

The NRV Regional Water Authority (Authority) and its members (Town of Blacksburg, Town of Christiansburg, Montgomery County and Virginia Tech) are paying close attention to what is unfolding in Flint, Michigan, and our thoughts are with all those who are struggling without access to safe and reliable water in their homes. In North America, no one should have to question the safety of water at the tap.

The Authority and its members want to provide information about this region's water and distribution systems. The Authority's source of water is the New River. We are very fortunate to have this as the region's source for water. The Authority treats all of the water taken from the New River through its 12.4 million gallon per day conventional water treatment facility. At the facility, the water is treated through the following treatment processes: coagulation, flocculation, sedimentation, filtration and disinfection.

The Authority treats all water to meet all state and federal requirements before it is sent out to each member's water distribution system. Before the treated water leaves the facility, a corrosion inhibitor is introduced into the water. This additive helps prevent lead and copper from leaching into the water. Fluoride is also added to the water before leaving the facility. The amount of fluoride leaving the facility and entering the member's distribution systems is at or below the recommended level of 0.7 milligrams per liter (mg/L) or parts per million (ppm) provided by the Virginia Department of Health Office of Drinking Water, US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

The Town of Blacksburg, Town of Christiansburg and Montgomery County Public Service Authority have their own distribution system to operate and maintain. These systems are permitted by and report to the Virginia Department of Health. Sampling and reporting is ongoing and is done in accordance with the Virginia Department of Health Waterworks Regulations.

Each member's public water distribution system consists of the water mains and the customer service lines from the water main to the water meter. The water mains serviced by the Authority and its members are primarily made of cast iron, ductile iron or PVC which have either push-on or mechanical (bolted) joints that are used to connect each length of pipe.

Present day service lines are made of copper or plastic and brass compression fittings are used at connections. Soldered joints are not used in the public water system. Individual private water system materials vary and only the property owner would have knowledge of the actual materials used.

Each of the Authority members perform lead and copper testing in accordance with the Virginia Department of Health and EPA requirements. All members currently comply with the Lead and Copper rule.

If you are a property owner, the following information is useful in addressing potential risks from lead in water.

- Lead service lines are typically only present in older homes, however, older brass faucets with lead content can be found in newer homes.
- A certified plumber will be able to tell you if you have a lead service line, check for lead solders in your internal pipes, and look for fixtures containing lead. Solder containing lead used for joining copper pipes was banned in 1986. Until January 2014, plumbing fittings and fixtures (faucets, etc.) could contain up to 8% lead and still claim to be "lead-free." After January 2014, plumbing fittings and fixtures (faucets, etc.) can only contain up to 0.25% lead
  - Lead service lines are generally a dull gray color and are very soft. They can be identified easily by carefully scratching them with a key or coin. If the pipe is made of lead, the area you've scratched will turn a bright silver color. Do not use a knife or other sharp instrument and take care not to puncture a hole in the pipe.
  - Lead service lines can be connected to the residential plumbing using solder. These lines have a characteristic solder "bulb" at the end or a compression fitting or other connector made of galvanized iron or brass/bronze.

- If your service line cannot be accessed to determine whether it contains lead, you may have your water tested by a certified laboratory.
- The following steps may help protect yourself and your family from lead in tap water, regardless of whether you have a lead service line.
  - Running cold water from your faucets can improve water quality by drawing fresh water into the home, particularly after long periods of time when water has not been used. Be sure to let the water run for 30 seconds up to two minutes, or until becomes cold.
  - When purchasing replacement plumbing products, make sure the products have been tested and certified to “lead-free” standards.
  - If you use a home treatment device to reduce your exposure to lead, make sure it is independently certified for that purpose and properly maintained.

We hope that the information provided is helpful. Information related to Authority member’s water quality, including lead and copper, can be found on their Consumer Confidence Report. The Authority provides links to each member’s report on their website at: <http://nrwater.org/water-quality/monthly-water-report/>

Additional information on each member’s system can be found at their respective websites:

- Blacksburg: <http://www.blacksburg.gov/Index.aspx?page=36>
- Christiansburg: <http://www.christiansburg.org/index.aspx?nid=149>
- Montgomery County PSA: <http://www.montgomerycountyva.gov/content/15989/16055/>

The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) provides the following information:

- Learn about lead: <http://www.epa.gov/lead/learn-about-lead>
- Actions You Can Take To Reduce Lead In Drinking Water:  
<http://nepis.epa.gov/Exe/ZyPDF.cgi?Dockey=20001R4V.txt>