



**Stoughton Utilities**

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*Serving Electric, Water & Wastewater Since 1886*

# News Release

## Stoughton Utilities

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Jill Weiss, Utilities Director

### **Stoughton Utilities Issues Public Drinking Water Notice - Elevated Concentrations of Lead Found in Some Homes**

Stoughton Utilities is proactively reaching out to residents in the City of Stoughton to share very important information regarding recent drinking water quality monitoring which found levels of lead that exceed the action level.

Annually, Stoughton Utilities collects drinking water samples from 30 homes, and tests those samples to determine the amount of lead and copper that is present in those homes' drinking water. All of the homes sampled have lead service lines, and the samples are taken from inside the homes at a faucet that provides drinking water.

Of the 30 sites sampled, six returned samples that contained elevated concentrations of lead. The utility has no evidence at this time that these levels are indicative of the water quality at the other lead service locations, or at the 85% of locations not served by lead service lines. However, we will be proactive in our response to this situation.

Lead is not a naturally occurring groundwater contaminant in the City of Stoughton, and is not sourced by the utility's groundwater wells or water towers. Rather, lead finds its way into homes' drinking water from the lead service lines that were installed to specific properties, as well as

internal plumbing solder and older plumbing fixtures. 85% of properties in Stoughton do not have lead service lines.

Stoughton Utilities is viewing this as an opportunity to continue to further educate the community about the danger of lead and what they can do to determine if their home is affected to minimize any risk, as well as develop ways for the utility and municipality to eliminate lead from the drinking water system.

The utility has reached out to important community stakeholders to inform them of the results of this sampling, including elected officials, clinics, hospitals, schools, and daycare providers.

“Our goal is to continue to be proactive in our notification process, and to provide the community with information about what the sampling means and the impact it might have on their neighborhood” stated Stoughton Utilities Director Jill Weiss. “By first informing and educating these community stakeholders, we hope to engage the community to assist us with expanding our education efforts.”

Stoughton Utilities will be initiating the following actions in the upcoming months:

- Conduct additional sampling at homes known to have lead service lines,
- Engage in additional community education and outreach on the concerns of lead,
- Continue to remove lead service lines that are publicly-owned by the water utility,
- Continue to encourage the removal of lead service lines that are privately-owned by property owners, including formalizing a lead service line replacement program and a mechanism for providing funding assistance to property owners, and
- Provide a water filtration pitcher at no cost to homes served by lead service lines where residents may be at a higher risk of the health impacts from lead, such as homes with young children or expectant mothers.

Although no level of lead is considered completely safe, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) set a level of 0.015 mg/L, or 15 parts per billion.

Residents interested in having their home's water tested can contact a state approved laboratory to receive a testing kit, including the Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene in Madison Wisconsin. Residents can also reduce their exposure by considering the following:

- Identify if their service line or interior plumbing fixtures contain lead. Stoughton Utilities can assist residents in doing so.
- Replace any service lines or plumbing fixtures found to contain lead.
- Run your water faucets for a minute or two before use to flush out any accumulated lead particles.
- Periodically remove and rinse the aerators on your kitchen and bathroom faucets to remove any accumulated particles.
- Use only cold water for drinking, cooking, and preparing baby formula.
- There is no benefit to boiling water to remove lead, as this has no effect. Use a water filter certified to remove lead particles.

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Founded in 1886, Stoughton Utilities serves electric, water, and wastewater customers in Stoughton and the surrounding townships.