



STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

MOLLY M. SPEARMAN
STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION

MEMORANDUM

TO: District Superintendents
District Facility Managers
School Food Service Directors

FROM: Molly M. Spearman
State Superintendent of Education

DATE: August 9, 2018

RE: Drinking Water

In recent years, there has been increased attention to lead in drinking water. Although lead is found throughout the environment, lead can accumulate in the body over time and cause health problems if inhaled or swallowed. As such, the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (SCDHEC), the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) are acting to address drinking water quality in schools.

The SCDHEC has taken a proactive approach to lead in drinking water and will now be testing schools with their own water source annually for lead and copper, regardless of past sampling results. Additionally, the SCDHEC has completed a study of water systems that exceeded the lead action level during the 2011–15 calendar years, visited and provided technical assistance to all schools with their own water source, and discussed the national regulation that addresses lead and copper levels in drinking water, the Lead and Copper Rule (LCR), and best management practices with water systems throughout the state. Many South Carolina water systems and associations have also reached out to the schools they serve with proactive tips for reducing exposure to lead and other potential contaminants.

Schools tend to have many periods throughout the year when water is stagnant in pipes for extended periods, such as summer vacation or holiday breaks. These longer periods of stagnant water may increase the probability of lead corrosion from pipes, if the piping materials included

lead. Stagnant water may also cause other water quality issues such as increased disinfection by-products or microbial growth, which could result in additional health risks.

To help schools lower the health risks associated with drinking water contamination, the EPA has prepared two best management practice documents for schools and child care facilities. These documents can be found at: https://www.in.gov/idem/files/lead_epa_schools_pws.pdf and https://www.in.gov/idem/files/lead_epa_schools_private.pdf. Please forward this information to the person(s) that manage facility operations at each of your schools. These documents provide a short background on drinking water contamination, how the drinking water regulations specifically apply to schools, best management practices, and other information that will be useful to the schools. Some of these best management practices include:

- Developing a flushing plan;
- Flushing all water outlets used for drinking or food preparation, especially after extended periods of low or no water use;
- Using only cold water to prepare food and drinks;
- Cleaning debris out of all water outlet screens or aerators on a regular basis;
- Cleaning drinking water fountains daily;
- Removing lime build-up on drinking fountains or ice machines; and
- Periodic cleaning of hot water tanks.

If you have questions about school drinking water, please contact Myra Reece, SCDHEC, at reecem@dhec.sc.gov, 803-898-4102 or you may contact Delisa Clark, Director, Office of School Facilities at dclark@ed.sc.gov, 803-734-4837. Please contact Ron Jones, Director of the Office of Health and Nutrition at rfjones@ed.sc.gov, 803-734-8205 if you have questions regarding cafeteria food preparation.