

JAY INSLEE
Governor



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**DIRECTIVE OF THE GOVERNOR
16-06**

May 2, 2016

To: Washington State Department of Health and Other Agencies as Needed

From: Governor Jay Inslee

Subject: Assisting community and agency responses to lead in water systems.

Recent detections of lead in drinking water systems have raised public awareness of the importance of safe drinking water as a foundational service of water utilities, school water systems, and our public health departments.

While everyone in Washington has some exposure to lead ([click here for more information about lead](#)), one common source is our water infrastructure. Fortunately, the State, utilities, schools, and others have resources dedicated to water sampling, testing, repairs, and for necessary health care measures; but, due to the deteriorating nature of our drinking water systems, we need further investments and funding for foundational public health services and infrastructure.

Therefore, I am directing the Department of Health (DOH) to continue to provide technical assistance and guidance regarding voluntary water quality tests that school districts may perform to ensure those tests meet water sample collection [protocol standards](#). The DOH will partner with local officials, utilities, the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, schools, and other agencies as necessary, and it will hold workshops for schools to raise water quality awareness and advise how to correctly test and remediate any identified drinking water issues.

I further direct:

1. DOH, the State Board of Health (BOH) and the Office of Financial Management (OFM) shall review and, if necessary, update WAC 246-366A, known as the “School Rule,” which promotes healthy and safe school environments. As part of this review, DOH in coordination with BOH shall prepare a decision package to implement the School Rule, with an emphasis, if necessary, on implementation of the portion of rules related to lead exposure.

2. DOH shall determine the viability and potential policy changes associated with developing a Lead Rental Inspection and Registry Program, to require residential rental properties built before 1978 to register and complete a lead inspection and demonstrate safety at each change of occupancy.
3. The Department of Early Learning, in collaboration with DOH and OFM, shall assess the need for, and viability of, policy changes that would require child care providers located in buildings constructed in whole or in part before 1978 to complete an evaluation for sources of lead exposure including the testing of drinking water.
4. DOH shall work with stakeholders to improve the efficiency of the blood level monitoring system and ensure full implementation of local public health outreach activities to families having children with blood lead levels meeting action levels. DOH shall develop a decision package and explore financing means, as part of a larger foundational public health system improvement package, for consideration next biennium. This should include:
 - transitioning the Child Blood Lead Registry to a fully electronic reporting system, which would be more efficient and effective for lab and clinic reporting; and
 - assessing the funding needs for local public health programs to fully implement lead investigations and remediation work for children who have blood level test results requiring action.
5. DOH shall work with the Health Care Authority to improve lead screening rates among children at the highest risk who are on Medicaid, and provide case management services to children with elevated blood lead levels and their families. DOH shall also work with the Office of the Insurance Commissioner to determine whether private payers provide for lead screening and case management services and whether any further coverage policy change may be necessary.
6. DOH shall prioritize the removal of lead service lines and other lead components in water distribution systems when considering a funding proposal through the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund, which provides low-interest loans to eligible public water systems to address public health concerns. As part of this effort, DOH shall work with stakeholder groups to develop policy and budgetary proposals with a goal of removing all lead service lines and lead components in Group A Public Water drinking systems within 15 years. DOH shall work with each Group A Public Water system to identify all lead service lines and lead components within two years.

7. DOH shall work with the Department of Ecology and the Environmental Protection Agency to seek additional federal assistance on these issues, including but not limited to:
 - Requesting additional funds to assist communities in expediting removal of lead in drinking water systems;
 - Supporting revisions to the Federal Lead and Copper Rule;
 - Considering regulatory requirements for testing in child care settings; and
 - Seeking funding for drinking water distribution line improvement.

DOH shall take necessary action immediately and, by no later than October 2016, report to me potential budget and policy recommendations regarding the various items listed above, while ensuring other affected parties and legislative leadership are also fully informed.