

Sidwell Friends

Lead in Drinking Water – Public and Nonpublic Schools

IMPORTANT NOTICE: ELEVATED WATER SAMPLE RESULT(S)

SIDWELL FRIENDS SCHOOL

Lower School Campus

5100 Edgemoor Lane, Bethesda, MD

ELEVATED LEAD WATER SAMPLE RESULT(S)

All Maryland public and nonpublic schools are required to sample all drinking water outlets for the presence of lead pursuant to the Code of Maryland Regulations. On **April 23-24, 2024, 134** lead water samples were collected from **Sidwell Friends School, Lower School Campus in Bethesda, Maryland**. Of these lead water samples, **five (5)** were found to have levels of lead exceeding the new action level of 5.0 parts per billion (ppb) for lead in drinking water in school buildings. The elevated lead results from the sample(s) collected at the Lower School campus were as follows:

Sample Source # W19 Groome Building Classroom 208 Drinking Fountain (currently NOT in use) 9.7 ppb.

Sample Source # W32 Groome Building Classroom 207 Drinking Fountain (currently NOT in use) 5.6 ppb

Sample Source # W35 Groome Building Classroom 205 Drinking Fountain (currently NOT in use) 5.8 ppb

Sample Source # W77 Meeting House 1st floor adult bathroom sink (currently in use) 7.1 ppb

Sample Source # W132 Meeting House exterior hose bib (currently in use) 25.9 ppb

ACTION LEVEL (AL)

The new AL established by **House Bill 636 on May 18, 2021**, is 5 ppb for lead in drinking water in school buildings. The AL is the concentration of lead which, if exceeded, triggers required remediation. The prior AL under House Bill 270 was 20 ppb.

HEALTH EFFECTS OF LEAD

Lead can cause serious health problems if too much enters your body from drinking water or other sources. It can cause damage to the brain and kidneys and can interfere with the production of red blood cells that carry oxygen to all parts of your body. The greatest risk of lead exposure is to infants, young children, and pregnant women. Lead is stored in the bones, and it can be released later in life. During pregnancy, the fetus receives lead from the mother's bones, which may affect brain development. Scientists have linked the effects of lead on the brain with lowered IQ in children. Adults with kidney problems and high blood pressure can be affected by low levels of lead more than healthy adults.

SOURCES OF HUMAN EXPOSURE TO LEAD

There are many different sources of human exposure to lead. These include lead-based paint, lead-contaminated dust or soil, some plumbing materials, certain types of pottery, pewter, brass fixtures, food, and cosmetics, exposure in the workplace and exposure from certain hobbies, brass faucets, fittings, and valves. According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), 10 to 20 percent of a person's potential exposure to lead may come from drinking water, while for an infant consuming formula mixed with lead-containing water this may increase to 40 to 60 percent.

IMMEDIATE ACTIONS TAKEN

In response to the elevated lead sample results reported by the laboratory, Sidwell has shut off the sources and/or posted signs to Not Drink the Water from each respective sample source found to have elevated levels of lead under the new drinking water regulation in HB 636. We are currently working with a plumbing contractor to remove the drinking fountains and with outside consultants to further investigate and remediate the bathroom sink and exterior hose bib water sources identified by this year's campus-wide sampling.

NEXT STEPS

Sidwell Friends intends to conduct further flush sampling to try to determine the source of lead associated with each of the water sources. This process will take some time and will be happening over the summer months so that any required repairs or replacement of fixtures can be made. Resampling will also occur after the repair/replacement work to ensure that the source is compliant before bringing it back into service.

TO REDUCE EXPOSURE TO LEAD IN DRINKING WATER:

1. Run your water to flush out lead: If water hasn't been used for several hours, run water for 15 to 30 seconds or until it becomes cold or reaches a steady temperature before using it for drinking or cooking.
2. Use cold water for cooking and preparing baby formula: Lead from the plumbing dissolves more easily into hot water.

Please note that boiling the water will not reduce lead levels.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

1. For additional information, please contact **Sidwell Friends School, Assistant Head of School for Finance & Operations, Russ Friedson** by email at FriedsonR@sidwell.edu . For additional information on reducing lead exposure around your home/building and the health effects of lead, visit EPA's website at www.epa.gov/lead. If you are concerned about exposure; contact your local health department or healthcare provider to find out how you can get your child tested for lead.