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UPDATED INFORMATION ON OUTREACH CAMPAIGN FOR THE PWSA LEAD AND COPPER RULE TEST

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT LEAD IN DRINKING WATER IN THE PWSA SYSTEM

As previously reported, recent drinking water quality monitoring conducted by the *Pittsburgh Water and Sewer Authority (PWSA)* during June 2016 found elevated levels of lead in drinking water in some homes in Pittsburgh. Lead can cause serious health problems, especially for pregnant women and young children. Although most lead exposure occurs when people eat paint chips and inhale lead-contaminated dust, or ingest lead-contaminated residential soil, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimates that 10 to 20 percent of a person's potential exposure to lead may come from drinking water.

The PWSA is concerned about the health of its customers. According to EPA, *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. Excess lead exposure 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. According the health professionals, scientists have linked the effect 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 can receive lead from the mother bones, which may affect brain development.*

There are steps you can take to reduce your exposure to lead in your water:

- **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.
- **Use cold water for cooking and preparing baby formula.**
- **Do not boil water to remove lead. Boiling water will not reduce lead.**
- **Look for alternative drinking water sources or treatment of water.** You may want to consider purchasing bottled water or a water filter.
- **Test your water for lead.** Call us at 412-782-7554, or e-mail at servicelines@pgh2o.com, to find out how to get your water tested for lead.
- **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.
- **Identify and replace plumbing fixtures containing lead.**



PWSA pre-selected 100 residential sites for the compliance test based on a method prescribed under regulatory guidelines requiring a water provider obtain tap samples from homes that have, or are expected to have, lead service lines or plumbing. Service lines are the connections from the property to the water main and are considered to be the primary source of lead in drinking water. Lead is dissolved by corrosive water. Results completed by an independent, certified lab and submitted in July to the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is as follows:

- 45 are non-detect for lead
- 15 are between 2.1 and 4.6 ppb (parts per billion)
- 7 are between 5 and 9.8 ppb
- 16 are between 10 and 14 ppb
- 6 are between 16 and 19 ppb
- 7 are between 22 and 38 ppb
- 4 are between 50 and 75 ppb

These sample results were analyzed to determine the 90th percentile level of lead in the tap water samples. This is not an average of all samples, but rather a calculation to determine whether 10 percent of the samples exceed the action level of 15 ppb for lead.

For this set of tests PWSA services show a 90th percentile of 22 ppb, which exceeds the 15 ppb action level for lead. An exceedance of the action level is not a violation of the regulations, but can trigger other requirements that include additional distribution system water quality monitoring, optimization of corrosion control treatment, source water monitoring/treatment, public education, and lead service line replacement. This 90th percentile level for lead is what is reported on the annual PWSA drinking water quality report to the regulators and the public.

The PWSA has been open and transparent about its water quality. The water leaving the water treatment plant is free of lead; however, some older services lines are constructed of lead. The lead service line is the line which runs from a home to the water main. The service line has joint ownership. The PWSA is engaging in a public outreach campaign to inform its customers about lead. We created and distributed a poster and brochures for placement in public places, such as libraries, health care providers, and schools. We also created a link on our website at www.pgh2o.com/lead-facts containing links to public health professionals and the EPA, as well as information on how to find out if you have a lead service line.

To order a free lead test kit, please e-mail servicelines@pgh2o.com, call 412-782-7554 between 7:30 am to 4:00 pm Monday through Friday, or visit our website at www.pgh2o.com/lead-facts.

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