



**July 26, 2019**

**For Immediate Release**

## **Public Advisory for Drinking Water Customers in the City of Benton Harbor**

(Benton Harbor) – The City of Benton Harbor has been conducting ongoing testing of the City’s water supply in accordance with the regulations under the Lead and Copper Rule of the Drinking Water Act for the State of Michigan since October 2018. During this ongoing compliance testing, it was found that water samples gathered in 47 residences from January through June 2019 exceeded the Action Level of 15 parts per billion (ppb) for lead within those household samples. The 90<sup>th</sup> percentile for these samples was 27 ppb for lead, with twelve of the forty-seven samples having lead levels in excess of 15ppb, ranging from 15ppb to 59ppb.

Since October 2018, the City of Benton Harbor, along with many community partners, have been taking several steps to reduce resident’s exposure to lead. The City of Benton Harbor has successfully started the replacement the City’s lead service lines, introduced new corrosion controls in the water supply at the City’s Water Plant, and provided ongoing support and education for residents for water testing and understanding how they can limit lead exposure. The City is committed to continuing to take all corrective actions necessary to educate residents, improve the community water supply, and replace lead service lines with the goal of eliminating lead exposure in drinking water for residents. Find more information regarding the Action Level Exceedance and the City’s drinking water at <https://bhcity.us> or by contacting the City of Benton Harbor Water Plant Director Mike O’Malley at 269- 363-0575 or [momalley@cityofbentonharbormi.gov](mailto:momalley@cityofbentonharbormi.gov).

Elevated levels of lead can cause health concerns. All Benton Harbor water customers are reminded to take the following precautionary actions to reduce their exposure to lead in drinking water:

- Public health officials recommend that any household with a child or pregnant woman use a certified lead filter to reduce lead from their drinking water. Look for filters that are tested and certified to NSF/ANSI Standard 53 for lead reduction. If you are not able to afford the cost of a lead filter, please contact the Berrien County Health Department. More information about obtaining a certified water filter and replacement cartridges can be found at [www.bchdmi.org](http://www.bchdmi.org) or by calling 800-815-5485.
- Residents who do not have a filter and have not used their water for six hours or more should flush their pipes to reduce the amount of lead in their drinking water. Pipes can be flushed by running faucets for at least five minutes, or by taking a shower, running a load of laundry or washing dishes. After flushing, run the water from your faucet until cold before drinking or cooking with the water.
- Use cold tap water for drinking and cooking.
- Use bottled water for preparing baby formula or use Ready-to-Feed formula.
- Do not boil the water, as boiling will not reduce the amount of lead in the water.
- Clean faucets’ aerators or screens at least every six months.

Additional information regarding lead in drinking water and how to reduce risk of lead exposure can be found at [www.michigan.gov/deqleadpublicadvisory](http://www.michigan.gov/deqleadpublicadvisory) or by calling 1-800-662-9278.