



# MCS - Lead/Copper FAQs

## Facility Questions

**Q. Where does Gregori High School get its water?**

A. Gregori High School has a small water system that utilizes well water.

**Q. What about testing other schools in the District?**

A. The Division of Drinking Water (DDW), in collaboration with the California Department of Education, has taken the initiative to begin testing for lead in drinking water at all public K-12 schools. All other MCS schools are on a community water system. California Assembly Bill 746 requires community water systems to test lead levels by July 1, 2019, at all sites constructed before January 1, 2010. MCS is working with the City of Modesto on a schedule to test other school sites.

**Q. What would suddenly cause lead to be an issue in drinking water?**

A. Over time, corrosion of pipes, solder, fixtures/faucets or fittings can occur. When high levels of minerals are detected, further investigation is needed. Gregori's recent elevated test results show that the system is susceptible to issues dissolving lead at times of slow/minimal use. We are working on a solution to this issue.

**Q. Were the areas where food/meals are prepared for students/staff tested?**

A. Yes. Gregori High School meals were prepared with bottled water during the period of elevated mineral levels.

**Q. Could students/staff continue to use the water to shower or wash hands?**

A. Yes.

**Q. How were students and staff informed of the elevated levels?**

A. Gregori High School informed staff, parents and students via an auto-call, social media and updates to their website. Signs were posted at all drinking water fountains and sinks. County notifications were scheduled to be distributed by September 2, 2018.

**Q. Under what oversight was the Gregori well built?**

A. The Stanislaus County Department of Environmental Resources provided oversight during construction of Gregori's well. The well site plans were approved by the Department of State Architecture in November 2007 (permit # 02-107590). Water well construction began in 2008 and was completed in spring 2010.

# Water System Compliance

**Q. What government organization sets the testing protocol, and what is the protocol?**

A. The Environmental Protection Agency and the California Code of Regulation Title 22 specifies the testing protocol.

**Q. What government organization is responsible for enforcing compliance?**

A. The Stanislaus County Department of Environmental Resources is delegated as the authority to regulate small water systems from the State Water Resources Control Board and California Code of Regulation Title 22.

**Q. How often is the water tested?**

A. Due to no action level exceedances above the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile in the past, Gregori High School was placed on reduced monitoring for Lead and Copper – once every 3 years. However, twice yearly monitoring will be implemented going forward. This will continue, at a minimum, for the next two years. The next sample will be due no later than March 23, 2019.

**Q. What are the actionable levels?**

A. For Lead, 15 parts per billion (ppb), and for Copper, 1.3 parts per million (ppm)

**Q. Have there been any high lead/copper level results in the past?**

A. Prior to the July 2018 routine lead and copper test, there have not been actionable levels for lead and copper, since there were no action level exceedances above the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile.

**Q. Are these reports sent to any state or federal agencies?**

A. State certified labs upload their information to a state database and the Stanislaus County Department of Environmental Resources electronically transfers data to the State Water Resources Control Board.

**Q. Who is responsible for notifying affected parties?**

A. The water system owner (District) is responsible for notifying consumers.

## Health

**Q. What are the health effects of acute lead poisoning and long term/chronic poisoning on the body?**

A. People with high blood lead levels may have no symptoms. In acute lead poisoning, typical neurological signs are pain, muscle weakness, and numbness and tingling. Abdominal pain, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea and constipation are other acute symptoms. Signs of chronic lead poisoning may include loss of short-term memory or concentration, depression, nausea, abdominal pain, high blood pressure and kidney problems.

# Health (continued)

**Q. Is lead exposure more dangerous to certain groups?**

A. Yes. Children and pregnant or nursing mothers are most at risk for health issues related to lead exposure. Exposure to lead can result in delays in physical and mental development in infants and children.

**Q. How soon will symptoms surface if someone is exposed to high levels of lead in water?**

A. Symptoms in adults exposed to high lead levels would only surface in cases of long-term exposure over many years. Symptoms can occur at levels above 40 µg/dL, but are more likely to occur only above 50–60 µg/dL. People are exposed to lead either by breathing it in or by ingesting it. Lead is not absorbed through the skin.

**Q. How can someone limit exposure to lead in drinking water?**

A. There are several steps people can take to limit their exposure to lead in drinking water:

1. Run water for 15-30 seconds or until it becomes cold before using it for drinking and cooking. This helps to flush standing lead from pipes.
2. Don't cook with, or drink, water from the hot water tap; lead dissolves more easily into hot water.
3. Do not boil water to remove lead. Excessively boiling water makes the lead more concentrated. Lead remains when the water evaporates.

**Q. Will students/staff be tested for lead exposure?**

A. Families that are concerned about lead exposure can get testing from their healthcare provider. Stanislaus County Public Health can assist with obtaining services for those who do not have a regular healthcare provider.