

State of Louisiana Safe Drinking Water Program

Low lead requirements in plumbing and potable water distribution systems:

Concentrations of lead found in drinking water do not typically derive from natural sources. Instead, the most common cause of lead concentrations in potable water is contamination from the gradual corrosion of water supply pipes and plumbing fixtures as well as the solder, or flux, used for installation and repair. Most current regulatory efforts to control lead in drinking water focus primarily on reducing the lead content of these system components.

On June 29, 2011, Gov. Bobby Jindal signed Louisiana House Bill 471 and enacted Act Number 362. This Act takes effect January 1, 2013, and prohibits the use, installation, repair, introduction into commerce, or sale of pipes, fittings, fixtures, solder, or flux that are not “lead free” when used for conveying water for human consumption.

The Department of Health and Hospitals (DHH) has prepared this fact sheet to help clarify how Act 362 redefines “lead-free” and how these new, lowered lead limits will affect various components used in the construction of new and existing plumbing and water distribution projects. In addition, this fact sheet will describe the key components of implementation including code development, applicable performance and material standards, enforcement and exceptions.

Reduced Lead Requirements of Act 362 (effective January 1, 2013):

Under Act 362, the lead content of pipes, fittings and fixtures will be reduced from not more than 8.0 percent lead to not more than a weighted average of 0.25 percent lead when used with respect to the wetted surfaces of pipes, pipe fittings, plumbing fittings and fixtures.

All pipe, plumbing fittings and fixtures, solder or flux used in the installation or repair of any public water system or any plumbing in a facility providing water for human consumption must meet the new low lead requirements, except when necessary for the repair of leaded joints of cast iron pipes.

EXCEPTIONS: The following materials are not required to meet the reduced lead requirements of Act 362:

- ▶ Pipes, pipe fittings, plumbing fittings or fixtures, including backflow preventers, which are used exclusively for non-potable services such as manufacturing, fire sprinkler system, industrial processing, irrigation, outdoor watering or any other uses where the water is not anticipated to be used for human consumption; or
- ▶ Toilets, bidets, urinals, fill valves, flushometer valves, tub fillers, shower valves, showers, safety shower flushes, service saddles or water distribution main gate valves that are two inches in diameter or larger.
- ▶ Materials purchased or acquired by a public water system prior to January 1, 2013, can continue to be utilized until January 1, 2014.

In addition to the installation requirements, no person shall introduce into commerce any pipe, pipe or plumbing fitting or fixture intended to convey or dispense water for human consumption through drinking or cooking that is not lead-free, including kitchen faucets, bathroom faucets or any other end-use devices intended to convey or dispense water for human consumption through drinking or cooking.

Louisiana Administrative Code (LAC) Updates:

These new low-lead requirements will be published in Parts XII (Water Supplies) and XIV (Plumbing)

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of LAC Title 51 (Sanitary Code). Under Parts XII and XIV, all applicable potable water piping, fixtures, pipe related products and materials that join or seal pipes shall be evaluated and listed as conforming with NSF/ANSI 372-Drinking Water System Components, Lead Content or shall be certified to be lead-free by an independent American National Standards Institute (ANSI)-accredited third party testing laboratory, inspection agency or other organization concerned with product evaluation.

Enforcement:

The enforcement of the lead reduction law will be handled during plan reviews, permit inspections, surveys, complaints, etc. For plumbing-related violations, the enforcement will typically be handled at the local level in accordance with their ordinances, laws or other regulations. When handled at the state level, the enforcement process will be in accordance with Part I of LAC Title 51.

Potential Health Effects of Lead Exposure:

- ▶ Lead is a neuro-toxic metal that accumulates in both soft tissue and bones. Even low-level exposure can lead to a range of adverse health effects, including brain, nervous system and blood disorders.
- ▶ Children and Infants— Exposure can result in delays in physical or mental development, reduced intelligence, learning disabilities, attention deficit disorder, behavioral problems, stunted growth, impaired hearing and kidney damage.
- ▶ Adults— Exposure can result in kidney problems, high blood pressure, nerve disorders, fertility problems, muscle and joint pain, irritability, memory and concentration problems. Pregnant women can pass lead contained in their bodies to their fetuses.

Highlighted Facts:

- ▶ Act 362 Becomes Effective January 1, 2013.
- ▶ Prohibits the use, installation or repair, introduction into commerce, or selling of pipes, fittings, fixtures, solder, or flux that is not “lead-free” when used for conveying water for human consumption.
- ▶ Pipes, fittings and fixtures that are used exclusively for non-potable services are not required to meet the reduced lead requirements of Act 362.
- ▶ Materials purchased or acquired by a public water system prior to January 1, 2013 can continue to be utilized until January 1, 2014.
- ▶ All applicable piping, fixtures, pipe-related products and materials that join or seal pipes shall be evaluated and listed as conforming with NSF/ANSI 372-Drinking Water System Components, Lead Content or shall be certified to be lead free by an independent ANSI-accredited third party testing laboratory.

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