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## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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

Pontiac, Mich., Oct. 29, 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 Royal Oak’s municipal water system have lead levels in the drinking water exceeding revised state standards. Water testing occurred as part of routine compliance sampling required by EGLE under Michigan’s Safe Drinking Water Act.

“Oakland County continues to support communities with their water quality response efforts, including educating residents, distributing NSF-certified water filters to qualified households, and testing water for lead and copper upon request,” County Executive David Coulter said. “Our goal is to ensure that residents and communities have the tools they need to ensure access to drinking water that does not exceed actionable levels for lead and copper.”

The Oakland County Board of Commissioners also supports affected Oakland County communities.

“We can and need to do more to ensure that lead free water is coming out of everyone’s tap,” said Board Chairmen David T. Woodward (D-Royal Oak). “Improved testing, better public education, and more funding to help communities replace lead service lines is required to protect our drinking water.”

Preventive 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 Royal Oak residents who qualify at Leo Mahany/Harold Meininger Senior Community Center at 3500 Marais Avenue, Royal Oak on **Wed., Oct. 30 from 4:00-7:00 p.m.**

(more)

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

### Page 2

- Answering public questions:
  - Water testing/lead service line questions: City of Royal Oak special hotline 248-246-3999, Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Visit [www.romi.gov/leadtesting](http://www.romi.gov/leadtesting) for more information.
  - 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 [noc@oakgov.com](mailto:noc@oakgov.com)
- Oakland County Health Division has a laboratory that is certified to test water for lead and copper. Bottles for these tests can be purchased at Health Division Offices for \$24 per testing bottle.

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

"We are building a public education program to help our local communities inform their residents about lead in drinking water," Oakland County Water Resources Commissioner Jim Nash said. "We are also a resource as communities carry out the new lead and copper rule."

"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.

(more)

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

### Page 3

- **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 Royal Oak

<https://www.romi.gov/1439/Lead->

[Testing?fbclid=IwAR364tXjTZnnfLagCUvS0NzMO1f2vp64H\\_8kbHaMYwxA\\_u9f8LGZDLc4MR8](https://www.romi.gov/1439/Lead-Testing?fbclid=IwAR364tXjTZnnfLagCUvS0NzMO1f2vp64H_8kbHaMYwxA_u9f8LGZDLc4MR8)

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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