

LEAD TESTING IN SCHOOLS FINAL UPDATE AS OF NOVEMBER 2019

There is currently no federal or state regulatory requirement for testing lead levels in the drinking water at schools. However, because school aged children are especially vulnerable to the adverse health effects of elevated lead levels, the Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM) and the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) joined together in March of 2016 to develop a voluntary school testing program. In December of 2016, the Master Plan and the detailed Sampling Plan for the program were finalized and posted on the ADEM website.

The goal of this program was to test the approximately 1,500 public schools, which consist of approximately 8,000 buildings. Testing began in April of 2017 and is now coming to a close. The Sampling Plan was based on EPA's "3Ts for Reducing Lead in Drinking Water in Schools" technical guidance document. The 3Ts (Training, Testing, and Telling) assist local school systems to select the appropriate buildings and sampling locations for testing. Site selection is based on plumbing fixture type, age, and accessibility to students and staff, with at least one water cooler and one kitchen sink tested at each school.

All samples were collected by the school system, a certified laboratory, the public water system that serves the school, or an entity approved by ADEM. Training was available from either ADEM, the Alabama Rural Water Association (ARWA), or the Rural Communities Assistance Program (RCAP). The plan called for samples to be collected during the hotter months (August, September, April and May), as that is the time of year that lead levels would be expected to be highest.

The samples were analyzed by state-certified laboratories. All results are available for inspection in the Department's eFile system. (See <http://app.adem.alabama.gov/eFile/> and select Media Area "Water", check "Custom Query", and select document category/type "SCHLAC")

Over 1,000 public schools have submitted results. 99.5% of the samples collected and analyzed had lead levels below the action level established for schools. Half of the schools had lead levels below detection limits. ADEM worked with the schools that had results over the action level to ensure the affected fixtures were taken out of service, replaced and/or resampled to acceptable levels.

[View a summary of the results here.](#)

ADEM will continue to update this page should additional results be received. We thank the Alabama State Department of Education, the participating school systems and water utilities, and laboratories that helped to make this voluntary program a success. In the future, it is expected that EPA will mandate public water systems to sample schools and child care facilities for lead. Should this occur, Alabama schools will be especially prepared to work with these utilities to establish meaningful sampling programs.