



# SCAPPOOSE SCHOOL DISTRICT

"Cultivating passionate lifelong learners for an ever-changing world"

## Frequently Asked Questions About Lead

### **What is Lead?**

Lead is a naturally occurring heavy metal that has been used in a variety of manmade products. The use of lead has decreased over the years, but many sources are still present in the environment (air, soil, water, fossil fuels). Lead can enter the body through swallowing, inhaling, or touching lead-containing products.

### **What are the most common sources of lead exposure?**

Lead paint is the most common source of lead poisoning in Oregon. Other sources include water from lead-containing pipes and faucets, contaminated soil, job or hobby exposures, and lead-containing dishware.

### **What is the recommended level of lead in drinking water?**

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) states in guidance documents that school water outlets that provide water for drinking or food preparation meet a standard of under 15 parts per billion (ppb). They recommend water fountains and/or outlets be taken out of service for any water source at or above 15 ppb.

### **What about water used for hand-washing?**

Lead on the hands is not a concern because lead does not absorb through the skin.

### **What are the health effects of lead?**

Lead poisoning occurs when too much lead builds up in the body. Lead is toxic to humans of all ages, but especially to young children and pregnant women because of harm to the developing brain. While lead can affect any organ system, it is primarily toxic to the nervous system. In children, exposure to small amounts of lead over time can affect a child's mental and physical growth. Exposure to large amounts of lead can cause more severe health problems, including blood anemia, severe stomach ache, muscle weakness, kidney damage, and brain damage.

### **Will all schools be tested for lead?**

Yes. All Scappoose School District schools and facilities were tested in 2024, with samples collected from every possible source of drinking water: faucets, drinking fountains, and hose bibs. Re-testing will take place approximately every six years or as needed.

### **Who will do the testing?**

PBS Engineering & Environmental, Inc. will handle the collection and testing.

### **Where/when can I find sample results?**

The results will be posted on our [Facilities and Maintenance](#) webpage as soon as they are available.

**What action will you take if you find high levels of lead?**

If a water source tests above the EPA's recommended action level of 15 ppb, parents and staff will be immediately notified, and the fixture will be mitigated or removed and replaced. Bottled water will be provided for students and staff if that process causes a hardship for a classroom or school.