



Department of Health

ANDREW M. CUOMO
Governor

HOWARD A. ZUCKER, M.D., J.D.
Commissioner

LISA J. PINO, M.A., J.D.
Executive Deputy Commissioner

October 13, 2020

Re: Lead Testing in School Drinking Water – Extension of School Lead Testing Requirements

Dear Superintendents and School Representatives:

On April 3, 2020 the New York State Department of Health (Department) issued guidance to all schools required to conduct lead testing in drinking water under Subpart 67-4 to discontinue lead testing of drinking water while a school is closed in response to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19), and that sampling should be conducted upon resuming normal operating conditions. On September 9, 2020 the Department sent guidance recommending schools conduct a flushing program of the internal plumbing of their school buildings prior to reopening due to the fact that buildings that have been closed or have had limited occupancy for an extended period of time can result in adverse stagnant water conditions that can develop within a building's internal plumbing system. Stagnant water in the internal plumbing is conducive for the growth of bacteria, and can cause leaching of metals, such as lead, from internal plumbing materials, pipes, and water fixtures. A flushing program is important to evacuate stagnate water, stabilize water quality measures within the internal plumbing, and restore water quality.

As schools reopen this fall with various reopening and contingency plans due to COVID-19, school occupancy in buildings and water usage will likely be in flux. In recognition of these unusual circumstances, the Department is extending the 2020 lead sampling period to June 30, 2021. This extension provides schools additional time to complete proper testing in accordance with the requirements specified in Subpart 67-4.

Thank you for your continued efforts to protect your students, staff, and community in response to COVID-19.

If you have any questions, please send an email to:
lead.in.school.drinking.water@health.ny.gov

Sincerely,

The Lead Testing in School Drinking Water Program