Lead-Safe Drinking Water: Test, Fix, Inform

FOR: School district & facility managers; Local water utility; Health dept • SDGs: 3 • 6 • 10

One-sentence summary. Implement a district plan that tests every school/child care tap used for drinking or cooking, fixes elevated taps, and informs families—aligned with EPA's 2024 Lead and Copper Rule Improvements (LCRI) and local utility programs.

Why it matters

Lead harms children's brain development even at low levels. EPA's final LCRI (Oct 2024) strengthens protections: full replacement of lead service lines on a defined timeline, more rigorous sampling, and clear expectations for outreach to schools and child care. Districts that move now can align building work with the water system's inventory and replacement schedule.

Evidence (key points)

• LCRI strengthens nationwide requirements to protect people from lead in drinking water (EPA).

• Water systems must replace all lead and galvanized service lines requiring replacement on a set timeline (Federal Register).

• EPA fact sheets detail schools & child care sampling and public education requirements (Oct 2024).

• Posting results and actions increases trust and empowers families.

Options considered

Option	What it looks like	Pros	Cons
Wait for utility plan	No district action until water system replaces service lines	No immediate cost	Continued exposure risk from fixtures/building plumbing; limited transparency
Test-and-fix plan (filters/fixtures)	Test all taps; install certified point-of-use filters where needed; replace fixtures; post results	Immediate risk reduction; transparent; aligns with LCRI outreach/sampling	Ongoing filter maintenance; staff time

Full building plumbing upgrades	Replace problem piping/fixtures; coordinate with service line replacement	Long-term solution; reduces failures	High capital cost; phased work required

Alt text: Table compares waiting, test-and-fix, and full upgrades on setup, pros, and cons.

Recommendations

1) Test and inventory. Owner: Facilities. Steps: list all drink/cook taps; collect first-draw samples; coordinate with the utility to follow LCRI-aligned sampling; post results online with plain-language labels.

2) Fix priority taps immediately. Owner: Facilities + Principals. Steps: install certified lead-reducing point-of-use filters on drinking fountains and kitchen taps above the threshold; replace aerators/fixtures; flush lines after periods of non-use.

3) Plan for service-line and plumbing upgrades. Owner: District + Utility. Steps: match each building to the utility's service line inventory; schedule replacements and capital upgrades; use school breaks for work windows.

What to do next (60-day plan)

Weeks 1–2: assemble team and map taps; request utility data on service line materials. Weeks 3–4: sample priority buildings; publish results and actions. Weeks 5–8: install filters and replace failing fixtures; set maintenance schedule; brief families.

How we'll measure success

- 100% of drink/cook taps sampled and posted within 6 months
- All taps above threshold either filtered or offline within 2 weeks of results
- Filter maintenance logs current (cartridge changes on schedule)
- Service line material known and scheduled for replacement where applicable

Implementation notes

- Use certified lead-reducing filters; track cartridge change dates.
- Flush lines after weekends/holidays; train custodial staff.
- Provide multilingual notices and a simple FAQ for families.
- Coordinate construction windows with school calendars.

Credits & sources (clickable)

- EPA — Lead and Copper Rule Improvements (overview)
- Federal Register — LCRI Final Rule (Oct 30, 2024)
- EPA — LCRI Fact Sheet: Schools & Child Care (Oct 2024, PDF)
- EPA — LCRI Fact Sheet: Public Education Requirements (Oct 2024, PDF)
- EPA — LCRI Supporting Materials (technical fact sheets)