

Important Water Information from The City of Wetaskiwin

For immediate release:
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WETASKIWIN, ALBERTA – One of our top priorities is the protection of public health. The quality of Wetaskiwin's tap water is extremely high: 99.9% of Wetaskiwin buildings meet or exceed all water quality parameters. Like most cities in North America, a small number of buildings in Wetaskiwin have a lead water service line. The City of Wetaskiwin has conducted an ongoing tap water sampling program to assess the quality of water at the tap for those buildings with lead service pipes. The vast majority of buildings with these pipes were built prior to 1950. While the drinking water leaving The City of Wetaskiwin's Water Treatment Plant is virtually lead free, lead may be present in some buildings due to its presence in the service connection line or in the buildings' plumbing systems containing lead, including solder and brass fittings.

The City of Wetaskiwin is initiating an information program about steps businesses and households supplied by lead service pipes can take to improve the quality of drinking water. This program includes a plan to improve overall water quality by:

- Offering free initial testing of your households and businesses tap water;
- Adjusting the water chemistry in order to reduce the probability of corrosion occurring in lead pipes;
- Inform residents and business owners about an NSF/ANSI 53 certified tap mounted filter.

Our study shows the majority of buildings with a lead service pipe can maintain good water quality at the tap by flushing their water pipes regularly before drinking. This can be done by flushing toilets, running the dishwasher, or letting the taps run for at least 5 minutes before drinking, especially if water has been sitting for longer than 6 hours. Cold water should be used for cooking and drinking. After flushing the sink in the morning, drinking water can be stored in a pitcher in the refrigerator. In a few buildings, additional steps may be taken to bring lead levels in the drinking water within Health Canada's recommended levels.

In buildings with water lead concentration levels above the standard recommended by Health Canada, high risk individuals (pregnant women, infants, and children under 6) should take extra precautions, such as using bottled water, until an NSF/ANSI 53 certified tap mounted filter is installed which can be purchased at major local retailers.

Buildings identified in our records as having a lead service line will be receiving letters with more information about the potential health effects of lead, how it may enter the drinking water system, and steps to take to limit exposure. City of Wetaskiwin Utility staff carrying City ID will visit buildings that phone in about having lead pipes and will provide written and verbal awareness packages to all discovered locations, without necessarily testing the water at each service.

For more information about potential health effects of lead in the household environment, please call **Health Link at 811** or visit www.wetaskiwin.ca/water. To find out more about the lead service pipe awareness and testing program, please call the City of Wetaskiwin at **780-361-4436**.

For more information please contact:
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A safe, strong and proud community

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