

Pinedale water high in lead

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Recent drinking water tests in Pinedale revealed high levels of lead, causing the town to increase its U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) mandated water monitoring next year.

Randy Hubbard, Pinedale public works supervisor, said water tests from two of the 10 older homes sampled in Pinedale showed lead levels greater than the .0015 permitted by the EPA.

Pinedale tends to experience ups and downs when it comes to residential and business drinking water.

"We'll be good for a couple of years and then we'll fail (the water tests) again," Hubbard said.

The elevated lead drinking water levels are coming from private homes and businesses and not the town's drinking water.

With Pinedale's residential water samples not meeting EPA standards, the town will increase its monitoring the coming year by testing 20 homes or businesses over six month periods until results are within EPA requirements.

Hubbard explained the lead concerns only reside in older homes built between the 1980s and the early 90s.

Newer homes typically don't have issues with lead and copper due to higher construction standards put in place in recent years.

Although the primary sources of lead exposure are lead-based paint and lead-contaminated dust or soil, the EPA estimates 10 to 20 percent of a person's potential exposure could come from drinking water.

This is why the EPA requires cities and towns to test and monitor residential drinking water.

Hubbard said Pinedale is also concerned about the health of its residents because lead can cause serious problems if large amounts enter the body from drinking water or other sources.

He explained pregnant women and young children are affected most from lead exposure, while adults with kidney problems and high blood pressure are at greater risk as well.

High levels of lead can cause damage to the brain and kidneys and interfere with the production of red blood cells, which carry oxygen throughout body.

Scientists have also linked the effects of lead on the brain with lowered IQs in children.

Pinedale began its corrosion control program to reduce lead and copper from residential drinking water in 1998.

Hubbard said during that period many of the older homes were not in compliance with the EPA's lead and copper levels.

"Almost every (older) home in town was above the maximum contaminant levels," he said.

Hubbard explained the corrosion control program has had an impact, because the number of residential homes showing high lead in drinking water has reduced.

However, more work is needed.

Because Pinedale has naturally lower PH levels in its water, Hubbard said higher lead and copper in residential drinking water remains a problem.

He explained when the PH levels are below 7 percent the corrosion inhibitors used in pipes to prevent corrosion issues, such as higher levels of lead, don't hold as well.

"What our problem is now is we can't get our PH (levels) high enough," Hubbard said, explaining the town is in the process of revising its corrosion control program to address this problem.

"That's what we are trying to do now is redesign (the corrosion control program) so that it's more effective," he said.

Pinedale is also removing old water lines in town and working to educate the public about lead concerns.

Hubbard recommends residents run their water for 15 to 30 seconds before using it.

"The longer you let the water sit in your plumbing the copper and lead is going to leach, it's just naturally going to happen," he said. "The best thing to do is to let your water run ...that will clear all the plumbing out."

Hubbard suggested residents use cold water for cooking and preparing baby formula and not to boil water to remove lead, because this will not help.

Residents should also test their water if they are concerned.

For more information on reducing lead exposure and its health effects, visit the EPA's Web site at [www. Epa.gov/lead](http://www.Epa.gov/lead) or call the Town of Pinedale at

307-749-7771.