United States Environmental Protection Agency
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Office of Water (WH-550A)

EPA Lead Contamination Control Act (LCCA)

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The New Law

The Lead Contamination Control Act (LCCA) of 1988 requires:

- The identification of water coolers that are not lead-free.
- The repair or removal of water coolers with lead-lined tanks.
- A ban on the manufacture and sale of water coolers that are not lead free.
- The identification and resolution of lead problems in schools' drinking water.
- The authorization of additional funds for lead screening programs for children.

The Act was signed by President Reagan on October 31, 1988.

Who Is Affected

The law's programs and provisions will affect:

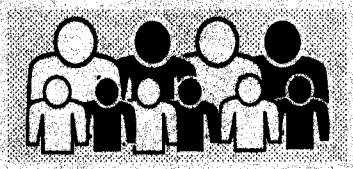
- Secondary and primary schools, kindergartens and day care centers.
- Water cooler manufacturers and distributors.
- Federal, state, and local agencies.

Why It Was Enacted

Most people understand that the consumption of lead can be very dangerous and that exposure to lead can cause a number of harmful health effects. These include serious damage to the brain and central nervous system, kidneys, and liver. Lead is present in many places — in air, food, dust, dirt, and in drinking water. Harmful levels of lead can enter our bodies from any of these sources.

Children are particularly sensitive to lead contamination. Their bodies are developing and, as a result, they absorb and retain more lead than adults. Even at very low levels of lead exposure, children can experience reduced I.Q. levels, impaired learning and language skills, loss of hearing, and reduced attention spans and poor classroom performance. At higher levels, lead can damage their brains and central nervous systems, interfering with both learning and physical growth.

Women are also at risk. In women, lead can cause fertility problems and miscarriages. In pregnant women, lead can cause impaired development of the fetus, premature births, and reduced birth weights.



Men are at risk of increased blood pressure from exposure to lead.

The lead problem must be solved and the threat it imposes must be eliminated. One way to begin is to remedy one of the most common, yet controllable sources of lead contamination — that found in drinking water due to the corrosion of interior plumbing (including water coolers) —especially in schools and day care centers.

Federal Guidance

The Lead Contamination Control Act directs EPA to publish guidance to assist schools, local education agencies, and day care centers in discovering the levels of contamination in drinking-water coolers and taking actions to reduce contamination. The first, most important step is to identify such sources of lead

contamination in drinking water as water coolers, interior plumbing, bathroom faucets, and kitchen facilities. If the specific source is determined, then the problem can be solved.

To help do this, EPA published a guidance document entitled, *Lead in School Drinking Water*. The guidance explains the problem of lead contamination and the harmful effects related to the consumption of lead in drinking water. It also explains how to identify possible sources of lead and how to conduct a thorough, step-by-step sampling protocol in a school (or other public building).

Schools and people responsible for other buildings should obtain the guidance document and begin the process of identification, sampling and remediation. *Lead in School Drinking Water* has been distributed to all the states and is also available to the general public through the U.S. Government Printing Office (see below for details).

Water Coolers

Other sections of the Act focus on the identification of water coolers that may contribute lead to drinking water. As required by the law, EPA has published a list, identifying the brands and models of water coolers that are not lead free. The list appeared in the *Federal Register* on April 10, 1989 (54 FR 14320). This list may help schools and other building owners identify a priority list of outlets for testing, but it does not account for all possible sources of lead in schools' drinking water. **EPA encourages owners of drinking water coolers to sample the water they produce if they believe there may be a lead problem.**

The LCCA directs the Consumer Products Safety Commission (CPSC) to issue an order requiring manufacturers and importers of coolers with lead-lined tanks to either repair the coolers, replace the coolers, or recall the coolers and provide a refund to the owners. The law also prohibits the future manufacture and sale in interstate commerce of any water cooler that is not lead-free.

State Agencies

The LCCA also indicates three areas involving state agencies:

First — To complement the EPA guidance document and testing protocol, states are supposed to provide a list of qualified laboratories so that school authorities and the general public can test their tap water for lead. These should be laboratories that are certified by the States only after proven to provide reliable and accurate testing services.

Second — States may use the guidance documents to assist local school systems and education agencies. Although EPA does not require testing, local education agencies are encouraged to:

- Identify water coolers that are not lead-free.
- Test school water outlets (including water coolers) for lead.
- Identify and remedy other sources of lead contamination in the school (e.g. interior plumbing, bathroom faucets, and kitchen facilities).
- Repair water coolers by taking actions to ensure that they are lead-free; permanently remove and replace them with coolers that are lead-free; or render the coolers inoperable, unless they are tested and found (within the limits of testing accuracy) not to contribute lead to drinking water.

Third — If funds are available, the Centers for Disease Control may make grants available to states and local governments for initiating and expanding community programs designed to:

- Screen infants and children for elevated blood levels.
- Assure referral for treatment and environmental intervention of infants and children with elevated blood levels.
- Provide education about childhood lead poisoning.
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FOR MORE INFORMATION

Publications and Documents

Lead Contamination Control Act (P.L.100-572) and supporting documents, available through: House Document Room, House of Representatives, Washington, DC 20515, (202) 225-3456.

Lead In School's Drinking Water (GPO-055-000-00281-9), available for $3.25. Send check or money order to: Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402, (202) 783-3238.

You and Your Drinking Water and *Lead and Your Drinking Water*. Available from: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Public Information Center, 401 Street, SW, Washington, DC 20460.

For these and other materials and information about safe drinking water or lead in drinking water you can write to:

Office of Drinking Water (WH-550) U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 401 M Street, SW, Washington, DC 20460.

U.S. Consumer Products Safety Commission, Division of Corrective Actions, Washington, DC 20207.

Centers for Disease Control, Center for Environmental Health and Injury Control, Division of Environmental Hazards and Health Effects, Atlanta, GA 30333.

State and Local Information Requests

Information about state and local lead-in-drinking-water programs may be available from designated "lead contacts" at state Health or Environmental agencies, Departments of Education, or Water Supply Agencies. Local information may be available from county/city Boards of Education, Environmental Agencies and Health Departments. Local lead-screening programs and family doctors or pediatricians can also be information sources.

Hotline

EPA's Safe Drinking Water Hotline:
(800) 426-4791 or (202) 382-5533