

Ontario Regulation 243/07 (Schools, Private Schools and Child Care Centres)

Communications for Changes Effective July 1, 2017

Information for Early Childhood Educators and Teachers:

This information sheet is to be used by early childhood educators and teachers to help them know about changes to flushing and sampling for lead as a result of updates to *Ontario Regulation 243/07* effective July 1, 2017. Early childhood educators and teachers may also use this information to inform children and answer questions parents/guardians may have about lead testing.

What are the changes to flushing and sampling for lead that are affecting my child care centre or school?

The Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change (MOECC) has updated *Ontario Regulation 243/07*.

Since 2007, the Ontario government has been requiring child care centres and schools to flush the plumbing in their facilities and test their drinking water for lead.

New amendments to *Ontario Regulation 243/07* that take effect July 1, 2017 will now require lead testing within these facilities for **all** fixtures used to provide drinking water and/or prepare food or drink for children under 18.

If there are drinking water fixtures that have not been sampled under *O. Reg. 243/07*, they need to be sampled by the following timelines.

Timelines

Child care centres	By January 1, 2020
Schools with a primary division	By January 1, 2020
Other schools	By January 1, 2022

What is a “drinking water fixture”?

A “drinking water fixture” refers to every drinking water fountain and every tap that is used to provide drinking water or to prepare food and/or drink for children under 18.

What do children need to know?

Children need to know that all child care centres and schools in Ontario will be testing drinking water fixtures for lead to protect children’s health. Your child care centre or school may choose to post signs to indicate whether a drinking water fixture has been tested for lead. For example, if children notice a sign that says “handwashing only” then they should not use that fixture for drinking water or to

prepare food or drink. Some taps and fountains may also be temporarily bagged or marked as “do not use” as part of this testing.

What about taps that do not provide drinking water, e.g., taps in bathrooms, custodian rooms, or that are outside for gardening? Will they be sampled too?

These types of taps do not need to be sampled if children do not use them to obtain drinking water. It is up to your child care centre or school to identify which taps are used for drinking water or to prepare food and/or drink for children under 18 and to have them tested for lead.

Why do all drinking water fixtures need to be sampled?

Studies¹ show that lead levels in drinking water from plumbing can vary substantially between individual taps or fountains. Only by testing each drinking water fixture can child care centres and schools be sure that they are not exposing children to lead through any of the plumbing within their facilities.

When are samples collected?

Sampling is done between May 1st and October 31st. Some exceptions to this may include when a new facility begins operation or when resampling is required by a local health unit.

Who will conduct the sampling?

A designated person at your child care centre or school, (e.g., custodial staff), will conduct the sampling per the requirements of the regulation. For more information on how to sample, go to www.ontario.ca/drinkingwater.

Why does the Ontario government require child care centres and schools to test drinking water for lead?

Young children are more vulnerable to the effects of lead because they absorb ingested lead more easily than adults, which can interfere with the development of their nervous systems. In population studies, exposure to lead has been associated with effects on learning capacity, intellectual development and behavior.

For more information:

- Health Canada – Lead and Human Health: www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ewh-semt/contaminants/lead-plomb/asked_questions-questions_posees_e.html.
- Ontario Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change – Drinking Water Information: www.ontario.ca/drinkingwater.
- Ontario Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change Public Information Centre: 1-800-565-4923.

¹ World Health Organization: Lead Poisoning and Blood.
<http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs379/en/>