



U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Pacific Southwest / Region 9

Testing for Lead in Tribal School Drinking Water

Water Division
Tribal Water Section • February 2018

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HELP PREVENT CHILDHOOD LEAD POISONING

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is providing free analysis of lead in drinking water in schools and other children’s facilities on tribal lands in the Pacific Southwest. We need your help to collect samples!

Even low levels of lead in children can result in negative health effects, such as:

- Behavior and learning problems
- Lower IQ and hyperactivity
- Slowed growth
- Hearing problems
- Anemia

The Lead in Tribal School Drinking Water Project is a voluntary effort to work with tribal governments, schools, and water utilities to identify children’s facilities on EPA Region 9 tribal lands that have a potential for lead in drinking water. The project includes lab analysis for facilities not typically sampled to determine lead concentrations in drinking water and to provide education and assistance to reduce exposure.

FREE lead in drinking water analysis is provided to facilities that meet the following criteria:

- Serve drinking water on a regular basis to children
- Do NOT already get sampled – i.e., schools that serve as their own public water system (PWS)
- Located on tribal lands in EPA Region 9
- Have leadership support for participation

What is lead? Lead is a naturally occurring, toxic metal used for years in products found in and around homes.



EPA recommends ALL facilities serving drinking water to children get sampled for lead.

How does lead get into water? Lead can enter the water system through the corrosion of plumbing systems that contain lead.

How can my child be exposed to lead? One can be exposed by drinking water with lead or swallowing or breathing lead particles (e.g., paint or dust).

How do I know if my child has lead poisoning? The only way to know if a person has elevated blood lead levels is to get tested by a doctor or at a local health center. Children at risk of exposure to lead should be tested.

Is it safe to wash our hands in lead contaminated water? Yes. Washing hands, cleaning, and bathing should be safe for you and your children, even if the water contains lead over EPA’s action level. Human skin does not absorb lead in water.

Are schools required to sample lead in drinking water? There are no federal regulations that require schools to sample for lead in drinking water.

For more information, contact:
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