



# City of La Salle

La Salle County, Illinois

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March 18, 2024

Drinking water quality monitoring conducted by the City of La Salle in 2023 has found elevated levels of lead in drinking water in a few homes/buildings in the community. As such, the City of La Salle with the Environmental Protection Agency is mailing all residents a lead educational pamphlet which is included with this letter. We have no evidence the issue is related to the City's Water Treatment Plant and is likely site-specific relating to plumbing and fixtures. This notice is not indicative that lead has been identified in your specific home.

### How was the lead identified?

The City of La Salle, like all municipalities, is concerned about the health of its residents because lead can cause serious health problems if too much enters your body from drinking water or other sources. The City of La Salle conducts regular lead sampling and a testing of 47 homes in 2023 resulted in six homes coming back with levels exceeding the EPA limit. These six homes were notified of the exceedance and the City is working to replace their service lines. These samples are gathered by the homeowner in homes/businesses that have all different types of ages of pipes and fixtures. Improper collection may also impact these studies.

### Is this an ongoing issue?

The City of La Salle has conducted more recent sampling of 40 homes, 33 tests have come back as of March 14<sup>th</sup> and only one home recorded levels exceeding the EPA limit. It's important to note that drinking water when it leaves the Water Treatment Plant meets all federal guidelines and this is not indicative of water quality from the Water Treatment Plant. A test result coming back with an exceedance is possibly indicative of water lines or fixtures in the home such as a faucet. In those cases, it can be resolved by replacing old fixtures. Often the presence of lead is more common in older homes.

### What are the next steps?

This communication is part of the City of La Salle Public Education Plan regarding lead. The City of La Salle is, as are other communities, currently conducting lead line inventory and is currently in the lengthy process of replacing lead lines. The City will continue to conduct regular lead line sampling and further notices will go out if exceedances are discovered. Additional information regarding the health effects of lead, sources of lead, testing for lead, testing done by the City of La Salle, and steps that can be taken to reduce exposure is included in the attached pamphlet. Call us at 815-224-1650 for more information or visit our website for additional copies of these materials at lasalle-il.gov.

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The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) and the City of LaSalle 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 April 2024 if, after further investigation, lead results in your water district display lead levels above 15 ppb.

This program includes:

1. Public education content
2. Corrosion control treatment (treating the water to make it less likely that lead will dissolve into the water)
3. Source water treatment (removing any lead that is in the water at the time it leaves our treatment facility) This brochure also explains the simple steps you can take to protect yourself by reducing your exposure to lead in drinking water.

### **Important Information about Lead in Your Drinking Water**

The City of LaSalle 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.

### **SOURCES OF LEAD**

Lead is a common metal found in the environment. Drinking water is one possible source of lead exposure. The main sources of lead exposure are lead-based paint and lead-contaminated dust or soil, and some plumbing materials. In addition, lead can be found in certain types of pottery, pewter, brass fixtures, food, and cosmetics. Other sources include exposure in the work place and exposure from certain hobbies (lead can be carried on clothing or shoes). Lead is found in some toys, some playground equipment, and some children's metal jewelry.

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 0.25 percent wetted surface lead to be labeled as "lead-free."

When water is in contact with pipes, and plumbing containing lead for several hours, the lead may enter drinking water.

Don't forget about other sources of lead such as lead paint, lead dust, and lead in soil. Wash your children's hands and toys often as they can come into contact with dirt and dust containing lead.

### **STEPS YOU CAN TAKE TO REDUCE YOUR EXPOSURE TO LEAD IN YOUR WATER**

1. Run your water to flush out lead

Run water from the cold water tap for 15-30 seconds to flush lead from interior plumbing or until it becomes cold and reaches a steady temperature before using it for drinking or cooking, if it hasn't been used for several hours.

2. Use cold water for cooking and preparing baby formula

Do not cook with or drink water from the hot water tap. Also, do not boil water from the hot water tap, as hot water can dissolve lead more quickly than cold water. Rather, if you need hot water, draw water from the cold tap and heat it on the stove. Do not use water from the hot water tap to make baby formula.

3. Identify and replace plumbing fixtures containing 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 0.25 percent wetted surface lead to be labeled as "lead- free."

4. Test your water for lead

Call us at 815-224-1650 to find out how to get your water tested for lead.

5. Get your child's blood tested

Contact your local health department or healthcare provider to find out how you can get your child tested for lead, if you are concerned about exposure.

6. 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. Be sure to maintain and replace a filter device in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions to protect water quality.

## WHAT HAPPENED?

### WHAT IS BEING DONE?

This exceedance occurred in September of 2023. The City of LaSalle was notified of this exceedance in October of 2023.

The City of LaSalle and IEPA will be conducting further investigations by sampling for Lead and Copper throughout the distribution system. If results indicate a Lead exceedance, a Corrosion Control treatment will be installed to ensure safe drinking water.

For a guide to help you determine if the service line into your home is lead please visit: <https://www.epa.gov/ground-water-and-drinking-water/protect-your-tap-quick-check-lead-0>

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

Call us at 815-224-1650 or visit our website at <http://www.lasalle-il.gov>

For more information on reducing lead exposure around your home/building and the health effects of lead, visit EPA's Web site at [www.epa.gov/lead](http://www.epa.gov/lead), or contact your health care provider.

# Lead in Drinking Water



City of LaSalle

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