



# Mexia Water System, Inc.

P. O. Box 247 • Mexia, Alabama 36458-0247 • (251) 743-2332

January 21, 2021

Dear Customer:

During a recent (November 5, 2020) sampling of (20) twenty water service sites located within the Mexia Water System; increased lead levels were detected in (3) three of the (20) twenty sample sites. Please note there is **NO LEAD IN THE WATER** coming from the Mexia Water Well that provides our drinking water. Based on a recent Corrosion Control Study we performed within the last 12 months, the lead level exceedance is not system wide. It appears to be an isolated occurrence. These lead levels can be attributed to the water pH in our treated water supply in combination with old house plumbing that may cause lead to come out of the existing piping in your home. Please be reminded, lead and copper can be detected in older homes where metal pipes are still in use or where connections were made with lead solder or lead goosenecks.

The Sample Sites where these exceedance levels occurred were resampled after these initial November 2020 sample results were reported. There was no exceedance of lead in the subsequent resamples that were collected. All additional Sampling is being conducted in accordance with ADEM Requirements. We have completed the Corrosion Study Evaluation of our Water Source, Treatment Method and Distribution Piping. Future plans include modifications to our treatment process at our source to correct future occurrences.

Attached is literature we hope will help you to understand lead and copper as it relates to our Water Supply and System. It is our hope that this information will also help those who participate in sampling understand the importance of sampling with procedural accuracy.

We will continue to improve our treatment, continue testing, continue to serve, and remain compliant with Federal Guidelines on your behalf. Our goal is to continue providing safe drinking water for customers on the Mexia Water System.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact our office at (251) 743-2332.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. J. McMillan".

J. J. McMillan, Board President  
Mexia Water System, Inc.

## IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT LEAD IN YOUR DRINKING WATER

Mexia Water System, Inc. found elevated levels of lead in drinking water in some homes/buildings. 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.

**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.

The Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM) and Mexia Water System, Inc. are concerned about lead in your drinking water. Although most homes have very low levels of lead in their drinking water, some homes in the community have lead levels above the EPA action level of 15 parts per billion (ppb), or 0.015 milligrams of lead per liter of water (mg/L). Under Federal law we are required to have a program in place to minimize lead in your drinking water by December 31, 2022. This program includes corrosion control treatment, source water treatment, and public education. We are also required to replace each lead service line that we control if the line contributes lead concentrations of more than 15 ppb after we have completed the comprehensive treatment program. If you have any questions about how we are carrying out the requirements of the lead regulation, please give us a call at (251) 743-2332. This brochure explains the simple steps you can take to protect you and your family by reducing your exposure to lead in drinking water.

Lead is a common metal found throughout the environment in lead-based paint, air, soil, household dust, food, certain types of pottery, porcelain and pewter, and water. Lead builds up in the body over many years and can cause damage to the brain, red blood cells and kidneys. The greatest risk is to young children and pregnant women. Amounts of lead that will not hurt adults can slow down normal mental and physical development of growing bodies. In addition, a child at play often comes into contact with sources of lead contamination such as dirt and dust that rarely affect an adult. It is important to wash children's hands and toys often, and to try to make sure they only put food in their mouths.

Lead in drinking water, although rarely the sole cause of lead poisoning, can significantly increase a person's total lead exposure, particularly the exposure of infants who drink baby formulas and concentrated juices that are mixed with water. The EPA estimates that drinking water can make up 20 percent or more of a person's total exposure to lead. Lead is unusual among drinking water contaminants in that it seldom occurs naturally in water supplies like rivers and lakes. Lead enters drinking

water primarily as a result of the corrosion, or wearing away, of materials containing lead in the water distribution system and household plumbing. These materials include lead-based solder used to join copper pipe, brass and chrome plated brass faucets, and in some cases, pipe made of lead that connect your house to the water main (service lines). In 1986, Congress banned the use of lead solder containing greater than 0.2% lead, and restricted the lead content of faucets, pipes and other plumbing materials to 8.0%. When water stands in lead pipes or plumbing systems containing lead for several hours or more, the lead may dissolve into your drinking water. This means the first water drawn from the tap in the morning, or later in the afternoon after returning from work or school, can contain fairly high levels of lead.

**Steps You Can Take in the Home to Reduce Exposure to Lead in Drinking Water.** Despite our best efforts mentioned earlier to control water corrosivity and remove lead from the water supply, lead levels in some homes or buildings can be high. To find out whether you need to take action in your own home, have your drinking water tested to determine if it contains excessive concentrations of lead. Testing the water is essential because you cannot see, taste, or smell lead in drinking water. Some local laboratories that can provide this service are listed at the end of this booklet. For more information on having your water tested, please call Mexia Water System, Inc. (251) 743-2332.

If a water test indicates that the drinking water drawn from a tap in your home contains lead above 15 ppb, then you should take the following precautions:

Let the water run from the tap before using it for drinking or cooking any time the water in a faucet has gone unused for more than six hours. The longer water resides in your home's plumbing the more lead it may contain. Flushing the tap means running the cold-water faucet until the water gets noticeably colder, usually about 1.5-30 seconds. If your house has a lead service line to the water main, you may have to flush the water for a longer time, perhaps one minute, before drinking. Although toilet flushing or showering flushes water through a portion of your home's plumbing system you still need to flush the water in each faucet before using it for drinking or cooking. Flushing tap water is a simple and inexpensive measure you can take to protect your family's health. It usually uses less than one or two gallons of water and costs less than \$.40 per month. To conserve water, fill a couple of bottles for drinking water after flushing the tap, and whenever possible use the first flush water to wash the dishes or water the plants. If you live in a high-rise building, letting the water flow before using it may not work to lessen your risk from lead. The plumbing systems have more, and sometimes larger pipes than smaller buildings. Ask your landlord for help in locating the source of the lead and for advice on reducing the lead level.

Try not to cook with or drink water from the hot water tap. Hot water can dissolve more lead more quickly than cold water. If you need hot water, draw water from the cold tap and heat it on the stove.

Boiling does not reduce lead in drinking water.

Remove loose lead solder and debris from the plumbing materials installed in newly constructed homes, or homes in which the plumbing has recently been replaced, by removing the faucet strainers from all taps and running the water

from 3 to 5 minutes. Thereafter, periodically remove the strainers and flush out any debris that has accumulated over time.

If your copper pipes are joined with lead solder that has been installed illegally since it was banned in 1986, notify the plumber who did the work and request that he or she replace the lead solder with lead-free solder. Lead solder looks dull gray, and when scratched with a key looks shiny. In addition, notify the Drinking Water Branch of ADEM about the violation.

Determine whether or not the service line that connects your home or apartment to the water main is made of lead. The best way to determine if your service line is made of lead is by either hiring a licensed plumber to inspect the line or by contacting the plumbing contractor who installed the line. You may be able to identify the plumbing contractor by checking the record of building permits which should be maintained in the files of the City of Monroeville Building & Compliance Department at (251) 575-2081. A licensed plumber can at the same time check to see if your home's plumbing contains lead solder, lead pipes, or pipe fittings that contain lead. The public water system that delivers water to your home should also maintain records of the materials located in the distribution system. If the service line that connects your dwelling to the water main contributes more than 15 ppb to drinking water, after our comprehensive treatment program is in place, we are required to replace the portion of the line we own. If the line is only partially controlled by the Mexia Water System, Inc., we are required to provide you the owner of the privately-owned portion of the line with information on how to replace the privately-owned portion of the service line, and offer to replace that portion of the line at the owner's expense and take a follow-up tap water sample within 14 days of the replacement. If we replace only the portion of the line that we own, we also are required to notify you in advance and provide you with information on the steps you can take to minimize exposure to any temporary increase in lead levels that may result from the partial replacement, to take a follow-up sample at our expense from the line within 72 hours after the partial replacement, and to mail or otherwise provide you with the results of that sample within three business days of receiving the results. Acceptable replacement alternatives include copper, steel, iron, and plastic pipes.

Have an electrician check your wiring. If grounding wires from the electrical system are attached to your pipes, corrosion may be greater. Check with a licensed electrician or your local electrical code to determine if your wiring can be grounded elsewhere. DO NOT attempt to change the wiring yourself because improper grounding can cause electrical shock and fire hazards.

The steps described above will reduce the lead concentrations in your drinking water. However, if a water test indicates that the drinking water coming from your tap contains lead concentrations in excess of 15 ppb after flushing, or after we have completed our actions to minimize lead levels, then you may want to take the following additional measures:

Purchase or lease a home treatment device. Home treatment devices are limited in that each unit treats only the water that flows from the faucet to which it is connected, and all of the devices require periodic maintenance and replacement. Devices such as reverse osmosis systems or distillers can

effectively remove lead from your drinking water. Some activated carbon filters may reduce lead levels at the tap; however all lead reduction claims should be investigated. Be sure to check the actual performance of a specific home treatment device before and after installing the unit.

Purchase bottled water for drinking and cooking

You can consult a variety of sources for additional information. Your family doctor or pediatrician can perform a blood test for lead and provide you with information about the health effects of lead. State and local government agencies that can be contacted include:

Mexia Water System, Inc. at (251) 743-2332 can provide you with information about your community's water supply, and a list of local laboratories that have been certified by ADEM for testing water quality;

City of Monroeville Building & Compliance Department at (251) 575-2081 can provide you with information about building permit records that should contain the names of plumbing contractors that plumbed your home; and

Monroe County Health Department at (251) 575-3109 can provide you with information about the health effects of lead and how you can have your child's blood tested.

The following is a list of some State approved laboratories in your area that you can call to have your water tested for lead.

LABORATORY	CONTACT	ADDRESS	CITY	STATE	ZIP	TELEPHONE	EMAIL
Environmental Resource Analysis	Eric Consegna	2975 Brown Court	Auburn	AL	36830	(334) 502-3444	ecconsegna@erlab.com
Guardian Systems	Tam M. Bennett	1108 Ashville Road	Leeds	AL	35094	(205) 699-6647	luisss@ashlab.com
McCabe Engineering	John Allen	430 19th Street West	Jasper	AL	35201	(205) 221-0686	john.allen@mc-engine.org
Pace Analytical National	Lisa Terry	2220 Bellline Road SW	Decatur	AL	35601	(256) 350-0846	lterry@paceanalytical.com
Pace Analytical Services	Steve Martin, Lab Manager	3516 Greenboro Avenue	Tuscaloosa	AL	35401	(205) 345-0816	steve.martin@pacelabs.com
Southern Environmental Testing	Arlison Dixon, Lab Manager	3103 Northlawn Court	Florence	AL	35630	(256) 740-5572	arlison.dixon@sestesting.com
Siltbrook Environmental Testing Lab	Mark Dover	305 Crawford Street	Fairfield	AL	35644	(205) 788-1750	siltbrook@rsn.com
Substrand Environmental Testing Laboratory	Michael Heard	2415 Fifth Avenue South	Birmingham	AL	35233	(205) 981-9500	sublander@bellsub.net