

**TOWN OF BEDFORD
WESTCHESTER COUNTY, NY
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS WATER DIVISION**

Kevin Winn, P.E. Commissioner



William Nickson, Water Foreman

Frequently Asked Questions – Consolidated Water District Lead in Water
February 2016

This is intended to supplement the February 2016 letter that was mailed to all Consolidated Water District customers and can be read at <http://www.bedfordny.gov/departments/dpw/water/>. Please read the public notice!

Q1. Is my water unsafe to drink?

A1. Most homes in our community have lead levels that are below the EPA action level of 15 parts per billion. One of the easiest ways to reduce the risk of elevated lead levels in drinking water is to run the cold water faucet until the water gets noticeably colder, usually about 15 to 30 seconds, before using it for drinking or cooking. The Town will provide a test for lead at your home at no charge to you. For more information on having your water tested, please call (914) 666-7855.

Q2. Is this my problem or the Town's?

A2. Potentially both. The Town is required to treat the water supply to meet New York State Health Department (NYSDOH) requirements for lead concentration at customer taps. The source of lead is household plumbing containing lead solder or brass. There is no lead in the Town's supply or distribution system. The Town adds NYSDOH approved chemicals (sodium hydroxide and orthophosphate) to the water supply to reduce its corrosivity. This treatment has been effective in all of the water supplies in Westchester County that use the NYC water supply, as well as for NYC itself.

Q3. How serious is this problem?

A3. Lead can pose a significant risk to your health if too much of it enters your body. The greatest risk is to young children and pregnant women. One of the easiest ways to reduce the risk of elevated lead levels in drinking water is to run the cold water faucet until the water gets noticeably colder, usually about 15 to 30 seconds, before using it for drinking or cooking. The Town will provide a test for lead at your home at no charge to you. For more information on having your water tested, please call (914) 666-7855.

Q4. Is the Town going to fix it and if so, when?

A4. The Town has slightly modified its treatment targets to increase the pH, or reduce the acidity of the water, to determine if this makes an improvement. Previous targets were well within the range specified by our engineers. It is expected that this minor treatment change, as well as additional time for the treatment to take effect, will reduce the lead levels at customers' taps. It will take several months for the changes to take effect. We will be sampling again April and May 2016 in order to determine the impact of the current treatment adjustments. It is expected that a subsequent update to the public will occur in July once the laboratory data has been obtained and analyzed.

Q5. Do I need to change my piping?

A5. In general, the water treatment performed by the water supplier at the source has been quite effective in reducing the lead levels at customers' taps. If high lead levels persist at your property, internal piping may need to be investigated. We also are not aware of instances in which flushing the pipe as described herein does not bring lead levels below the action level.

Q6. Is the Town going to re-test?

A6. We will be sampling again in April and May 2016 and will let residents know the results.

Q7. I just eliminated my water softener, was that a mistake?

A7. No, our supply is no longer high in hardness and does not require water softeners. Water softeners do not remove lead, and the source of lead are in many cases in the plumbing on the tap side of the water softener.

Q8. The Town recently switched from a groundwater supply to our current surface water supply from NYCDEP. Was this the right decision in light of this problem?

A8. The previous groundwater supply met NYSDOH requirements for water quality. The previous system did, however, have several wells removed from service due to water quality exceeding NYSDOH health standards for nitrate, chloride, and manganese. The concentrations in the remaining wells were increasing, causing risk of having to eliminate additional wells and having inadequate supply quantities.

A detailed engineering analysis showed that switching to the NYCDEP supply was the most cost effective, sustainable way to obtain a high quality supply for the future. This is the same supply that 85% of Westchester County, and NYC itself, use. They use the same type of treatment as Bedford and have acceptable lead levels. It is expected that the minor treatment change described above, as well as additional time for the treatment to take effect, will reduce the lead levels at customers' taps. It will take several months for the changes to take effect. We will be sampling again in April and May 2016 and will let residents know the results.

Q9. If I have further questions whom should I contact?

A9. Kevin Winn, DPW Commissioner, at 914-241-2458.