

For Immediate Release
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Passaic Valley Water Commission Issues Important Information about Lead in Paterson, Clifton, Passaic and Prospect Park Drinking Water

Clifton, New Jersey, November 17, 2015 – Recent drinking water quality monitoring conducted by Passaic Valley Water Commission (PVWC) has found elevated levels of lead in drinking water in some homes/buildings in Paterson, Clifton and Passaic. Although the primary sources of lead exposure are lead-based paint and lead-contaminated soil, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency estimates that 10 to 20 percent of a person's potential exposure to lead may come from drinking water.

PVWC is committed to ensuring we provide our customers with high-quality water every day and conducts testing of its water on a constant basis, testing source water (rivers and reservoirs) and treated water when it leaves the treatment plant and as it flows through the distribution system of mains in the street. Lead has not been found in any of these parts of the public water system. The lead is specific to homes with lead service lines or that have fixtures that contain lead.

PVWC is concerned about the health of our customers because lead can cause serious health problems if too much enters your body from drinking water or other sources, especially for pregnant women and children 6 years and younger. It can cause damage to the brain and kidneys, and can interfere with the production of red blood cells that carry oxygen to all parts of your body. Scientists have linked the effects of lead on the brain with lowered IQ in children. Adults with kidney problems and high blood pressure can be affected by low levels of lead more than healthy adults. Lead is stored in the bones and it can be released later in life. During pregnancy, the child receives lead from the mother's bones, which may affect brain development.

PVWC is taking steps to educate its customers, through outreach to customers and resident households in the affected municipalities, including direct mail of educational materials to customers and residents, direct contact with county and local health officials, and additional outreach to municipal and school officials and educational information posted on its website designed to reduce the potential for lead exposure in drinking water.

As stated by PVWC's Executive Director, Joseph Bella, "Tap water monitoring results from our most recent monitoring study, which took place during June and September 2015, revealed elevated lead levels in some homes/buildings in Paterson, Clifton, and Passaic. "Lead comes from lead service lines and pipes and fixtures located in many homes, particularly in older construction."

"Many of the homes in our service area are older and as such are more prone to having lead within the homes' plumbing system," Bella added. "It's our goal to educate the public on how to minimize the chances of exposure to lead in their drinking water that results from the corrosion of pipes and other factors".

Customers can proactively manage the quality of the water in their households regardless of the age of their homes' internal plumbing and fixtures. Here are some ways to reduce your exposure to lead if you think it's present in your tap water

- ▶ **Run your water to flush out lead.** Flush after the water has been sitting in the pipes such as overnight or when away all day. Run water 30 seconds to 2 minutes or until it becomes cold or reaches a steady temperature before using it for drinking or cooking. This flushes lead-containing water from the pipes.
- ▶ **Use cold water for cooking and preparing baby formula.**
- ▶ **Do not boil water to remove lead.** Boiling water will not reduce lead.
- ▶ **Look for alternative drinking water resources or treatment of water.** You may want to consider purchasing bottled water or a water filter.
- ▶ **Test your water for lead.** Call PVWC at 973-340-4300 to find out how to get your water tested for lead.
- ▶ **Get your child tested.** Contact your local health department or healthcare provider to find out how you can get your child tested for lead if you are concerned about exposure.
- ▶ **Identify if your plumbing fixtures contain lead.**

There are several actions that PVWC is taking to address concerns about lead in drinking water. PVWC is continuing efforts to correct the problem, including:

- Monitoring the system twice per year through voluntary public involvement in accordance with EPA/New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) requirements.
- Replacing lead service lines.
- Conducting voluntary lead public education.
- Continuing our corrosion control program to reduce the potential of lead dissolving into the water. Corrosion control treatment was installed at three locations in our system since December 2013 to treat parts of our water system. Additional corrosion control systems will be phased in as a part of the reservoir improvement project, where each phase will provide treatment to specific areas of the distribution system. Once the reservoir improvement project is completed, the entire service area will receive corrosion control treatment.
- Testing the system on a weekly and monthly basis for parameters that indicate how the corrosion control treatment systems are working.
- Continuing our lead public awareness campaign to keep our customer informed. Lead information as well as progress updates on the installation of corrosion control treatment is provided to our customers each year within our annual water quality report. This report can be found on the PVWC website at www.pvwc.com.

Call PVWC at 973-340-4300, email us at customerservice@pvwc.com, or visit PVWC's Web site at <http://www.pvwc.com> to find out how to get your water tested for lead or for more information on steps PVWC is taking to address the lead action level exceedance. For more information on reducing lead exposure around your home/building and the health effects of lead, visit EPA's Web site at <http://www.epa.gov/lead> or contact your health care provider.