

Local Public Drinking Water Supplies in Full Compliance on Lead Standards

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The issue of lead in public drinking water systems has received extensive attention in recent weeks as a result of the water contamination crisis in Flint, Michigan. Lead in drinking water is a health hazard that is closely regulated at the state and local level by the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

The VDH has established regulations governing lead levels in drinking water, consistent with the federal Safe Drinking Water Act and EPA's Lead & Copper Rules. The Lexington Field Office for the VDH Office of Drinking Water monitors all water quality testing and compliance for waterworks in the Central Shenandoah Valley.

Should monitoring results be unacceptable over consecutive monitoring periods, the Office of Drinking Water requires an evaluation of source water and water quality parameters to determine what corrective actions are needed. In most instances elevated levels of lead, when present, can be reduced by providing effective corrosion control treatment.

Local waterworks operated by the City of Staunton, the City of Waynesboro, the Augusta County Service Authority, and the Town of Craigsville are all in full compliance with drinking water standards for lead. Testing is performed in accordance with the frequency and at locations established by the VDH and the EPA's Lead and Copper Rules.

The results of the required lead testing are included in annual water quality reports issued by each municipality. These reports are available at the following locations:

- City of Staunton: <http://www.staunton.va.us/directory/departments-h-z/public-works/ccr>
- City of Waynesboro: <http://www.waynesboro.va.us/documentcenter/view/2250>
- Augusta County Service Authority: <http://www.acsawater.com/waterquality>
- Town of Craigsville: <https://www.craigsville.us/>

Elevated lead levels in drinking water are typically associated with certain materials and fixtures used in service lines and household plumbing, in the presence of corrosive water quality. Lead levels that exceed the EPA "Action Level" of 15 parts per billion are required to take corrective action to reduce levels of lead in the drinking water. A part per billion is equivalent to a single penny in \$10,000,000.

A simple way for people to reduce possible exposure to lead, particularly in older homes, is to allow the tap water to run for 15 to 30 seconds before using it, if the water has been sitting in the pipes for several hours. Further information on ways to reduce exposure to lead can be found at www.epa.gov/lead.

