

Date: 2/8/22

Dear Resident,

Berkeley Springs Water Works appreciates your participation in the lead tap monitoring program. A lead level of 0.67 ppb was reported for the sample collected on 12/14/21 at your location, [REDACTED]

We are happy to report that your result, as well as the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile value for our water system, is below the lead action level of 15 parts per billion(ppb).

### **What Does This Mean?**

Under the authority of the Safe Drinking Water Act, EPA set the action level for lead in drinking water at 15 ppb. This means utilities must ensure that water from the customer's tap does not exceed this level in at least 90 percent of the homes sampled (90<sup>th</sup> percentile value). The action level is *the concentration of a contaminant which, if exceeded, triggers treatment or other requirements which a water system must follow.* If water from the tap does exceed the limit, then the utility must take certain steps to correct the problem. Because lead may pose serious health risks, the EPA set a Maximum Contaminant Level Goal (MCLG) of zero for lead. The MCLG is *the level of a contaminant in drinking water below which there is no known or expected risk to health. MCLGs allow for a margin of safety.*

### **What Are the Health Effects of Lead?**

*Lead can cause serious health problems if too much enters your body from drinking water or other sources. It can cause damage to the brain and kidneys, and can interfere with the production of red blood cells that carry oxygen to all parts of your body. The greatest risk of lead exposure is to infants, young children, and pregnant women. Scientists have linked the effects of lead on the brain with lowered IQ in children. Adults with kidney problems and high blood pressure can be affected by low levels of lead more than healthy adults. Lead is stored in the bones, and it can be released later in life. During pregnancy, the child receives lead from the mother's bones, which may affect brain development.*

### **What Are the Sources of Lead?**

The primary sources of lead exposure for most children are deteriorating lead-based paint, lead-contaminated dust, and lead-contaminated residential soil. Exposure to lead is a significant health concern, especially for young children and infants whose growing bodies tend to absorb more lead than the average adult. Although your home's drinking water lead levels were below the action level, if you are concerned about lead exposure, parents should ask their health care providers about testing children for high levels of lead in the blood.

### **What Can I Do to Reduce Exposure to Lead in Drinking Water?**

- **Run your water to flush out lead.** If water has not been used for several hours, run water for 15 – 30 seconds or until it becomes cold or reaches a steady temperature before using it for drinking or cooking. This flushes lead-containing water from the pipes.
- **Use cold water for cooking and preparing baby formula.** Do not cook with or drink water from the hot water tap; lead dissolves more easily into hot water. Do not use water from the hot water tap to make baby formula.
- **Do not boil water to remove lead.** Boiling water will not reduce lead.
- **Look for alternative sources or treatment of water.** You may want to consider purchasing bottled water or a water filter. Read the package to be sure the filter is approved to reduce lead or contact NSF International at 800-NSF-8010 or [www.nsf.org](http://www.nsf.org) for information on performance standards for water filters.
- **Test your water for lead.** Call us at 304-258-9152 to find out how to get your water tested for lead.
- **Identify if your plumbing fixtures contain lead.** New brass faucets, fittings, and valves, including those advertised as “lead-free,” may contribute lead to drinking water. The law currently allows end-use brass fixtures, such as faucets, with up to 8 percent lead to be labeled as “lead-free.” Consumers should be aware of this when choosing fixtures and take appropriate precautions.

### **For More Information**

Call us at 304-258-9152 For more information on reducing lead exposure around your home and the health effects of lead, visit EPA's Web site at [www.epa.gov/lead](http://www.epa.gov/lead), call the National Lead Information Center at 800-424-LEAD, or contact your health care provider.