
From: Benzie, Richard (DEQ)
Sent: Wednesday, September 30, 2015 3:07 PM
To: Busch, Stephen (DEQ); Rennaker, Joanne (DEQ); Prysby, Mike (DEQ); Rosenthal, Adam (DEQ); Skinker, Bethel (DEQ); Joseph, Mark (DEQ); Swendsen, Kurt (DEQ)
Cc: Shekter Smith, Liane (DEQ); Devereaux, Tracy Jo (DEQ); Philip, Kris (DEQ); Cook, Pat (DEQ); Howd, Pamela (DEQ)
Subject: RE: Flint calls

ODWMA is receiving a lot of calls with questions from Flint residents concerned about the safety of their drinking water. If you receive one of these calls, our message should be consistent – the drinking water distributed to city customers currently meets all drinking water standards and is considered safe. However, there is no safe level for lead. The fact that Flint meets the drinking water standard is based on an evaluation of the effectiveness of their treatment system to minimize lead leaching from plumbing materials. Compliance does not mean that under certain conditions that some homeowners may still have water in their domestic plumbing that has leached some lead from lead pipes or lead solder.

The only way for a resident to know if they may be exposed to lead leaching from their plumbing system is having a sample from that residence analyzed for lead at a certified laboratory. The DEQ laboratory is not providing that service at no cost. The city of Flint currently is accommodating requests from residents without charging them, but the residents have to go through the city to arrange that sampling, and the city may have a backlog right now.

If the caller has a result that indicates lead is present, or in the absence of a result, our advice should be to minimize any stagnation of the water before consumption, even without knowing if they have plumbing that contains lead. You could tell them they can do so by letting a faucet run for a few minutes or until the water is cooler (don't set a time – it can be so variable) and then use it for drinking or cooking.

Please be polite and empathetic if you receive one of these calls.

I also want to thank you for the effort you have made to respond to this issue. It is noticed and appreciated. In recognition of your performance, I have arranged for you to receive a 2 percent merit increase starting tomorrow.

Richard

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