Maine Environmental Laboratory

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"FIRST DRAW" LEAD & COPPER SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

Lead and copper from plumbing corrosion is sampled using the "first draw" technique to get water that has been sitting still in the pipes for at least six hours. The recommended stagnation time is 6-10 hours. Do not intentionally flush the water line before beginning the stagnation time.

Sitting still means no using the water at all! No toilet flushing, garden watering, clothes washing, etc. You want to give any metals that might leach into the water the opportunity to do so.

WHAT WE NEED:

1 liter of water in a clean plastic container provided by the laboratory.

HOW TO GET THE BEST SAMPLE:

1. Do not remove aerators before collecting samples.
2. Use the cold water tap. If your faucet mixes hot and cold water (does not have separate faucet heads), turn off the hot water line before you collect the sample or choose a different faucet. Collecting hot water can result in higher lead levels.
3. Let water sit motionless in the pipes for at least six hours.
4. Place water sample bottle under the tap and gently turn on the cold water faucet. Do not rinse the bottle first. Do not lose any water to splashing outside of the bottle.
5. Fill the sample container to the shoulder of the bottle or the line indicated on the sample instructions. Turn off the water and close the bottle tightly.

RECORD-KEEPING:

Fill out the laboratory paperwork and submit to MEL with the samples. Remember to record the date and time of last water use and date and time of sample collection. Record the time of sampling on the Chain of Custody form with your other information.

GET IT TO THE LAB:

Lab must receive sample and chain of custody form within 14 days of sampling.