

Testing Drinking Water for Lead and Copper in Public Schools Project

Sampling strategy overview:

Report to RI General Assembly on findings of the monitoring program, including a plan for ensuring compliance with all state and federal laws, rules and regulations pertaining to lead and copper levels in drinking water supplies in public schools deadline April 30, 2017

To develop baseline data, samples from several (2-3) drinking water fixtures per public school in Rhode Island will be collected and analyzed for lead (and copper?) by March 15, 2017.

Due to the tight budget and time line, school staff or designated volunteers (school committee members, PTO, etc.) will be recruited and provided training materials to collect samples and complete sample data and chain of custody forms in each school.

Samples will be collected first thing (5 am – 7am) Tuesday through Friday mornings in bottles provided by the laboratory. Sampling will not occur during school vacation periods in order to reflect typical use concentrations (rather than atypical extensive stagnation values).

Sampling sites (fixtures to be tested) will be identified in consultation with school staff. The 2-3 water fountains or faucets most frequently used by students will be targeted. School kitchens which prepare food will also be considered for testing.

Project or laboratory staff will pick samples up from schools according to a designated schedule for delivery to the lab for subsequent analysis.

Sample results will be shared with schools as soon as they are received by URI Cooperative Extension staff. Results will be sent in letters which will include information on what the actual values were, what those mean, and provide information on steps for remediation if necessary, as well as guidance for more comprehensive assessments for schools to consider (i.e., links to 3 Ts information).

Progress to date:

- Sent requests for quotes to certified labs based on scope of services outline.
- Received responses from 3 of the 6 labs to which the scope of services was sent.
- Hired a graduate student to assist with GIS assessments and project tasks, scheduled to start in November.
- Discussed project ideas with UMass staff coordinating MADEP efforts to test schools statewide. That project builds on existing requirements for schools to complete Lead and copper checklists regularly, as well as having a \$2M budget. (See the link to [Assistance Program for Lead in School Drinking Water](#) under Resources at <http://web.uri.edu/nemo/lead-and-copper/>. UMass/MADEP materials are being used to create sampling plans and checklists for this effort.
- Created communication strategy for the project.
 - Draft letters to schools created.
 - Draft letters to water suppliers created.
 - Draft checklist for schools to complete to provide lead and copper information prior to sampling created.

- In process of contracting with Sue Stableford, Director of the Health Literacy Institute, Center for Community and Public Health, University Of New England, an expert in developing clear health communication tools, to review and revise project communication materials (letters, templates, press releases, etc.) to ensure effective outreach.
- Begun gathering project data:
 - From DCYF received data on licensed daycare providers including dates of initial licensure, confirmation of lead-free/lead-safe certification.
 - From RIDOH received data on:
 - Schools with their own water supplies (i.e. operating as public water suppliers (PWS) and subject to the lead and copper monitoring regulations required of PWS).
 - Lead service line information.
 - School-based blood lead levels.
 - From RIDE website located information on:
 - School facilities (FY2013 report based on FY2011 data).
 - School contact information (Excel files with email addresses and phone #s).