

PURISSIMA PIPELINE

Lead and Copper – GOOD NEWS

As expected, the re-test of water samples taken from 41 residences showed all results were well below the EPA limits for lead and copper by a large margin. The most common source for lead and copper is plumbing fixtures and piping in private homes. Minute quantities of these metals (measured in parts per billion) can dissolve from copper piping, lead-based solder and brass fixtures when the water stands for long periods. That is why the EPA tests involve having homeowners take samples from the kitchen tap or other commonly used faucet at least six hours after the tap was last used.

They also caution that running the tap to drain for 15 seconds before first use will flush out dissolved contaminants.

The January scare was the result of not following the protocols for sampling precisely, with the result that three samples were above the EPA limit. Our procedures and instructions to homeowners who participate have been revised and we have provided additional training to our staff and all persons doing the sampling. Here are the results based on the June sampling of 41 customers:

| Measurement | Copper | Lead |
|--------------------|---------------|-------------|
| Highest value | 48.7 | 6.5 |
| Lowest value | 16.3 | <1 |
| Average | 38.5 | 2.1 |
| Median | 32.8 | 2.1 |
| EPA Limit | 1300.0 | 15.0 |

All values are in micrograms per liter or parts per billion by weight. The compliance ratio for Copper (average) is 34:1, and for Lead it is 7:1, so we are well below the EPA health limits. A second confirming round of testing is planned for September and will include another 41 samples.

Water Rates

The increased costs of buying water, power, fuel, materials; increases in labor costs, plus the need to replace and upgrade an aging system means that a rate increase is on the horizon. The District Board is reviewing all costs and needs for capital expenditures to run our water system in a safe and reliable manner and maintain it in good repair. Wholesale water rates increased 19 percent last year and this year San Francisco will increase our water cost by 6.6 percent. Wholesale water costs will continue to increase over the next 10 years as San Francisco finances the \$3.4 billion seismic and water supply improvement program and passes the cost on to its customers. We have not had a rate increase since 2004, over 3 years ago. Notification of the new rates will be given to all customers in advance and a public hearing will be scheduled for November or December prior to adoption.

Daniel Seidel
President
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