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Contact the City Manager's Office at (313) 343-2505

City responds to new state rules for lead testing in tap water

HARPER WOODS, MI, October 18, 2019 – In 2018, the Michigan Safe Drinking Water Act (MSDWA) was changed to include more stringent procedures for testing and analysis for lead and copper. The new regulations are intended to have a more proactive approach in monitoring each community's lead and copper levels. Since 1992, the City of Harper Woods, which has 5,680 total water customers, has regularly tested for lead and copper. In that time, the City's testing results have never exceeded the state standard. The city has evaluated the service line composition of approximately 1,900 customers to date. These efforts have identified 71 homes with lead service lines. The MSDWA mandated additional testing and testing procedures be modified for broader sampling. The state "action level" standard is 15 parts per billion (ppb). The state requires cities whose testing exceeds the standard to provide a public education campaign advising homeowners of actions they can take to mitigate any lead that may come from their pipes.

In September 2019, in accordance with the MSDWA, Harper Woods tested 30 houses. Of these 30 houses, four houses showed levels above the state standard (15 ppb), triggering a public advisory and public education campaign. The testing under this new method resulted in a rating of 20 ppb, five parts per billion above the state standard. "In coordination with the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy (EGLE), the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, and Wayne County's Public Health Division the City is alerting all of its water customers, whether their house has lead service pipes or not, on practical steps they can take to reduce the risk to lead exposure, particularly for those whose houses have lead service pipes," said **Harper Woods City Manager, Joe Rheker**. "While the Action Level exceedance is not a health-based standard nor a violation of the Michigan Safe Drinking Water Act, we do want the public to be aware of this change, our results and what it means to them. The intent is not to scare the public but let them know the City is proactively working to identify, test and address known lead service leads in the City and work with property owners who want to improve water quality in their homes." Among the steps the City will take includes more testing and an extensive public education campaign. Additionally, residents can contact the City's Department of Public Works at (313) 343-2570 between the hours of 7:30 am and 3:00 pm Monday through Friday to schedule a water service line evaluation.

To start the public education process, the City has set up a dedicated webpage on its website at www.harperwoodscity.org/lead-safety that features content to further inform the public. The page includes steps the public can take to do home tests, as well as, learn about further resources with the State of Michigan and Wayne County.

In conjunction with the City and through the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, the Wayne County Public Health Division will provide complimentary water filters for economically disadvantaged members of the City who meet State mandated thresholds on **Monday, October 21st and Tuesday, October 22nd from 2:00 p.m.-6:00 p.m.** on the first floor of **the Harper Woods Library located at 19601 Harper**. To qualify, your household must have at least one of the following:

- A child under age 18 living there.
- A child under age 18 spending several hours every week at least 3 months of the year there.
- A pregnant woman living there, **AND**

Your household has at least one of the following:

- Someone receiving WIC benefits and/or Medicaid insurance.
- Difficulty affording a filter and replacement cartridges (filters cost about \$35 and replacement cartridges cost about \$15.)

The Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy or EGLE (formally the MDEQ) is the state department that evaluates compliance with the Action Level of all lead and copper results collected in each round of sampling. More information on their program can be accessed at www.michigan.gov/MILeadSafe