**Press Release Template**

**Note**: For systems serving a large population of non-English speaking consumers, notification materials must contain information on how to obtain a translated copy or request assistance in the appropriate language.

**Note**: Media outlets may choose not to include all the information that you provide in your Press Release; however, *anything in italics under each topic area* is mandatory language and must be included as written.

**PRESS RELEASE DRINKING WATER NOTICE**

**IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT LEAD IN** **[INSERT NAME OF YOUR COMMUNITY] DRINKING WATER**

Recent drinking water quality monitoring conducted by *[insert name of water system/community] has found elevated levels of lead in drinking water in some homes/buildings in* [insert name of community or area served by your water system]. *Lead can cause serious health problems, especially for pregnant women and young children. Please read this information closely to see what you can do to reduce lead in your drinking water.*

[Insert name of community] is concerned about the health of their residents because *exposure to lead in drinking water can cause serious health effects in all age groups. Infants and children can have decreases in IQ and attention span. Lead exposure can lead to new learning and behavior problems or exacerbate existing learning and behavior problems. The children of women who are exposed to lead before or during pregnancy can have increased risk of these adverse health effects. Adults can have increased risks of heart disease, high blood pressure, kidney or nervous system problems.*

Lead is a common metal found in the environment. Drinking water is one possible source of lead exposure. The primary source of lead exposure for most children is lead-based paint. Other sources of lead exposure include lead-contaminated dust or soil, and some plumbing materials. In addition, lead can be found in a number of consumer products, including certain types of pottery, pewter, brass fixtures, food, and cosmetics. Other sources include exposure in the workplace (jobs that include house painting, plumbing, renovation, construction, auto repair, welding, electronics repair, jewelry or pottery repair) and exposure from certain hobbies (such as stained glass or pottery, fishing, making or shooting firearms and collecting lead or pewter figurines), as lead can be carried on clothing and shoes. Children’s hands or their toys can come into contact with lead in paint, dust and soil. Therefore, washing children’s hands and their toys will help reduce the potential for lead exposure from these sources.

[Insert information about what happened and what is being done. You may wish to include information about the exceedance and the history of lead levels in tap water samples in your community. For example, have they declined substantially over time? Have they been low and risen recently? Is there a known reason for any lead level changes? Explain the steps being taken to reduce lead levels, such as corrosion control treatment and/or lead service line replacement.]

**Steps You Can Take To Reduce Your Exposure To Lead In Your Water**

* ***Run your water to flush out lead.*** Before drinking, flush your home’s pipes for several minutes by running the tap, taking a shower, doing laundry, or doing a load of dishes. The amount of time to run the water will depend on whether your home has a lead service line or not, and the length of the lead service line. Residents should contact their water utility for recommendations about flushing times in their community.
* ***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 in 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.
* ***Replace your plumbing fixtures if they are found to contain lead.*** Plumbing materials including brass faucets, fittings, and valves, including those advertised as “lead-free,” may contribute lead to drinking water. The law previously allowed end-use brass fixtures, such as faucets, with up to 8 percent lead to be labeled as “lead-free.” As of January 4, 2014, end-use brass fixtures, such as faucets, fittings, and valves, must meet the new “lead-free” definition of having no more than 0.25 percent lead on a weighted average. Visit the NSF website at: [**http://www.nsf.org/newsroom\_pdf/Lead\_free\_certification\_marks.pdf**](http://www.nsf.org/newsroom_pdf/Lead_free_certification_marks.pdf) to learn more about lead-containing plumbing fixtures and how to identify lead-free certification marks on new fixtures.
* ***Use bottled water or use a water filter.*** If your home is served by a lead service line, and/or if lead-containing plumbing materials are found to be in your home*,* 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 1-800-NSF-8010 (800-673-8010) or visit <https://info.nsf.org/Certified/dwtu/listings_leadreduction.asp>, for a consumer guide of approved water filters. In conjunction with flushing, properly operated filters are highly effective at reducing lead exposure. Be sure to maintain and replace a filter device in accordance with the manufacturer’s instructions to protect water quality. Any measure you take to reduce your exposure to lead should be continued until the lead source(s) has been minimized or eliminated.

**Should you test your water for lead?**

If lead-containing plumbing materials are identified in your home, you may want to consider testing your water for lead to determine how much lead is in your drinking water. Call us at [insert phone number for your water system] to find out how to get your water tested for lead. [Include information on your water system’s testing program. For example, do you provide free testing? Are there labs in your area that are certified to do lead in water testing?]

**Should your child be tested for lead?**

New York Public Health Law requires primary health care providers to screen each child for blood lead levels at one and two years of age as part of routine well-child care. In addition, at each routine well-child visit, or at least annually if a child has not had routine well-child visits, primary health care providers assess each child who is at least six months of age, but under six years of age, for high lead exposure. Each child found to be at risk for high lead exposure is screened or referred for lead screening.

If your child has not had routine well-child visits (since the age of one year) and you are concerned about lead exposure to your child, contact your local health department or healthcare provider to find out how you can get your child tested for lead.

There are several actions that [insert name of your water system/community] is taking to address this lead in drinking water concern. [Insert a quote from a water system official letting the public know what actions the system is taking to address the lead action level exceedance or insert a list of action steps.]

*Call us at* *[insert phone number] or (if applicable) visit our website at* *[insert website]. For more information on lead in drinking water, contact your local health department at* *[insert local health department or district office name, phone number and email address], or the New York State Department of Health directly by calling the toll-free number (within New York State) 1-800-458-1158, extension 27650, or out of state at (518) 402-7650, or by email at bpwsp@health.ny.gov. For more information on reducing lead exposure around your home/building and the health effects of lead, visit EPA's Website at* ***www.epa.gov/lead****, or call the National Lead Information Center at 1-800-424-LEAD.*