

**Boston Water and  
Sewer Commission**

980 Harrison Avenue  
Boston, MA 02119  
617-989-7000



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CONTACT: Dolores Randolph

Director of Communications  
(617) 989-7000

## **Boston Water and Sewer Commission Drinking Water Notice**

### **Some homes have high levels of lead**

*This notice contains important information about your drinking water. Have someone translate it for you or speak with someone who understands it.*

This notification is being sent to Boston Water and Sewer Commission (BWSC) customers and media outlets; however, it is of greatest importance to homes that still have a full or partial lead water service line, old plumbing fixtures, or lead solder still in place. During our recent lead monitoring round for the period July 1- December 31, 2023, BWSC's water system exceeded the lead drinking water action level at six locations. BWSC routinely monitors for lead in water in homes with lead service lines as they are more likely to have elevated levels. We are required to collect 33 samples for the current July-December 2023 round. Six of these higher risk homes had elevated lead levels. The results of these routine samples for lead indicate a level of 0.021 mg/L (or 21 parts per billion). This level exceeds the lead action level of 0.015 mg/L (or 15 parts per billion). This means that more than 10 percent of the lead samples collected were above the lead action level.

#### **What does this mean to residents and businesses in Boston?**

Our system's water mains that carry the water to you are made mostly of iron and steel and therefore do not add lead to water. However, lead can get into tap water through the service line that connects your home to the water main if it is made of lead. Lead may also come from lead solder used to connect pipes in home plumbing, and from some older brass faucets and fixtures.

*Exposure to lead in drinking water can cause serious health effects in all age groups. Infants and children can have decreases in IQ and attention span. Lead exposure can lead to new learning and behavior problems or exacerbate existing learning and behavior problems. The children of women who are exposed to lead before or during pregnancy can have increased risk of these adverse health effects. Adults can have increased risks of heart disease, high blood pressure, kidney or nervous system problems.*

#### **What should I do to reduce my exposure to lead?**

- **Check whether your home has a lead service line. IF YOU DO, HAVE IT REMOVED AT NO COST USING THE BWSC NO COST PRIVATE LEAD REPLACEMENT PROGRAM.**
- Check your home address at <https://www.bwsc.org/environment-education/maproom/lead-service-map>
- See: <https://www.bwsc.org/environment-education/lead-your-water/lead-replacement-incentive->

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[program](#) for more information about your home's service line, how to have it removed, or for information about plumbing materials in your home that may contain lead.

- **Use only cold, fresh water for drinking, cooking, and preparing baby formula.** Run the water for at least 1 minute or until after it turns cold.
- **Do not boil the water to remove lead.**
- **Contact your health care provider if you have any health-related questions or contact your local health department to find out if your child needs to be tested for lead.** A blood lead level test is the only way to know if your child is being exposed to lead. For more information on Massachusetts' childhood lead testing program, contact the Boston Public Health Commission at (617) 534-5965 or see: <https://www.boston.gov/government/cabinets/boston-public-health-commission/healthy-homes-and-environment/lead-poisoning-prevention> and [www.mass.gov/orgs/childhood-lead-poisoning-prevention-program](http://www.mass.gov/orgs/childhood-lead-poisoning-prevention-program).

### What is our system doing?

Our public water system is taking the following actions to address the situation:

- BWSC now offers the “No Cost Private Lead Replacement Incentive Program” Effective January 1, 2023, eligible property owners who participate in this program can have the replacement work completed at no cost.
- This past year, BWSC has replaced over 240 lead service lines through our Private Lead Replacement Incentive Program (“Program”).
- BWSC will continue conducting monitoring of 33 homes in the spring and fall of each year.
- BWSC mailed the No Cost Private Lead Replacement Program brochure to over 70,000 customers with the September bills.
- BWSC will offer public education materials on how to reduce lead exposure in your drinking water.
- BWSC will continue to identify and reach out to property owners with suspected lead service lines advising customers to take advantage of the No Cost Private Lead Replacement Incentive Program.
- For more information, contact our **Lead Hotline at (617) 989-7888** or online at <https://www.bwsc.org/environment-education/lead-your-water/lead-replacement-incentive-program>.
- For more information on lead see <https://www.bwsc.org/environment-education/lead-your-water>.

Due to the exceedance, BWSC is also required to provide this notification to its customers and the public.

*Please share this information with all the other people who drink this water, especially those who may not have received this notice directly (for example, people in apartments, nursing homes, schools, and businesses). You can do this by posting this notice in a public place or distributing copies by hand or mail.*

This notice is being sent to you by Boston Water and Sewer Commission PWS ID#: 3035000

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