

March 29, 2019

Change to Lead and Manganese MAC Guidelines in Drinking Water

The new guidelines for lead are stricter and change the point of measurement.

On March 8, 2019, Health Canada **published a new maximum acceptable concentration (MAC) for lead**, and they expect a new MAC for manganese in April 2019. Health Canada publishes these MACs under its *Guidelines for Canadian Drinking Water Quality* that list various contaminants that can be found in drinking water and have potential for causing negative health effects. Maximum acceptable concentrations (MACs) are set, and revised if appropriate, based on regular reviews and assessments of scientific evidence. The new **MAC for lead is 0.005 mg/L** (milligrams per litre), which is a lower value than the current 0.010 mg/L. The expected MAC for manganese will be 0.12 mg/L.

So what does this mean for Alberta drinking water systems?

Municipal water providers will have five years after receiving written notification from their Alberta Environment and Parks (AEP) regional *Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act* (EPEA) signing Director to develop and begin implementation of lead and/or manganese management programs for their systems. Water utilities will be required to submit their plans for meeting the MAC for lead (at the tap) and manganese (in the distribution system) as part of their annual drinking water system report to AEP and to include the plans in their Operations Program. As a result of these changes, current monitoring programs may need enhancement to assess the presence and concentration of lead and manganese in water.

Health Canada has developed an **infographic** on the subject of lead in drinking water.

For more information, click **here**.

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