



A Service of The City of Cincinnati

GREATER CINCINNATI
WATER WORKS

Lead FAQ for Schools



What has prompted review of lead in water systems across the nation?

Recent crises involving elevated levels of lead in drinking water in Flint, MI, and Sebring, OH along with other US cities have reached prominence on a national level. These events have resulted in federal and state regulators reacting to quickly review current regulations concerning lead in drinking water.

What has Greater Cincinnati Water Works (GCWW) been doing regarding the issue of lead?

GCWW provides treatment specifically to minimize the amount of lead that may leach into the drinking water. This treatment process, called corrosion control, minimizes the chance that lead can be picked up from home and building plumbing.

GCWW has recently embarked on an enhanced outreach program to educate about lead in drinking water and is developing programs to reduce the potential risk of exposure to lead. More information can be found about lead in drinking water and GCWW's programs at www.lead.mygcww.org.

Why are schools a focus?

The increased awareness of lead has resulted in public attention to drinking water quality schools. Schools are a focus since young children are at higher risk of adverse health consequences from lead exposure.

How might a school's students and teachers be exposed to lead?

There are several sources of lead exposure in the environment, one of which may include drinking water, depending on the plumbing materials used at the school. There is no lead in drinking water when it leaves the water treatment plant, and GCWW's water distribution mains do not contain lead. However, water service branches (the water pipes that provide water from the water main in the street to a building) may be made of lead, and/or plumbing materials and fixtures inside a building may contain lead. Although GCWW employs an effective corrosion control process to minimize the amount of lead that leaches into the water, the presence of lead materials in a water system will still present a risk.

Where can I find out more information about sampling in schools?

While there is no federal law requiring schools to test for lead in drinking water, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) developed the **3Ts for Reducing Lead in Drinking Water in Schools Guidelines Document** (3Ts Document) to address the potential presence of lead in school drinking water. GCWW highly recommends schools follow the practices outlined to assist them with understanding the water quality within school facilities. Facilities managers and other school personnel should thoroughly read the 3Ts document and understand the various steps needed to complete the recommendations.

What is GCWW doing to assist schools in determining their drinking water quality?

GCWW is working proactively to educate school staff on the issue of lead in drinking water and partnering with them to assist in understanding the water quality within their facilities.





A Service of The City of Cincinnati

G R E A T E R C I N C I N N A T I
W A T E R W O R K S

Is there a cost to the school to partner with GCWW?

There is no financial cost for your school to partner with GCWW. However, school staff should expect to spend some time completing a sampling plan as well as collecting samples. Additional costs may occur if a remediation plan is needed. Some remediation costs may be covered through grants from the Ohio Facilities Construction Commission (ofcc.ohio.gov).

Are any other partners involved?

GCWW has partnered with the Cincinnati Health Department and Hamilton County Public Health. Both of these organizations may be involved if lead is detected in facilities.

Where should I sample in the schools?

Each drinking water and cooking outlet within the school facility should be sampled. This would include drinking fountains, sinks in restrooms and classrooms, as well as sinks in the kitchen area that are used for food preparation. The 3Ts Document explains in detail where sampling should be done. It is strongly encouraged that school staff review the 3Ts Document to further understand the proper sampling protocol.

When should I sample in the schools?

You should sample when school is in session, and first thing in the morning, prior to facility water use for the day. Sampling during the summer or right after weekends and vacation periods (when buildings are vacant and no water is being used) does not provide an adequate representation of the water quality within school facilities. The 3Ts Document provides additional details on when to sample within the facility.

Where can I get sampling bottles?

GCWW will provide sample bottles/kits for you. These kits will either be mailed to you or you can arrange to pick them up.

Who can analyze the samples for me?

GCWW can analyze the samples for your school. GCWW is certified and offers to perform lead analyses free of charge. GCWW can also provide referrals if a school would like to use a private laboratory to analyze samples.

How long will it take to get the sample results?

It normally takes GCWW 2 to 3 weeks to analyze samples and provide the results. However, this timeframe may increase or decrease depending on the volume of workload at any given time.

What happens if the sample results indicate detections of lead?

GCWW will call or meet to discuss the school's results. If necessary, follow-up sampling can be arranged. GCWW can also discuss short and long-term remediation options with you.

Will I get my results in writing?

Yes, GCWW will provide your results in writing.

What should I tell the families and parents at the schools about the sampling?

Performing sampling and eliminating sources of lead are very positive steps that show the school is being proactive in protecting the health of children. The 3Ts Document provides information about how to communicate with families regarding your program. School personnel are strongly encouraged to review this document and determine which communications method(s) works best for their school community (staff, parents, students).

What will GCWW do with the sample results?

GCWW will share the results with the Cincinnati Health Department, Hamilton County Public Health, or other health departments where applicable. To further assist schools and increase transparency of data, GCWW will include the results of all school lead analyses on its website. GCWW will also post any remediation steps that schools are implementing so that those reviewing the results are aware that corrective actions are being taken.



www.myGCWW.org



[@CincinnatiWater](https://twitter.com/CincinnatiWater)



www.facebook.com/CincinnatiWater



A Service of The City of Cincinnati

G R E A T E R C I N C I N N A T I
W A T E R W O R K S

What can you expect from GCWW as your partner?

As a partner, you can expect the following from GCWW:

- An explanation of our records of service lines providing water to the schools;
- Verification of the actual service lines;
- A link or a copy of the recommended USEPA 3Ts for Reducing Lead in Drinking Water in Schools: Revised Technical Guidance Document (3Ts Guidelines);
- Provision of sample kits to the schools;
- Analysis of the samples, and results discussion;
- Consideration of follow-up samples, if needed;
- Assistance with a remediation plan;
- Posting of the results to the lead.mygcww.org website, school section;
- Assistance with creating a communications plan for the school community.

What is GCWW expecting from the school?

- A thorough sampling plan, identifying drinking water and cooking outlet sample locations;
- Communication with the school community regarding the sampling;
- Collection of samples following the sampling protocol outlined in the 3Ts Document;
- Review of the sample results with GCWW and the appropriate health department;
- Follow-up sampling if needed;
- Communication regarding sampling results to the school community;
- Development and implementation of remediation plans, if necessary.



www.myGCWW.org



[@CincinnatiWater](https://twitter.com/CincinnatiWater)



www.facebook.com/CincinnatiWater