

Proposed Rulemaking: Safe Drinking Water Lead and Copper Rule Improvements

Environmental Quality Board
6/9/2026





Background

- US EPA published the original Lead and Copper Rule (LCR) NPDWR* in 1991; subsequent Minor Revisions and Short-term Revisions were published in 2004 and 2007, respectively.
- US EPA published the Lead and Copper Rule Revisions (LCRR) NPDWR* on January 15, 2021, requiring water systems to complete an initial service line inventory, deliver notifications of service line materials to consumers, and issue Tier 1 public notice (PN) for lead action level exceedances.
- US EPA published the Lead and Copper Rule Improvements (LCRI) NPDWR* on October 30, 2024, amending the existing LCR to improve public health protection by reducing exposure to lead in drinking water.

*NPDWR = National Primary Drinking Water Regulations in 40 CFR Part 141



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Purpose of the Regulation

- Improve public health protection
 - Reduce exposure to lead in drinking water for consumers of water provided by public water systems
 - Educate consumers on the dangers of lead exposure
- DEP must adopt standards that are at least as stringent as the NPDWR to maintain primacy.



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LCRI Provisions

- Compliance begins November 1, 2027.
- Complete and submit a service line inventory to identify and locate lead service lines.
- Lower the lead action level and update the calculation for the 90th percentile compliance value.
- Strengthen the compliance steps for optimal corrosion control treatment (CCT) and expand compliance options for CCT in small water systems.
- Update the tap sampling and monitoring requirements for lead and copper to improve the reliability of results.



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LCRI Provisions

- Protect children in schools and child care facilities by requiring public education activities and sampling, if accepted or requested by schools and child care facilities.
- Replace lead and galvanized requiring replacement (GRR) service lines under a water system's control no later than 10 years after November 1, 2027.
- Require additional actions for public water systems with multiple lead action level exceedances.
- Update health effect language for lead in public education, increase in notifications to consumers, and conduct additional outreach to customers to encourage service line replacement.



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LCRI Applicability

The LCRI applies to all 2,911 community and nontransient noncommunity water systems.

- 1,851 are community water systems
- 1,060 are nontransient noncommunity water systems

Combined, these water systems serve approximately 11 million people.

LCRI: Estimated Benefits

LCRI Estimated Benefits

Total annual benefits to Pennsylvania consumers	\$587.25 million to \$1.1 billion
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Quantifiable benefits include:

- Increase in IQ in children from birth to 7 years
- Reductions in incidents of low birth weight or ADHD in children
- Reduction in adult cardiovascular disease premature mortality

LCRI: Estimated Costs

LCRI Estimated Costs

Total annual costs to PA water systems	\$63.04 to \$85 million
Annual costs per system	\$21,656 to \$29,201
DEP annual costs	\$460,714 to \$494,643

LCRI estimated costs includes rule implementation and administration, sampling, service line inventory, service line replacement, CCT, POU program, and public education/ outreach.

Costs for water systems that do *not* have any lead or GRR service lines *and* that do *not* exceed an action level are estimated at \$3,482 to \$3,973 annually.

- These costs include rule implementation and administration, monitoring, and public education/ outreach.

DEP costs include updating compliance programs for tracking LCRI compliance and reporting, training staff and water systems, taking enforcement actions, and reporting to the EPA.



Costs vs. Benefits

- Estimated **net** annual benefits (benefits minus costs) in PA range from \$523.7 million to \$1 billion.
- The quantifiable and nonquantifiable benefits of the proposed LCRI justify the quantifiable and nonquantifiable costs.



Advisory Committee Review

- The Public Water System Technical Assistance Center (PWS-TAC) Board reviewed the draft proposed annex on February 12, 2026.
- Edits were suggested to provide clarity, improve readability, and to align with the federal regulation. Annex A was revised as recommended by the Board.
- The Board also recommended that:
 - DEP to work with the EPA to ensure clarity in technical guidance for the 90th percentile calculation
 - DEP to create SOPs and training for staff to ensure consistent implementation in determining when systems are required to re-optimize OCCT
 - DEP and the EPA work with their respective Department of Education and Department of Human Services in creating marketing, communications, and notification plans for sampling in schools and child care facilities



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Recommendation

DEP recommends the Board adopt this proposed regulation with a 60-day public comment period.



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Questions?

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The Department of Environmental Protection's mission is to protect Pennsylvania's air, land and water resources and to provide for the health and safety of its residents and visitors, consistent with the rights and duties established under the Environmental Rights Amendment (Article 1, Section 27 of the Pennsylvania Constitution).