

Lead in Water

Licensed Child Care Facilities

In July 2022, the Ministry of Health provided a recommendation that licensed child care facilities develop a long term plan for routine lead monitoring and that lead in water testing be ideally completed annually.



Is it mandatory for child care facilities to develop a plan for routine monitoring and conduct annual testing?



It is a recommendation by the Ministry of Health.

Who pays for the additional cost of testing?



Licensees who choose to conduct annual testing will be responsible for the cost associated with additional testing of their drinking water for lead.

Is there funding available to help with the additional cost of testing?



Yes. Eligible licensed child care providers can now apply for funding through the ChildCareBC Maintenance Fund which now includes coverage of an 'initial purchase of a NSF/ANSI certified faucet mount filter for lead treatment in drinking water'.



August 2025

Resources

Ministry of Health

Guidelines on Evaluating and Mitigating Lead in Drinking Water Supplies, Schools, Child Care Facilities and Other Buildings

Island Health

Lead in Water InfoSheet

First Nation Health Authority

Fact Sheet Lead and Copper in Drinking Water

ChildCareBC Maintenance Fund

Maintenance Fund Emergency Repair and Replacement



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Safe drinking water is essential for good health and the wellbeing of communities.

Stacey Sowa | Drinking Water Coordinator
Environmental Public Health | Island Health

Why do child care facilities in BC need to test their drinking water for lead?

Ingesting lead can be harmful to human health, especially for young children and infants as they absorb lead more easily than adults and are more susceptible to its harmful effects. Lead in drinking water can cause adverse cognitive and behavioural effects in children. It is critical to have drinking water that is both microbiologically and chemically safe to promote healthy growth and development of children.

Sampling water that is used for drinking and other domestic purposes, like teeth brushing or washing fruits and vegetables is an important and necessary step to ensuring safe drinking water for all. Testing your water will allow you to obtain valuable information around the amount of lead that may be present in your drinking water.

Health Canada set a Maximum Allowable Concentration (MAC) of lead in drinking water at 0.005mg/l; however, lead levels should be kept as low as reasonably achievable as there is no known safe exposure level to lead. Even where an alternative water source is being provided (i.e. bottled water), child care providers are still responsible for ensuring the water at the tap is safe. Children do not have the capacity to make informed decisions about the use of available domestic water and therefore may still be exposed to water with elevated lead levels.

Where lead is observed at elevated levels, steps to mitigate exposure should be taken. These steps may include flushing fixtures before using the water, replacement of fixtures and plumbing, or providing water treatment equipment. Once mitigation steps are selected and implemented, it is important to conduct follow-up testing of drinking water to ensure that lead concentration remains at a safe level. In some instances, routine testing may be necessary to ensure the mitigation steps continue to be successful.

More Information

Applicants/Licensees who need assistance in understanding and interpreting lead in water test results should contact the chosen qualified laboratory with the scope of proficiency to test for lead. For questions regarding options related to reducing lead levels, Applicants/Licensees can contact a Licensing Officer.

Community Care Facilities Licensing

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250.739.5800

Courtenay
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Campbell River
250.850.2110

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