



Questions & Answers

The Reduction of Lead in Drinking Water Act

The Reduction of Lead in Drinking Water Act will take effect January 4, 2014. All water systems that provide water for human consumption must use materials, devices, and components that meet the new “lead-free” requirement. We developed this guidance for drinking water systems in Washington to use until the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency develops implementation guidance for the new law.

What are the specific changes to the law?

The law changes the definition of “lead-free” from a weighted lead content of 8 percent or less to a weighted average of less than or equal to 0.25 percent for surfaces in contact with potable water. It also establishes a formula to calculate the weighted average lead content. Any materials used for installation or repair must be lead-free, including pipes, pipe fittings, plumbing fittings, and plumbing fixtures. The law doesn’t change the definition of “lead-free” for solder or flux (0.2 percent lead).

The law specifically exempts:

- Nonpotable water uses such as pipes, pipe fittings, plumbing fittings, or fixtures, including backflow preventers, used exclusively for manufacturing, industrial process, irrigation, outdoor watering, or any other uses where water is not intended for human consumption.
- Toilets, bidets, urinals, fill valves, flushometer valves, tub fillers, shower valves, service saddles, or water distribution main gate valves that are at least two inches in diameter.

Does this change affect all materials I install in my system?

Probably not. Our existing rule requires all material in contact with potable water to conform to NSF/ANSI Standard 61. Standard 61 does *not* permit lead in a water system component *unless* it contains brass or bronze. Therefore, the new law only affects components that contain brass or bronze. These components must meet the new “lead-free” standard by January 4, 2014.

Can I use materials already in my inventory?

Yes. You can install materials that meet the current standard until January 3, 2014.

If I remove a device for maintenance or repair, can I put it back?

Yes. You can return a device that may not meet the new lead-free standard if the device still operates or can be repaired. However, if repairs involve replacing parts that contact potable water, the replacement parts must meet the new “lead-free” standard.



HELPING TO ENSURE SAFE AND RELIABLE DRINKING WATER

How do I know which devices meet the new standards?

Although the new law does not require devices to be certified, they must meet the weighted average lead content defined in the law. The easiest way to ensure a component meets the new definition of “lead-free” is to use only tested and certified products, such as those listed in Annex G of NSF/ANSI Standard 61 or NSF/ANSI Standard 372.

The following online resources may help you determine whether your materials, devices and components meet the new lead-free standard:

- **NSF Product and Service Listings** <http://www.nsf.org/Certified/PwsComponents/>
Use the check box in the “manufacturer” field to limit results to Annex G components
- **NSF Product and Service Listings (NSF/ANSI 372)**
http://www.nsf.org/Certified/Lead_Content/
Check the box titled “ALL LEAD CONTENT CERTIFIED PRODUCTS,” and then click “Search.” Look for products that meet NSF/ANSI 372
- **Water Quality Association NSF/ANSI 372** <http://12.2.248.199/goldseal/29.html>
- **International Association of Plumbing and Mechanical Officials (IAPMO) Product Listing Directory** <http://pld.iapmo.org/default.asp>
- **Underwriters Laboratories (UL) Online Certifications Directory**
<http://database.ul.com/cgi-bin/XYV/template/LISEXT/1FRAME/index.html>
Type “QNVB” into the UL Category Code box for NSF/ANSI 372 certified products and “FDNP” for all Standard 61 products (some of these are Annex G certified).

Where can I get more information?

Call Derrick Dennis, water quality unit supervisor, at (360) 236-3122 or email derrick.dennis@doh.wa.gov

Our publications are online at <https://fortress.wa.gov/doh/eh/dw/publications/publications.cfm>

