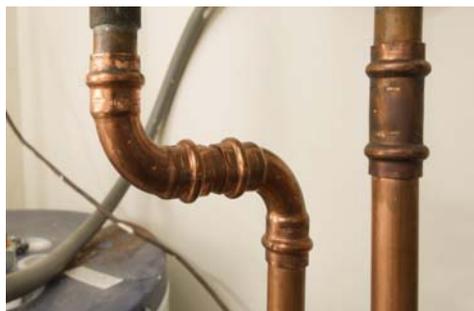




HOW DOES LEAD GET IN OUR DRINKING WATER?

In the Tallahassee region, lead (Pb) does not occur naturally in detectable levels in our ground water source. However, lead can still get into drinking water through prolonged contact with older pipe and plumbing components that contain lead, such as lead water service pipes, lead-brass alloy plumbing fixtures, and lead solder joints in copper plumbing. When water, lead, and oxygen come into contact with each other, the lead can oxidize and dissolve into the water. The more time the lead and water make contact, the more lead that can be dissolved. Such conditions may exist when water sits unused in the plumbing overnight, over the weekend, and even over several months (as can often occur with schools, government office buildings and businesses).



WHY IS THERE LEAD IN MY PLUMBING?

Lead was a commonly used pipe and plumbing material until the 1930's. After that time, molten lead (or solder) was commonly used as a pipe joint sealant until it was banned from use in 1986. Homes and businesses constructed before 1986 may still have plumbing components made with lead or lead-brass alloys. Additionally, up through 2013, plumbing fixtures classified as "lead-free" could still contain as much as 8 percent lead. In January 2014, the definition of "lead-free" was revised to require "less than 0.25% by weighted average, when used with respect to the wetted surface of pipes, fittings, and plumbing fixtures."

WHAT STEPS CAN I TAKE TO PREVENT LEAD EXPOSURE?

The presence of lead in pipe and plumbing does not mean for certain that lead will be present in your drinking water. Other factors can also have an effect on the presence of lead in drinking water, such as how long the water sits unused in the plumbing system and water chemistry or water quality. Corrosive water can accelerate lead corrosion in plumbing. Fortunately, the City's water supply is characterized as non-corrosive. Water customers that wish to reduce the potential for lead exposure from drinking water can take the following measures to significantly reduce their risk of exposure to lead in drinking water:



1. Flush your plumbing before using water for drinking or cooking. This is particularly important after prolonged periods (six hours, or longer) of limited or no use (i.e. after sleeping, closed business hours, vacations, etc.). The fresh water will not have had time to dissolve and absorb lead from your plumbing.
2. Drink and cook with water from the cold tap only, as hot water can dissolve contaminants more quickly than cold water. Also, lead does not absorb through the skin, so showering or bathing does not pose a risk.
3. Have your drinking water tested by an accredited laboratory that is certified to test for lead in drinking water. Also, it is equally important to understand the meaning of the laboratory results.
4. If lead is present, work with a licensed plumbing contractor to identify and replace plumbing and fixtures that may be contributing to the presence of lead.
5. If you chose not to replace lead plumbing or fixtures in your home or business, consider using bottled water or a certified 'lead removal' filter at the point-of-use for drinking water and cooking until you can replace lead plumbing and fixtures.

To learn more about how you can protect your family from the risks associated with lead exposure, visit the following online resources:

<http://www.floridahealth.gov/environmental-health/lead-poisoning/index.html>

<http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/tips/water.htm>

<http://www.epa.gov/lead/protect-your-family-exposures-lead#testdw>

<http://www.nsf.org/newsroom/nsf-international-publishes-consumer-guide-to-nsf-certified-water-filtratio>

To learn more about the City of Tallahassee's Drinking Water Quality, visit:

<http://www.talgov.com/you/you-learn-utilities-water-water-quality-report.aspx>

or contact Mr. David Roberts, Manager-Water Operations at 850-891-1228 or david.roberts@talgov.com