



500 Second Line East, P.O. Box 9000
Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, P6A 6P2
tel. (705) 759-6500 fax. (705) 759-6510
www.ssmruc.com

To Whom It May Concern:

Re: Important Information on Lead in Tap Water for Health Care Providers

Exposure to elevated lead concentrations can pose a serious health risk to children, particularly those under the age of 6. While the majority of children's lead exposure comes from sources such as soil contamination, dust, or paint chips, lead in drinking water can be a contributing factor to overall lead exposure.

Ontario legislation requires municipal water supply authorities to test for the presence of lead in drinking water at customer taps, and to put into effect corrosion control measures in the event that lead levels are higher than the regulatory limit (O.Reg. 170/03, Schedule 15.1, of the Safe Drinking Water Act, 2002; MOE, 2007).

Testing performed by the PUC has shown that while lead is not present as a contaminant in drinking water when it is distributed from Sault Ste. Marie water treatment facilities to our customers, lead may enter the water after coming into prolonged contact with a building's pipes and plumbing fixtures, particularly in older properties (e.g. built prior to the mid-1950s).

In compliance with the legislation, PUC is undertaking the addition of two new treatment processes required to reduce the potential for lead uptake from lead bearing pipes and fixtures. These new processes include the addition of soda ash and carbon dioxide to adjust pH and the addition of blended phosphates to control internal corrosion of pipes and fixtures.

The pH of drinking water in Sault Ste. Marie currently ranges from approximately pH 7.0 - 8.6. With the addition of the new treatment processes, we expect the pH range of the water will be stabilized at pH 7.4 - 7.8. Soda ash (i.e. sodium carbonate - Na_2CO_3) will be added at the water treatment plant and carbon dioxide will be added at the east end wells. As a result of adding soda ash, a slight increase in sodium content of about 2.2mg/L is expected in treated water produced at the water treatment plant. Also, the treated water will now contain phosphates at a concentration of 1 - 2 mg/L.

This information will be of specific concern to operators of dialysis units and providers of other health care services that may be impacted by this change in water chemistry.

We have attached two informational brochures which provide an overview of the lead issue and include website links and phone numbers for additional information.

Sincerely,

Giordan Zin
Supervisor, Communications
PUC Services Inc.

cc: Medical Officer of Health, Algoma Public Health

Enclosures:

"Water Facts: Lead in Tap Water & PUC Action to Control It"

"What You Need To Know About Drinking Water and Lead in Sault Ste. Marie"