

## Lead & Copper Sampling Randy Hellbusch

All systems must sample for lead and copper once every three years. Sometimes, over a three-year period, it is easy to forget exactly how the samples were collected the previous time and what some of the important issues to remember are. When the lead and copper rule went into effect some 13yrs. ago, NeRWA compiled a list of helpful tips to consider when collecting samples. Just because samples were good in the past does not assure they won't fail in the future. Don't get caught having to treat for lead and copper by getting lax or assuming everything will be o.k. Following is a list of reminders that may help when taking lead and copper samples

1. Have a system representative collect the samples.
  - a. If you are having consumers collect the samples, be sure they understand proper sampling technique. Don't let an error by a consumer cause a compliance problem.
2. Flush all faucets in the home 5 minutes or longer
  - a. let the water run until good and cold
3. Shut off faucets slowly.
  - a. Velocity in piping causes copper to leach more rapidly
4. Sample 6 hours later
  - a. do not allow water to stand any longer than 6 hours
5. Slowly turn on faucet until a steady stream is achieved
  - a. Take at least one minute to fill container
  - b. Practice with one liter bottle prior to sampling
6. Samples do not need to be taken all on the same date
  - a. Mail samples in as they are collected
  - b. Be creative, sample on weekends when homes are more accessible
  - c. Flush faucets at noon and sample at 6 p.m.
7. Do not sample from dead-end or low flow areas in the system
  - a. stay as close to the water source (well) as possible
8. Check past sample results
  - a. some systems have learned that results are lower in the summer months
9. Never sample from a home with a water softener or other home treatment device.
  - a. Even if there is a line dedicate to untreated water

The above sampling procedures have helped systems reduce the levels of copper in samples in the past. Most of it is common knowledge for many operators, but I thought a

little helpful reminder just might not hurt. If NeRWA can be of assistance with this, or any other aspect of your water system, don't hesitate to give us a call.