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# New Oxford Municipal Authority

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## LEAD & DRINKING WATER

PREPARED BY THE NOMA STAFF

Issue 7

May/June 2016

In the last couple of months, media attention has been placed on lead and copper in the drinking water and what effects it has on consumers. It started with Flint, Michigan and has been addressed in Chicago, Illinois, and Washington, D.C. to name just a few as an issue. While we continue to find out more about the issues in Flint, Michigan, as well as the other areas, it is important for New Oxford Municipal Authority (NOMA) to address the issue and help the customers understand how lead and copper affects the consumers and their drinking water.

To begin this journey, let's start with the basic rules and regulations that NOMA and all public water suppliers are required to follow. In 1974, Congress passed the Safe Drinking Water Act. This law requires the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to determine the level of contaminants in drinking water at which no adverse health effects are likely to occur with an adequate margin of safety. This standard is constantly changing as new potential contaminants are identified. The EPA has set the level on lead at zero based on the best available science which shows there is not safe level of exposure to lead<sup>1</sup>. With that being said, there is also the Federal Lead and Copper Rule that was established in 1991, and revised in 2000 and 2007, which requires that

public water suppliers monitor lead concentrations in tap water in high-risk homes they serve. The regulation requires systems to collect tap samples from sites served by the system that are more likely to have plumbing materials containing lead. The EPA also requires public water systems to alert any customers if there is a problem with the drinking water in accordance with the Public Notification Rule.

The EPA requires all community water systems to prepare and deliver an Annual Water Quality Report, also referred to as the Consumer Confidence Report (CCR). These test results are compiled every year and published in a report that is available to the customer by July 1<sup>st</sup> of every year. This report can be found on NOMA's website, [www.nomaoffice.com](http://www.nomaoffice.com). In 2014 alone, NOMA tested for approximately 95 different contaminants, and copper and lead are among these contaminants tested<sup>2</sup>. NOMA has also collected samples from 20 residents annually to be tested for lead and copper as required by the Lead and Copper Rule as mentioned above. NOMA is pleased to say, that all lead and copper testing have been in compliance for at least the past 10 years and the testing has been completed as required.

So, you are still wondering how the lead gets into the water that has been such a hot topic in the media. Well, let's discuss a few ways that this can happen. In rare instances, lead gets into the water as a result of pesticides that were used decades ago or industrial activity that contaminated the soil and groundwater. However, lead is more likely to enter water from household plumbing. It can also come from metal faucets and fixtures made from brass. Brass fixtures can leach lead even in homes with plastic water lines. The water can dissolve the lead from

***SPECIAL NOTE:** Residents with water conditioning appliances do not qualify as sampling sites. The testing for the Federal Lead & Cooper Rule takes place in the third quarter of 2016. When NOMA deposits a lead and cooper sample container at your residence, it is important to follow the instructions to obtain a first draw sample. This insures that the desired sample results are achieved.*

*Please remember to update your contact information with NOMA. This information is important to keep customers informed of important or emergency events. Contact the office or email [office@nomaoffice.com](mailto:office@nomaoffice.com).*

