

A Tale of Two Cities: Comparing EPA Region III Response to Lead in School Water of D.C. and Philadelphia

School System	Key Background Info	EPA on the Record about Health Concerns in Each School	EPA Action	% of schools failing	Stated cause of high lead in schools	Action
Philadelphia	<p>Site of Region III HQ's</p> <p>Local utility did not exceed EPA Action limit for corrosion</p> <p>State has primacy</p> <p>News in 1999</p>	<p>Region III argued that > 40 ppb lead in Philadelphia school water posed an "imminent and substantial endangerment" to children</p>	<p>EPA prepared to exercise emergency powers to prevent harm to Philadelphia children. Under threat of legal action, EPA negotiated 1999 and 2000 consent orders between school and state.</p>	<p>57% of schools with water over 20 ppb</p> <p>17% of schools with water over 100 ppb</p>	<p>Despite utility meeting EPA Lead and Copper Rule for corrosion, the cause of high lead was "corrosion of plumbing fixtures."</p>	<p>Decisive steps taken to mitigate hazardous exposure.</p> <p>\$6 million spent on problem through 2005.</p>
D.C.	<p>EPA regulations inadvertently caused lead problem in DC.</p> <p>EPA approved WASA actions hiding corrosion problems</p> <p>EPA has primacy</p> <p>News in 2004</p>	<p>After high lead identified in D.C. after implementing EPA regulations, EPA removed their long posted warnings about imminent danger to children from 40 ppb lead in school water. A few days after removing the warning, Region III testified under oath that 15 ppb lead in D.C. water was "low."</p>	<p>2004: EPA approved special DCPS sampling protocol that used pre-flushing and removed aerators before sampling, techniques that temporarily reduce lead in sampled water relative to normal use. Aerator removal banned in 2006. However, Region III testified under oath that the 2004 DCPS protocol was "consistent with" EPA protocol.</p> <p>2007: EPA "The good thing is that D.C. is doing this on its own."</p>	<p>75% of schools with water over 20 ppb</p> <p>42% of schools with water over 100 ppb**</p>	<p>DC WASA denied corrosive water contributes, but instead told reporters the lead was due to "old plumbing" in the schools. Region III allows WASA's statements to go unrefuted.</p>	<p>From 2004 to early 2007, DC school children needlessly exposed to lead in water hazard, despite knowledge that the 2004 sampling protocol hid problems. Based on sampling using this now-banned protocol, only 22% of DCPS schools were shown to have lead problems in 2004, versus 75% in 2007 after 2+ years of corrosion inhibitor and supposedly fixing all problem taps in 2004.</p> <p>EPA approved 2007 lead testing protocol, which enlisted "flushing volunteers" to pre-clean pipes 50+ minutes the night before sampling. This will decrease lead in water. ***</p>

**based on sampling of 14 schools through 2/14

***DCPS quoted in Washington Post saying EPA approved protocol with exhaustive pre-cleaning instructions. EPA later denied seeing the pre-cleaning instruction before approving the sampling protocol. After they did finally read it, they did not like it, but now maintain it is consistent with the "spirit" of EPA protocol. Pre-flushing instructions were essentially copied from EPA instructions on how to remediate problems with high lead in water, by pre-cleaning lead from the plumbing system.

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