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IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT LEAD IN YOUR DRINKING WATER

Contact us at 800-422-5987 to obtain a translated copy of the public education materials or to request assistance in the appropriate language.

Llamenos al 800-422-5987 para obtener una copia traducida de los materiales de educación pública, o para pedir asistencia en el idioma apropiado.

SUEZ Water New Jersey Hackensack (SUEZ) found elevated levels of lead in drinking water in some homes/buildings in Bergen and Hudson counties. 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.

This notice is being distributed to you and all customers of SUEZ as a regulatory requirement. Under the Code of Federal Regulations for the Control of Lead and Copper, 40 CFR Part 141 Subpart I, SUEZ is required to routinely sample for lead and copper at a minimum number of locations based on the population served.

The 90th percentile value for our water system is greater than the lead action level of 15 parts per billion (ppb). The action level is the concentration of a contaminant which, if exceeded, triggers treatment or other requirements which a water system must follow. This means SUEZ must ensure that water results from the locations sampled do not exceed this level in at least 90 percent of the sites sampled (90th percentile result).

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.

In other words, it is the fetus that is at risk because developing fetuses receive lead from the mother's bones. Children and fetuses absorb more lead into their bodies than adults and are more susceptible to its effects on brain development; however, most children with elevated blood lead levels do not exhibit any symptoms, but effects may appear later in life.

Sources of Lead

Lead is a common metal found in the environment. Drinking water is one possible source of lead exposure. The main sources of lead exposure are lead-based paint and lead-contaminated dust or soil. In addition, lead can be found in certain types of pottery, pewter, brass fixtures, cosmetics, imported spices and other food. Other sources

include exposure in the work place and exposure from certain hobbies like shooting ranges and fishing (lead can be carried on clothing or shoes). Lead is found in some toys, some playground equipment, and some children's metal jewelry. *Tip: Wash your children's hands and toys often as they can come into contact with dirt and dust containing lead.*

Lead is unusual among drinking water contaminants 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 pipes, brass and chrome-brass faucets, and in some cases, pipes made of, or lined with lead.

When water remains in contact with lead pipes or plumbing materials containing lead over time, 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 if the water has not been used all day, may contain elevated levels of lead.

- Homes and buildings in New Jersey built before 1988 are more likely to have lead pipes and/or lead solder.
- Service lines are the individual pipes that run from the water main in the street to a home or building and consist of two portions. The first portion is the section of the service line from the water main to the curb stop and the second portion is the section from the curb stop to the home. Ownership of the service line varies by water system, but for SUEZ, the utility owns the portion from the main to the curb while the property owner is responsible for the section from the curb to the building.

Brass faucets, fittings, and valves, including those advertised as "lead-free" may also contribute lead to drinking water. The law currently allows end-use brass fixtures, such as faucets, that contain a maximum of 0.25 percent lead to be labeled as "lead free". However, prior to January 4, 2014, "lead free" allowed up to 8 percent lead content of the wetted surfaces of plumbing products including those labeled National Sanitation Foundation (NSF) certified. Consumers should be aware of their current fixtures and take appropriate precautions.

EPA estimates that 10 to 20 percent of a person's potential exposure to lead may come from drinking water. Infants who consume mostly formula mixed with lead-containing water may receive 40 to 60 percent of their exposure to lead from drinking water When there are elevated levels of lead in your water, drinking water is likely to be a more important source of exposure.

Steps You Can Take to Reduce Exposure to Lead in Drinking Water

1. Determine if you have a lead service line or interior lead plumbing or solder. Property owners are encouraged to check their portion of the service lines and we are asking you to contact us at 800-422-5987 if a lead service line is identified so we can update our records. If your home/building was constructed prior to 1988, it is also important to determine if interior lead solder or lead pipes are present. You can check yourself, hire a licensed plumber, or check with your landlord.

2. Replace plumbing fixtures and service lines containing lead. If there is a lead service line, replace it in full, from main to home. Contact SUEZ at 800-422-5987 to learn more about replacing the lead service line on your property.

Replace brass faucets, fittings, and valves that do not meet the current definition of "lead free." The current definition went into effect January 4, 2014; therefore, any "lead free" plumbing materials purchased and/or installed prior to that date should be discarded or replaced. Visit the NSF website at www.nsf.org to learn more about lead-containing plumbing fixtures.

3. Run the cold water to flush out lead. Let the water run from the tap before using it for drinking or cooking any time the water in the faucet has gone unused for more than six hours. The longer the water resides in plumbing the more lead it contains. Flushing the tap means running the cold water faucet for about 15 to 30 seconds. Although toilet flushing or showering flushes water through a portion of the plumbing system, you still need to flush the water in each faucet before using it for drinking or cooking. Flushing tap water is a simple and inexpensive measure you can take to protect your health. It usually uses less than one gallon of water. **For those with lead service lines or until you determine if you are served by one, let the water run from the tap longer based on the length of the lead service line and the plumbing configuration in your home. In other words, the larger the home or building and the greater the distance to the water main (in the street), the more water it will take to flush properly.**

4. Use cold water for cooking and preparing baby formula. Because lead from lead-containing plumbing materials and pipes can dissolve into hot water more easily than cold water, never drink, cook, or prepare beverages including baby formula using hot water from the tap. If you have not had your water sampled or if you know or suspect you have a lead service line it is recommended that bottled or filtered water be used for drinking and preparing baby formula. If you need hot water, draw water from the cold tap and then heat it.

5. Do not boil water to remove lead. Boiling water will not reduce lead.

6. Use alternative sources or treatment of water. If there is confirmed or suspected lead-containing materials, such as lead service lines and/or interior lead plumbing or lead solder, in your home or building, you may consider purchasing bottled water or a water filter. Be sure the filter is approved to reduce lead or contact NSF International at 1-800-NSF-8010 or www.nsf.org for information on performance standards for water filters. Be sure to maintain and replace a filter device in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations. Water softeners and reverse osmosis units will remove lead from water but can also make the water more corrosive to lead solder and plumbing by removing certain minerals; therefore, the installation of these treatment units at the point of entry into homes with lead plumbing should only be done under supervision of a qualified water treatment professional.

7. Remove and clean aerators/screens on plumbing fixtures. Over time, particles and sediment can collect in the aerator screen. Regularly remove and clean aerators screens located at the tip of faucets and remove any particles.

8. Test your water for lead. Call us at **800-422-5987** to find out how to get your water tested for lead. Testing is essential because you cannot see, taste, or smell lead in drinking water. Customers served by a utility-owned lead gooseneck, lead service line or a line of unknown material will be offered a free drinking water test. If you want a test but are not eligible for our program, there are many certified laboratories that can assist you. The NJDEP maintains a list of certified laboratories, which can be found at: https://www.13.state.nj.us/DataMiner.

9. Get your child 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 lead exposure. Your family doctor or pediatrician can perform a blood test for lead and provide you with information about the health effects of lead. Wash your children's hands and toys often as they can come into contact with dirt and dust containing lead. New Jersey law requires that children be screened at both 1 and 2 years of age. Children 3 to 5 years of age should also be screened if they have not been screened before.

What Happened? What Is Being Done?

In monitoring periods that ended on December 31, 2018 and June 30, 2019, samples taken from some homes exceeded the federal lead standard of 15 ppb and the 90th percentile was above the standard. As SUEZ has adjusted corrosion control, lead levels have decreased.

SUEZ continues to adjust its corrosion control treatment, which essentially coats pipes to reduce scale and lead and copper deposits from entering the drinking water.

SUEZ is removing lead service lines from the system. SUEZ had 21 crews working across Hudson and Bergen counties last year, removing 2,517 lead lines. That work will continue in 2020.

STEPS SUEZ IS TAKING

- Customers served by a utility-owned lead goosneck, utility-owned lead service line or a utility line of unknown material may call our customer service representatives for free lead testing of drinking water.
- If the result is above the standard (15 parts per billion), customers will be provided with a free pitcher with a filter that removes lead from drinking water. A SUEZ team will also visit the home to help identify potential sources of lead in the residence's plumbing.
- To determine the type of line that serves your property, go to https://www.mysuezwater.com/njwq or call our customer service department.
- Our trained customer service representatives are available at 800-422-5987 to answer any of your questions. Information is also available at www.SUEZWQ.com.

Additional Information

For more information, call us at 800-422-5987 or visit our website at www.SUEZWQ.com. For more information on reducing lead exposure around your home/building and the health effects of lead, visit EPA's website at, http://www.epa.gov/lead , call the National Lead Information Center at 800-424-LEAD or Safe Drinking Water Act hotline at 1-800-426-4791, or contact your health care provider.

This notice is being sent to you by SUEZ Water New Jersey Hackensack, New Jersey Public Water System Identification Number (PWSID) NJ0238001.

You can check your water system's analytical results and monitoring requirements (i.e., the frequency of sampling and number of samples) on New Jersey Drinking Water Watch at www.nj.gov/dep/watersupply/waterwatch .

**Please share this information with all the other people who consume water provided by SUEZ Water New Jersey Hackensack, especially those who may not have received this notice directly (for example, people in apartments, nursing homes, schools, and businesses). You can do this by posting this notice in a public place or distributing copies by hand or mail. **

Date Notification was distributed: February 8, 2020