

Posted on: June 30, 2016

Village of Orland Park: Maintaining A Safe, Clean Water Supply Is Highest Priority



Media reports of lead in drinking water in parts of the country have prompted the Village of Orland Park to assure its water customers that maintaining a safe and clean water supply is one of the village's highest priorities.

"We want people to know that Orland Park's water is safe. The village's Public Works Department follows all of the state guidelines for testing and treating water," said Mayor Dan McLaughlin. "Lead service pipes were replaced in Orland Park years ago."

Orland Park's Public Works Department reports that the Safe Drinking Water Act of 1974 was established to protect the quality of drinking water in the United States. The act authorized the Environmental Protection Agency to establish minimum standards for many contaminants including lead and copper. These standards must be applied to every public water supply in the United States.

The Village of Orland Park has proactively replaced a majority of its oldest water main. During this process, water services were also replaced up to homes' buffalo boxes. Any lead services found were replaced with copper with none extending beyond the b-box.

"Lead does not naturally occur in water, specifically the water the village pumps to homes and businesses," said Orland Park Director of Public Works John Ingram. "Any lead present would be the result of the fixtures and plumbing in the home or business. The village's annual Consumer Confidence Report details the village's testing of its water and includes results from our parent supply, the City of Chicago." Orland Park's Consumer Confidence Report can be found on the village's website at www.orlandpark.org.

The Village of Orland Park was served by well water up until 1985 when it began receiving Lake Michigan Water via the Village of Oak Lawn.

"The Utilities Division of the village's Public Works Department regularly collects samples and does a number of tests to ensure safe water in Orland Park," said Trustee Michael Carroll, chair of the village's Public Works Committee. "They not only test EPA sanctioned homes, they also test at the main pump station where the Chicago water comes into Orland Park from Oak Lawn."

It is important to remember that lead services are not the only source of lead. Brass fixtures and appurtenances also contained a small percentage of lead until just a few years ago. Lead solder was also prevalent for connecting copper pipes until 1986.

The village's Public Works Department offers good practices for all water customers. Flushing the tap is particularly important when the faucet has gone unused for more than a few hours. Flushing clears standing water from the plumbing and home service line to

ensure that drinking water is coming from the main. Let the water run from the tap until it is noticeably colder, up to two minutes or more, before using it for cooking or drinking. Use only cold water for cooking or drinking.

Make sure lead-free materials are used when building a new home. After moving into a new home, remove the faucet strainers and rinse them to remove any debris. This can be done periodically to remove accumulated debris as well.

Orland Park is required to collect water samples testing for lead and copper every three years from its distribution system. In 2004, residential addresses where samples were collected were drawn from an IEPA approved master list of sites with a total of 120 tested. The lab results of the most recent samples taken in 2014 continue to show the village was well below the action levels on both contaminants. This is why the village has remained on the same sampling frequency for every three years.

Village of Orland Park water customers who want to test their water are encouraged to consult an accredited lab. Suburban Laboratories in Geneva, Illinois has worked with the village and is accredited by the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency, the Illinois Department of Public Health and others. Test kits can be ordered online for \$45 and include a pre-cleaned sample bottle, instructions and a professional report. Residents can call 1-800-783-5227 or order a test kit online at www.drinkingwaterlabs.com.

Chicago area municipalities have received reports of contractors trying to capitalize on recent water issues.

Village residents are warned to be cautious if approached by non-licensed contractors wanting to work on residents' plumbing. Village code requires that all contractors working in Orland Park be licensed and bonded with the village. Call the Development Services Department at 708/403-5300 to learn if a contractor holds a current village license. The list of contractors licensed to work in the village can be found on the Village of Orland Park website at <http://goo.gl/M2G19h>. Those who hire non-licensed contractors have no recourse through the village.

Questions about water service in the Village of Orland Park may be directed to the Public Works Department at 708/403-6350 or via email at publicworks@orlandpark.org.