

Have you tested your school's water for lead contamination?

Free Lead Testing Now Available to Your Local Schools & District



Lead in drinking water is a serious concern, especially in schools. Adequate hydration is critical to children's overall health and development, and state law requires school districts to provide access to free, fresh drinking water during mealtimes.¹ However, if the available water is contaminated, children should not drink it.

Recently the California State Water Board mandated that local water districts provide free water testing for lead contamination at the point of use in California schools—when the school requests it. Water agencies regularly test water quality at the source, but they rarely test the quality at the point of use. Now schools can ask the water districts to test for lead contamination at no cost to the school.

PROTECT STUDENTS RIGHT AWAY.

- Lead is a toxic.
- Children under six years are at particular risk for lead exposure because they absorb lead more easily than do adults.
- **Even low blood levels of lead have been associated with reduced IQ and attention span, learning disabilities, poor classroom performance, hyperactivity, behavioral problems, impaired growth and hearing loss.**
- No safe blood lead level in children has been determined.
- Lead can affect almost every organ and system in your body. The most sensitive is the central nervous system (brain), particularly in children.

Finding lead in your water is serious, but there are inexpensive procedures to mitigate contamination, and various new and old funding sources are available to schools to help address adverse water results. **Page two of this document provides a step-by-step process to provide safe drinking water to your students.** However funding is limited, so the earlier you test and apply for funding, the better your chance to receive these funds.

New resources make free lead testing available to schools & districts by contacting your local water agency (info on back).

You may also contact our technical assistance providers to help you determine your best options.

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¹ http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/pub/09-10/bill/sen/sb_1401-1450/sb_1413_bill_20100930_chaptered.html

Steps to Provide Lead-Free Drinking Water in Your Schools

First, contact your local water agency to request FREE lead testing.

- Visit the State Water Resources Control Board's website for details on how to request free lead testing from your local water agency: http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/drinking_water/certlic/drinkingwater/leadsamplinginschools.shtml

If your water tests positive for lead, you should shut off the tap and then:

- Review EPA's 3Ts for Reducing Lead in Drinking Water in Schools:
<https://www.epa.gov/ground-water-and-drinking-water/3ts-reducing-lead-drinking-water-toolkit>
- Acquire emergency bottle water service through the state and/or county:
http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/grants_loans/caa/dw_droughtfund/
- If necessary, at no charge to schools and districts, contact Rural Community Assistance Corporation (RCAC) or Self Help Enterprises (SHE) for technical assistance with any water service or emergency drinking water applications. Info on front.

Next steps:

- **Apply for grants to install point-of-use filtration and drinking water filling station installation FOR FREE:**
The 2016 state budget included \$9.5 million for schools to install filtered water bottle filling stations and water fountains, similar to those you see in the airport and at schools and community locations served under the Agua4All program. The State Water Board is expected to adopt the guidelines for the program in May 2017, and it will begin to accept applications shortly thereafter. This interim solution, which could be installed within the next year, can improve water quality and water access at your school. Contact: agua4all@rcac.org
- **Plan for a permanent solution using numerous options available to schools and districts to remediate adverse lead testing results.**
 - Learn more about the Public School Facility Bond Program and how your school may be able to apply for a Construction Financial Hardship Waiver:
<http://www.dgs.ca.gov/opsc/Programs/facilityhardshipprogram.aspx>
- **Contact your legislator** to advocate for safe drinking water solutions in schools and communities, including more funding to ensure all Californians have safe and affordable drinking water. <http://findyourrep.legislature.ca.gov/>

