



STATE OF WASHINGTON  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

OFFICE OF DRINKING WATER

PO Box 47822 • Olympia, Washington 98504-7822

TDD Relay Service: 1-800-833-6388

April 26, 2016

School Districts within Washington State:

News reports about high levels of lead in drinking water in Flint, Michigan and across the nation are generating concerns about the safety of drinking water in schools.

Schools should be aware the lead testing requirements in the state's revised [WAC 246-366A](#), Primary and Secondary Schools, known as the "School Rule," are frozen. In 2009, the Legislature inserted a proviso that the rule can't be implemented until state funding for the testing is available. This means schools are not legally obligated to test their water.

If schools choose to sample, they should follow these important planning steps before actually collecting any lead samples:

- Review their school's plumbing system to understand how to collect representative samples of water students and staff consume under normal building use.
- Develop a lead sampling plan and appropriately train staff on proper sampling procedures. A poor sampling plan and improper sampling procedures can result in misleading lead sample results.
- Develop a communication plan so that school staff and parents are properly informed of the intended sampling, sampling results, and their implications.

### Resources

- The Department of Health recommends schools review EPA's guidance document, [3Ts for Reducing Lead in Drinking Water in Schools](#).
- Our new brochure, [Testing for Lead in School Drinking Water Systems](#), provides step-by-step sampling guidance.
- Our web pages on [Lead](#) and [Lead in Schools](#) may also be helpful.

### For more information

- Contact Derrick Dennis for information concerning the "School Rule":  
Email: [derrick.dennis@doh.wa.gov](mailto:derrick.dennis@doh.wa.gov); phone: 360-236-3122.

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- If you have questions about sample collection procedures or sample results, please contact your nearest Office of Drinking Water regional office:

**Eastern Regional Office**

Phone: 509-329-2100

**Northwest Regional Office**

Phone: 253-395-6750

**Southwest Regional Office**

Phone: 360-236-3030

Sincerely,



Mike Means, Acting Office Director  
Office of Drinking Water