



City of Tigard Media Advisory

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Tigard Water Tests Show Improvements in Water Quality, Lower Lead Levels

The City of Tigard has recently completed required federal tests for concentrations of lead in drinking water, showing improved water quality and safe, healthy drinking water for customers served in the Tigard Water Service Area.

To meet federal requirements for changing to a new water source, the city's Water Program conducted mandatory tests for trace levels of lead in homes known to have lead solder or higher risks because of household plumbing fixtures. The U.S. EPA requires the sample group be homes built between 1983 and 1985.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), high lead levels in tap water can cause health effects and elevated blood lead levels. The U.S. EPA has determined that an action level for lead is 15 parts per billion, as mandated by federal drinking water standards.

“Our findings within the sample group show lead levels at less than four parts per billion using the U.S. EPA’s testing methodology,” said John Goodrich, Water Program manager. “This is a significant drop in the risk of lead and copper in the city’s primary drinking water source.”

Since June 2016, City of Tigard has been providing more than 60,000 customers in the Tigard Water Service Area with a new water source drawn from the Clackamas River, through the Lake Oswego Tigard Water Partnership. Drinking water standards require that water providers like Tigard conduct tests for known hazards in water sources, including lead. Lead is rarely found above detectable levels in the Clackamas River.

Samples taken this September at 66 homes with lead solder and copper in household plumbing show that Clackamas River water treated and delivered by the Lake Oswego Tigard Water Treatment Plant is less corrosive than the city’s previous water source. The plant treats drinking water to make it less corrosive and therefore less likely to leach into water from some household plumbing fixtures.

In 2016, the city sampled water in 11 homes and recorded samples of lead at 13 parts per billion—still within acceptable levels for safe drinking water. The testing occurred jointly with Portland and other wholesale water providers. Through June 2016, Tigard had purchased water from the Portland Water Bureau, whose primary source is the Bull Run Watershed.

Though overall 2016 results indicate that lead and copper risks have been greatly reduced, two homes still were found to be higher than the normal action level for lead. In such cases, lead levels can typically be traced back to interior plumbing fixtures, not the source water. The city will conduct another round of testing in March 2017 to confirm the initial results.

The city is responsible for water quality to the point of delivery at homes and business. However, some customers may use solder and copper plumbing components that can increase the level of lead at their taps. For water that has sat for several hours, consider flushing your tap for 30 seconds to two minutes before using it for drinking or cooking.

More information on lead and water can be found on the city's water page at: **www.tigard-or.gov/water**. Tigard Water Service Area customers can request a free lead-in-water test kit by contacting the City of Tigard at **503-718-2591**.

The CDC also provides information on health issues associated with lead and water on its website: **www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/tips/water.htm**.

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