PSU Lead Testing
Frequently Asked Questions

Why were PSU’s residence halls tested for lead in drinking water?
PSU regularly tests drinking water to ensure water quality. The campus expanded its lead testing last summer after six faucets in Cramer Hall were found to have lead levels above the federal action level. After those faucets were fixed, PSU launched spot checks of all other campus buildings, including all residence halls this summer. The older residence halls were tested first, because they are more likely to have older faucets.

What are the test results?
Out of 45 rooms tested this summer, we have identified eight rooms above the EPA action level of 15 parts per billion in these residence halls: Parkway, Blackstone, Stratford and King Albert.

The full results are on the Environmental Health and Safety website: http://www.pdx.edu/environmental-health-safety/drinking-water

Why were the initial tests done in unoccupied rooms?
In unoccupied rooms, the water likely sat in the pipes for two to four weeks. Higher lead levels typically are detected in faucets that are not used regularly. The results are not unusual for older buildings, which are more likely to have older plumbing and faucets that contain lead. Lead is most common in plumbing from 1970-1985.

What is PSU’s response?
The faucets with lead levels above the federal action level are being replaced starting August 3. PSU will test all remaining residence hall sink faucets and replace them based on the test results. We will give top priority to the four halls where lead was a factor and rooms where children will be living this fall. The testing, and the possible replacement of more faucets, will be expedited.

In addition, PSU has purchased bottled water for students who live in the four residence halls. Up to two liters per day per person are available at the Montgomery Service Desk. Please show your ID to pick up the water bottles.

When do students move in to the residence halls for fall term?
Students start moving in on Sept. 17, and PSU is working with contractors to expedite testing.

How much will the work cost?
The cost of initial testing and repairs is estimated to be about $150,000. The amount could rise if more lead is found.

What about the rest of campus?
Samples taken in the past year showed lead levels well under the maximum federal safety standard of 15 parts per billion in most other campus buildings, including two campus child care centers. Results are here: http://www.pdx.edu/environmental-health-safety/drinking-water.
The exception was Cramer Hall, where six faucets had lead levels above the federal standard in 2015. When these results were received, PSU posted signs on the sinks to indicate the water was not suitable for drinking while corrections were planned and implemented. Twenty-seven additional locations were tested throughout Cramer Hall, including departmental sinks, drinking fountains and hydration stations and had results below federal limit. Regular monitoring of campus buildings will continue after the testing in the residence halls is completed.

**How can I reduce lead in drinking water?**

Recommendations from the Portland Water Bureau:

- If the water has not been used for several hours, run each tap for at least 30 seconds or until it becomes colder before drinking or cooking.
- Use cold, fresh water for cooking and preparing baby formula.
- Do not cook with or drink water from the hot water tap; lead dissolves more easily into hot water. Do not use water from the hot water tap to make baby formula.
- Do not boil water to remove lead. Boiling water will not reduce lead.

**Is my health at risk if I drink water containing lead?**

Lead in water is more of a health risk to babies, children and pregnant women than other adults. Here’s more information on lead from Multnomah County: multco.us/health/lead-poisoning-prevention/what-lead-poisoning

If you are concerned about your health, please contact your doctor or the Center for Student Health and Counseling, [www.pdx.edu/shac](http://www.pdx.edu/shac), 503-725-2800.

**Where can I go for more answers?**

Leadline, Multnomah County’s lead prevention information and referral hotline: 503-988-4000, [leadline@multco.us](mailto:leadline@multco.us)

Center for Student Health and Counseling: [www.pdx.edu/shac](http://www.pdx.edu/shac), 503-725-2800

Housing & Residence Life: housing@pdx.edu, 503-725-4375