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## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

### Oakland County assists City of Oak Park with lead prevention efforts

Pontiac, Mich., Oct. 21, 2019 – Oakland County Health Division (OCHD) was notified by the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) that samples from the City of Oak Park’s municipal water system have lead levels in the drinking water exceeding new, stricter state standards. Water testing occurred as part of routine compliance sampling required by EGLE under Michigan’s Safe Drinking Water Act.

“The quality of our drinking water is vital to the health of Oakland County residents,” County Executive David Coulter said. “Oakland County Health Division continues to support our communities with their actionable test results with educating the public, distributing NSF-certified water filters to qualified households, and testing water for lead and copper upon request.”

The Oakland County Water Resources Commissioner also supports affected Oakland County communities.

“Oakland County Water Resources Commissioner’s Office is here to support all communities and we will assist wherever we can,” said Oakland County Water Resources Commissioner Jim Nash.

Preventative actions taken by collaborating agencies include:

- The municipality, Michigan Department of Health & Human Services (MDHHS), and OCHD are conducting water sampling and investigations.
- The Health Division is providing public education and coordinating distribution of free water filter kits to qualifying households. To qualify for a filter the household must:
  - Receive water from an affected area.
  - Have a pregnant woman or at least one child under age 18 living or spending several hours in the home weekly who receives WIC benefits, Medicaid health insurance, or has difficulty affording a filter (\$35) or replacement cartridges (\$15).
- Water filter kits will be available to Oak Park residents who qualify at City of Oak Park City Hall at 14000 Oak Park Blvd., Oak Park on the following date and times:
  - Thursday, October 24 from 4:00-7:00 p.m.

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- Answering public questions:
  - Water testing/lead service line questions: City of Oak Park Water Department at (248) 691-7470 or visit them at Oak Park City Hall, located at 14000 Oak Park Blvd, Oak Park, MI 48237.
  - Health related questions: Oakland County Health Division's Nurse on Call at 1-800-848-5533 Monday-Friday 8:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m. or [www.oakgov.com/health](http://www.oakgov.com/health).
- Oakland County Health Division has a laboratory that is certified to test water for lead and copper.

"This is a public health issue and requires the commitment of everyone to take bold steps." said Oakland County Board Chairman David T. Woodward (D-Royal Oak). "Better testing provides an opportunity for comprehensive public education on the issue, and motivation to fix the problem."

Education efforts focus on everyone affected by lead in the water but is especially targeted to those who are most at risk from the effects of lead.

"According to Centers for Disease Control, lead is most damaging to children age six and younger and pregnant woman," said Leigh-Anne Stafford, health officer for Oakland County. "Childhood lead poisoning most commonly occurs by breathing in lead dust, eating food items containing lead, or chewing on surfaces covered with lead-based paint."

Lead enters drinking water primarily as a result of corrosion, or wearing away, of materials containing lead in the water distribution system and plumbing. These materials include lead-based solder used to join copper pipe, brass and chrome plated brass faucets and fittings, and in some cases, pipes made of lead.

There are several things that you can do to reduce the risk of lead in drinking water:

- If you suspect that your home's plumbing or faucets could contain lead or lead-based solder, you should **have your water tested**.
- **Replace faucets** with those made in 2014 or later or marked "NSF 61/9" since they meet stricter limits.
- **Flush your cold-water pipes** by running the water for approximately five minutes. The longer the water has been sitting in the pipes, the more lead it may contain. You can fill containers for later use, after the flushing process.
- **Use cold filtered water or bottled water** for drinking, cooking, and especially for making baby formula. Hot water is likely to contain higher levels of lead.
- **You may choose to install a water filter that is certified to NSF/ANSI Standard 53 for lead reduction.** The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) also recommends the filter be certified for NSF/ANSI Standard 42 for particulate reduction (Class 1). If a water filter is installed, replace cartridges at least as often as recommended by the manufacturer.
- **Do not boil water** to remove lead. Boiling will not remove the lead.

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- **Clean aerators.** Aerators are small attachments at the tops of faucets which regulate flow of water. They can accumulate small particles of lead in their screens. Remove and sanitize monthly.

For more information on this topic, search, "Mi Lead Safe Lead and Copper Rule Frequently Asked Questions."

For up-to-date information, visit [www.oakgov.com/health](http://www.oakgov.com/health) and follow the Health Division on Facebook and Twitter @publichealthOC.

For MEDIA INQUIRIES ONLY: Contact Bill Mullan, Oakland County media and communications officer, at 248-858-1048.

### **Additional resources:**

Mi Lead Safe Lead and Copper Rule Frequently Asked Questions

[https://www.michigan.gov/mileadsafe/0,9490,7-392-92852\\_93738---,00.html](https://www.michigan.gov/mileadsafe/0,9490,7-392-92852_93738---,00.html)

Mi Lead Safe Drinking Water

<https://www.michigan.gov/mileadsafe/0,9490,7-392-92796---,00.html>

Public Advisory-City of Oak Park

[http://oakparkmi.gov/news\\_detail\\_T3\\_R248.php](http://oakparkmi.gov/news_detail_T3_R248.php)

Oakland County Health Division Lead and Drinking Water Fact Sheet

<https://www.oakgov.com/health/information/Pages/Lead-and-Drinking-Water.aspx>

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