

MCUSD#1 Water Testing Results Summary

Water Testing

Water testing for lead in schools and municipalities has made national and local headlines recently. In January 2017, Public Act 099-0922 was passed, requiring by the end of this year that all Illinois school districts complete water testing in all district sites built before 1987. The law only applies to buildings where pre-K through fifth grade students attend school. In Momence CUSD#1, 2 buildings met the required testing criteria, but all 3 buildings are scheduled to be tested.

The US EPA sets what is called an “action level” for lead in water at 15 parts per billion (ppb), however, the Illinois law establishes more strict guidelines, requiring districts to take action and notify parents if lead is found in water when levels are at or above 5 ppb. Please note that neither the 15ppb, nor the state’s threshold is a health based standard. Both the EPA and state levels were set to trigger systems to take action and mitigate the levels but are not accompanied by any requirements regarding medical tests or healthcare.

In accordance with the request of MCUSD#1, Prairie Analytical Systems conducted lead testing at the schools indicated.

MCUSD#1 complied with the new Illinois law and contracted with Prairie Analytical Systems, an industrial services company, to conduct testing. As noted, 2 buildings were identified as meeting the criteria for testing, under Public Act 099-0922:

JeNeir Elementary 24 sample(s) for the analyses presented.
MJHS 34 sample(s) for the analyses presented.

Prairie Analytical Systems collected 58 water samples from over 21 water sources at the 2 buildings. A summary of the results has been provided to the district.

The district will follow, and in many cases, go above and beyond the Illinois Department of Public Health’s guidelines to address the results. The district has and will continue to take the following action:

-All in classroom drinking fountains in all buildings that tested above IDPH guidelines will be shut off by September 22, 2017.

-Drinking fountains outside classrooms that tested above IDPH guidelines will be shut off by September 22, 2017. They will then be removed, replaced or repaired as soon as supplies and equipment are available. On a temporary basis, water stations will be available until repairs or replacements have been completed.

-All sinks in classrooms, bathrooms, nurses’ offices, kitchenettes, cafeterias, labs, and any other locations will be labeled with a bi-lingual sign reading “Hand-Washing Only”. In addition, according to the U.S. EPA, washing hands, and even bathing or showering, should be safe for children and adults, even if the water contains lead over the “action level”. Human skin does not absorb lead in water.

Please be assured that we will take all action necessary to protect student health and we will continue to update our staff, families, and community as new information becomes available.

Additional Resources

More resources are provided at the end of this document as well as this statement from the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH):

While any source of lead exposure to children is concerning, the majority of child lead poisoning is attributed to lead paint and lead in soil. Even so, IDPH is addressing water as a source of lead in schools by requiring Illinois' school districts to test for lead in water and report findings to parents and guardians. IDPH has established a low threshold for reporting to allow parents to be informed about risks their children may be exposed to at school. Risk will vary however, depending on the individual, the circumstances, and the amount of water consumed. A blood test is the only way to find out if your child has a high lead level. Most children with high lead levels in their blood have no symptoms. Your child's health care provider can recommend treatment if your child has been exposed to lead.

For additional resources, please visit the following websites:

Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH)
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S.EPA)
Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
Illinois Department of Public Health's Mitigation Strategies