not established in the Lead and Copper Rule. However, an Action Level (AL) was developed that directs a system to make changes to treatment should there be an exceedance. Currently, the AL for lead is 15 parts per billion (ppb), the AL for copper is 1300 parts per billion (ppb). Historically our water system has produced results well below the AL's for both lead and copper. Over the past two decades our systems' reportable **lead results have ranged from 0 (zero) to 3 ppb (AL 15ppb).** For the same period, **copper has ranged from 0 (zero) to 142 ppb (AL 1300 ppb).** No additional action or treatment improvements have been deemed necessary by State or Federal regulators at this time.

More Information on Lead and Copper/In-Home Testing:

Additional Information about lead and copper in drinking water can be found on the Environmental Protection Agency website at the following link: <http://www.epa.gov/dwreginfo/lead-and-copper-rule>

Or at the Michigan section of the American Water Works Association at: <http://www.mi-water.org/?page=WhatsNews>

For additional information about health hazards associated with lead and copper, or to get information about in-home testing, please contact your local health departments at the numbers listed below.

Van Buren and Cass District Health Department: (269) 621-3143
Allegan County Health Department: (269) 673-5411