



City of Tigard Press Release

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Water Tests Confirm Improvements in Water Quality, Lower Lead Levels

The City of Tigard recently completed a second round of required federal tests for concentrations of lead in drinking water, and is celebrating improved water quality as part of National Drinking Water Week. Tests showed improved water quality and safe, healthy drinking water for customers.

To meet federal requirements for changing to a new water source, the city's Water Program conducted mandatory tests in September 2016 and March 2017 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.

The city's most recent results indicate that lead and copper risks have been greatly reduced, zero homes were found to have higher than the normal action level for lead.

"That's truly remarkable," said John Goodrich, Water Program manager. "All along this was a goal of the Lake Oswego-Tigard Water Partnership, but to see it become a reality for our customers is really exciting."

In tests in September 2016, lead levels were at less than four parts per billion, yet two homes were found to be higher than the normal action level. In such cases, lead levels can typically be traced back to interior plumbing fixtures, not the source water. 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.

Samples taken in September and March 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 lead into water from some household plumbing fixtures.

In fact, the recent test results were so good, that Tigard will be able to reduce the lead and copper sampling schedule from “every year” to “every three years”. The city will be conducting the next round of lead and copper water quality testing in March of 2020.

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.