

2008:B9

**MEMORANDUM TO:** Directors of Education  
Supervisory Officers and Secretary/Treasurers of School  
Authorities  
Director, Provincial Schools Branch  
Supervisory Officer, Centre Jules-Léger

**FROM:** Nancy Naylor  
Assistant Deputy Minister  
Business & Finance Division

Keith West  
Chief Drinking Water Inspector  
Ministry of the Environment

**DATE:** June 27, 2008

**SUBJECT:** Annual Water Sampling for Lead per O. Reg. 243/07

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Further to the memoranda **2007: B7** and **2007: SB22**, I am writing to remind you of your on-going responsibilities for testing water for lead and flushing plumbing. We are now in the time period for mandatory annual sampling and testing of school water systems for lead in drinking water. This is required by *Ontario Regulation 243/07 - Schools, Private Schools And Day Nurseries* under the *Safe Drinking Water Act 2002*.

**All school boards are required to submit their annual school water samples for lead testing performed between June 15, 2008, and August 15, 2008.**

This annual water sampling and testing is an important component of water quality practice. The testing allows the Ministry of the Environment to gather necessary water quality data on a province-wide basis and determine the appropriate response.

It is critical that samples are taken in accordance with the regulatory requirements. Both standing and flushed samples must be taken and analyzed and sample bottles must be clearly labeled to indicate whether they are standing or flushed. I ask that you bring this letter, and the resources described below, to the attention of staff in your board who will be undertaking lead sampling.

2007 test results confirm value of flushing

The Ministry of the Environment received results from the laboratories contracted to test for lead in drinking water samples taken by schools for the June 15, 2007 to August 15, 2007, sampling period. These test results are summarized in the attached charts. All

cases where lead exceedences have occurred were followed up by the local public health unit and Ministry of the Environment staff.

Schools are required to take two samples annually – one that is taken when the plumbing has been left standing for 6 hours (“standing samples”), and another that is taken following a 5-minute flush and a 30-35 minute stagnation period (“flushed samples”). The 2007 results indicate that 72 per cent of schools had results below the 10 microgram per litre standard in standing samples, and 91 per cent of schools had results below the standard for flushed samples.

These results clearly show that flushing plumbing for a minimum of 5 minutes reduces the concentration of lead in drinking water. The data also indicate that, with certain exceptions, daily flushing is not warranted in facilities with plumbing installed after January 1, 1990. This is reflected in the revised approach to testing in these facilities outlined in the letter of March 28, 2008, to operators of schools, private schools and day nurseries from the Chief Drinking Water Inspector.

### Information Resources

To support this annual water testing process, the Ministry of Environment has provided a variety of on-line information resources. These are described in the attached **Appendix – Online Information Resources**. I encourage you to review and use these resource materials because the experience of the first year of testing underscores the importance of sampling and flushing procedures.

### Drinking Water Information System (DWIS) number:

Over the course of the last year, each school has been registered in the Ministry of the Environment’s database Drinking Water Information System (DWIS) and each school has been assigned a unique DWIS number. This unique number allows your water test results to be uploaded to DWIS.

It is important that the DWIS number be used, since a lack of consistency regarding school identification was a significant problem in the first year of testing.

If you would like to confirm or identify your school’s unique DWIS number please contact the Ministry of Environment’s Drinking Water helpline at: 1-866-793-2588 (toll-free). Additional information on the DWIS is available on the *Drinking Water Ontario* website.

### After submitting water samples

After submitting water samples and receiving the results, please contact your local Ministry of the Environment office if you would like to discuss the sample results and any further required steps.

Schools that are required to provide alternative sources of drinking water will continue to be reimbursed for the costs by the Ministry of Education in 2008-09 (see memorandum **2008: SB14**).

Thank you in advance for undertaking the water sampling for lead in your schools. It is critical to ensure on-going public confidence in the health and safety of our school facilities.

Nancy Naylor  
Assistant Deputy Minister  
Business & Finance Division

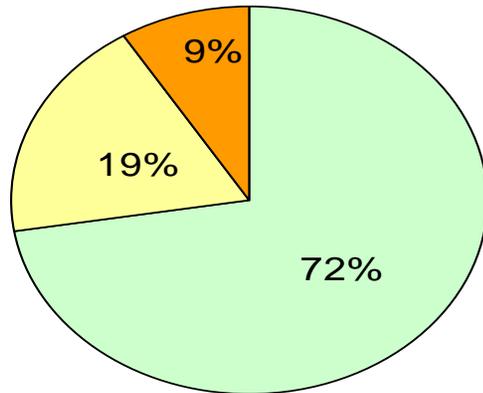
Keith West  
Chief Drinking Water Inspector  
Ministry of Environment

#### Attachments

cc: Superintendents of Business and Finance  
Senior Plant Officials  
Gerry Townsend, Director (A), Field Services Branch  
EDU Regional Managers

## Public Schools

**OR243 Breakdown of Standing Results  
for Public Schools by # Facilities -  
June 20, 2008**



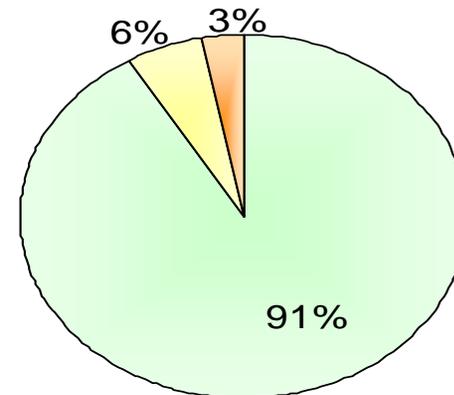
A standing sample is taken after a period of six or more hours when plumbing is not in use.

72% of public schools were below the Ontario Drinking Water Quality Standard (ODWQS) of 10 ug/L.

28% of public schools were above the ODWQS for lead.  
19% had a standing result between 10-30 ug/L  
9% had a standing result above 30 ug/L

<10 ug/L  
  10 -30.0 ug/L  
  >30 ug/L

**OR243 Breakdown of Flushed Results  
for Public Schools by # Facilities -  
June 20 2008**



A flushed sample is taken after the tap is allowed to run for approximately 5 minutes, then shut off for 30-35 minutes. The flushed sample is taken after the standing sample.

91% of public schools were below the Ontario Drinking Water Quality Standard (ODWQS) of 10 ug/L.

9% of public schools had a flushed sample above the ODWQS for lead.  
6% had a flushed result between 10-30 ug/L  
3% had a flushed result above 30 ug/L

<10 ug/L  
  10-30.0 ug/L  
  >30 ug/L

## APPENDIX – ONLINE INFORMATION RESOURCES

### 1. Contacting a licensed laboratory to get your *water sampling for lead kit*

The Ministry of the Environment has provided a list of all laboratories licensed to test for lead in water on the *Ministry's* website:

<http://www.ene.gov.on.ca/en/water/tapwater/leadlabs.php>

The list of laboratories is also attached to this memo.

Should you have any questions about contacting a licensed laboratory, please contact the Ministry of Environment's Drinking Water helpline at 1-866-793-2588 (toll-free).

### 2. Sampling procedure

The Ministry of Environment has prepared a quick reference poster, *Sampling for Lead: At-a-Glance Guide for Schools, Private Schools and Day Nurseries*, that outlines the required steps in the water sampling process. This is the same poster that was sent to school boards this past winter. It may be viewed and downloaded from:

<http://www.ontario.ca/drinkingwater/178734.pdf>

A copy of this poster is also attached to this memo.

In addition, a new resource which has now been made available by the Ministry of the Environment is a short instructional video on how to sample properly for lead in drinking water. This video can be viewed on-line at:

<http://www.ontario.ca/ONT/portal51/drinkingwater/General?docId=177450&lang=en>

To request a DVD copy of the video, contact the Ministry of the Environment's Public Information Centre at 1-800-565-4923

Should you have any questions about the sampling for lead in water procedure, please contact the Ministry of Environment's Drinking Water helpline at: 1-866-793-2588 (toll-free).

### 3. General information and support regarding water sampling for lead and O.Reg. 243/07:

The Ministry of the Environment operates the *Drinking Water Ontario* website:

[www.ontario.ca/drinkingwater](http://www.ontario.ca/drinkingwater)

All forms, instructions, guidelines, slide presentations and webcasts related to O.Reg. 243/07 may be accessed at the following specific URL. These resources include a webcast outlining regulatory requirements of Ontario Regulation 243/07 for publicly funded schools, which was conducted on May 27, 2008:

<http://www.ontario.ca/ONT/portal51/drinkingwater/General?docId=177450&lang=en>

## List of Commercial Laboratories Licensed in Ontario to Test for Lead in Drinking Water

Accutest Laboratories Ltd.*	146 Colonnade Road, Unit 8, Nepean ON, K2E 7Y1	Jennifer Mitchell 613-727-5692 fax: 613-727-5222 Email: jmitchell@accutestlabs.com.
Caduceon Environmental Laboratories - Ottawa East *	2378 Holly Lane, Ottawa ON, K1V 7P1	Greg Clarkin 613-228-1145 fax: 613-228-1148 Email: gclarkin@caduceonlabs.com
AGAT Laboratories - Mississauga	5623 McAdam Road, Mississauga ON, L4Z 1N9	Kelly Shea 905-501-9998 fax: 905-501-0589 Email: shea@agatlabs.com
ALS Laboratory Group – Environmental Division (Waterloo) *	60 Northland Road, Unit #1 Waterloo, ON L5N 2L8	Glenna Pike 519-886-6910 fax: 519-886-9047 Email: glenna.pike@alsenviro.com
ALS Laboratory Group – Environmental Division (Thunder Bay) *	1081 Barton Street, Thunder Bay ON, P7B 5N3	Karen Rutledge 807-623-6463 fax: 807-623-7598 Email: karen.rutledge@alsenviro.com
Maxxam Analytics Inc. *	6740 Campobello Road Mississauga ON L5N - 2L8	Sandra Gaudette 905-817-5700 Fax: 905-817-5777 Email: sandra.gaudette@maxxamanalytics.com
SGS Environmental Services – Lakefield *	185 Concession Street, Lakefield ON, K0L 2H0	Diane Wingett 705-652-2006 fax: 705-652-6441 Email: diane.wingett@sgs.com
Testmark Laboratories Ltd. *	7 Margaret Street, Garson ON, P3L 1E1	Lisa Finnermore (705) 693-1121 fax: (705) 693-1124 Email: customer.service@testmark.ca
York-Durham Regional Environmental Laboratory *	901 McKay Road, Pickering ON, L1W 3A3	Jerry Mirsch 905-686-0041 ext 4304 or Renu Joshi 905-686-0041 ext 4325 fax: 905-686-0664 Email: jerry.mirsch@region.durham.on.ca