



New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection **FACT SHEET**

Newark Water Filter Reliability Study: Preliminary Results

Filters distributed by the City of Newark reliably remove lead from drinking water.

SUMMARY

In early August, the DEP became aware of two homes where filters distributed by the City of Newark were not removing lead from drinking water as expected. Out of an abundance of caution, the City notified residents in the Pequannock gradient that filters might not be working as expected and advised them to use bottled water until further notice while it worked with DEP and USEPA to assess the filters provided by the City. Tests now show that the filters distributed by the City are reliable in reducing lead levels in tap water to below USEPA's action level of 15 ppb.

Working together, the City, DEP and USEPA developed a filter study to determine if properly installed, used and maintained filters were reliably removing lead. Teams collected over 1,700 samples from hundreds of homes. While the study team continues its work to finalize its official written report, **DEP is issuing this preliminary notice that sampling results presently show that over 97% of PUR filters issued by the City reduce lead below 10 parts per billion (ppb), which is below the federal EPA action level. When used in combination with flushing (running the water after long periods of rest), results show that over 99% of PUR filters issued by the City reduce lead below 10 ppb.** The study report will be finalized in the coming weeks.

NEXT STEPS: COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

DEP has committed \$1 million to fund a Community Assistance Program that will assist the City of Newark in recruiting, training, organizing, mobilizing and supporting a volunteer force that will **install water filters, educate residents on proper filter use, and collect water samples.** The program will be co-led by DEP's Office of Environmental Justice and the City of Newark and will activate the strong base of volunteers from community, faith-based, and philanthropic organizations who have sought ways to assist Newark's residents. More details on this effort, including how volunteers can participate and how residents can sign up, will be available in the coming days.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What do the results show?

The preliminary results from the study show that over 97% of PUR filters distributed by the City of Newark are reducing lead levels in tap water to below 10 ppb, which is below the federal EPA action level of 15 ppb. Using filters in combination with flushing (running water after long periods when water has not been used) increases the reliability of lead removal to over 99%. While those percentage numbers might change slightly as the technical team completes its review and finalizes its report, the range of percentages is not expected to change significantly.

The study report is being prepared by the City's contractor, CDM, and will be reviewed closely by the DEP and EPA before it is finalized. The report will provide a more detailed explanation of the study and the findings. The study is expected to be completed within the coming weeks.

Does this mean that residents should stop using bottled water?

The study results indicate that Newark residents can have a high degree of confidence in using City tap water if they use a PUR filter distributed by the City as instructed, and **especially if** they flush their water (run the water in the morning or after being away from home for more than 6 hours) before filtering. While the DEP and the City establish the Community Assistance Program to assist residents with water filter installation and sampling, the City will continue to make bottled water available.

If the filters are working, why is it necessary to also flush the water?

The study indicates that flushing the water (running the water after it has sat unused for several hours) before filtering increases the assurance that lead will be removed to below 10 ppb. For example, before filtering, water should be run first thing in the morning or after school or work if no one has been home. Preliminary results indicate that the reliability of filters in reducing lead to below 10 ppb increases to more than 99% when water is flushed before it is filtered.

This is especially important for homes served by lead service lines. But because lead can come from indoor plumbing as well as lead service lines, it is also good practice for anyone living in an older home to run the water before using it for drinking or cooking if the water has not been used for several hours.

How do I know how long to flush the water?

The length of time you need to flush your water depends on whether you have a lead service line and if you do, how long the lead service line is.

- For most homes with lead service lines, 5 minutes of flushing is adequate.
- Homes with larger front yards, where the lead service lines may be over 75 ft. long, are advised to run the water longer. For those situations, 10 minutes of flushing is advised at this time, while the technical experts continue to develop more detailed recommendations for the larger yards of varying sizes.
- For homes without lead service lines, less than a minute of flushing is recommended.

How do I know if I have a lead service line?

Residents should visit www.NewarkLeadServiceLine.com for more information learn about Newark's lead service line replacement program or call (973) 733-6303.

Will Newark replace all the lead service lines?

Newark has implemented a Lead Service Line Replacement Program with the goal of removing all lead service lines within the entire City, as well as residential customers directly billed by Newark located in Hillside and Belleville. The program's goal is to replace approximately 18,000 lead services lines with copper lines. The first phase of this program commenced in March 2019, and so far over 900 lines have been successfully replaced.

When will the final report be released?

The City, DEP and USEPA are working to ensure that the report includes and explains clearly all the factors considered in the study. The final report is expected in the coming weeks.

How do I get my water tested?

Contact the [Newark Water Department](#) to schedule a lead test by calling (973) 733-6303.