

**IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR DRINKING WATER  
CHARLES TOWN UTILITIES, WV3301905**

**WV3301905**

The Charles Town Utility Board found elevated levels of lead in drinking water in 4 homes out of 30 locations tested. The EPA set a “lead action level” at 15 parts per billion (ppb). The samples were taken at outside faucets and exceeded the 15 ppb level. The 4 locations have been resampled inside the home. 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.

**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.

**Sources of lead:**

Lead is a common metal found in the environment. The main sources of lead exposure are lead-based paint and lead-contaminated dust or soil, and some plumbing materials. In addition, lead can be found in certain types of pottery, pewter, brass fixtures, food and cosmetics. Other sources include exposure in the work place and exposure from certain hobbies (lead can be carried on clothing or shoes). Brass faucets, fittings, and valves, including those advertised as “lead-free”, may contribute lead to drinking water. Infants who consume mostly formula mixed with lead-containing water can receive 40 to 60% of their exposure to lead from drinking water.

**Steps to reduce exposure to lead in drinking water:**

- **Run your water to flush out lead.** Flush for 15-30 seconds, if your water has been sitting for several hours.
- **Use cold water for cooking and preparing baby formula.** Lead dissolves more easily into hot water.
- **Do not boil water to remove lead.** Boiling water will not reduce lead.
- **Look for alternative sources or treatment of water.** You may want to consider purchasing bottled water or a water filter. Read the package to be sure the filter is approved to reduce lead or contact NSF International at 800-NSF-8010 or [www.nsf.org](http://www.nsf.org) for information on performance standards for water filters.
- **Test your water for lead.** Call us at 304-725-3761 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 concerned about exposure.
- **Identify and replace plumbing fixtures containing lead.** Brass faucets, fittings, and valves, including those advertised as “lead-free”, may contribute lead to drinking water. The law currently allows end-use brass fixtures, such as faucets, with up to 8% lead to be labeled as “lead free”. Visit the NSF Web site at [www.nsf.org](http://www.nsf.org) to learn more about lead-containing plumbing fixtures.

**What happened? What is being done?**

Exceeding the “lead action level” is not a violation of the Safe Drinking Water Act. The Charles Town Utility Board has and will continue to provide safe drinking water to 6,200 metered customers. The Board sampled thirty (30) locations. Of the thirty (30) samples, four (4) exceeded the “lead action level” of 15 ppb. These four (4) samples were taken from outside faucets. Charles Town is retesting these four (4) locations with the sample taken from either a kitchen or bathroom cold water faucet. Of the remaining twenty-six (26) samples, all were taken from inside the location and none exceeded 15 parts per billion (ppb). For detailed information on parts per billion, please visit <http://www.nesc.wvu.edu/ndwc/articles/ot/fa04/q&a.pdf>.

Charles Town is immediately taking steps to increase a corrosion inhibitor to reduce the rate of metal breakdown. The State of West Virginia, Department of Health and Human Resources, Bureau for Public Health, Office of Environmental Health Services will require Charles Town to increase the number of samples collected to sixty (60) and add testing for Water Quality Parameters to determine potential alternatives to reduce lead levels. These tests include pH, water temperature, alkalinity, calcium, conductivity, and orthophosphate to inhibit corrosion.

For more information, please contact us at 304-725-3761. For more information on reducing lead exposure around your home/building and the health effects of lead, visit EPA’s Web site at <http://www.epa.gov/lead> or contact your health care provider.