

Good News on the Lead Front:

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When the U. S. Congress passed the “Reduction of Lead in Drinking Water Act”, a lot of commotion was created because public water systems that use meters for billing believed that they would not be able to repair and reuse meters that were already in existence. Wording in various documents would tend to lead one to this assumption. This situation has been monitored by the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services Division of Public Health because of these concerns.

In a fairly recent conversation with the USEPA, the Department has learned that, based on USEPA’s interpretation of the Act, if a PWS removes an existing in-service water meter and repairs it with no-lead parts, that meter may be re-installed either in the same location, or in another location. The keys to the re-installation of a repaired meter being that it is an appurtenance that was already “in service” prior to the implementation of the Act and the repairs were accomplished with parts that meet the new definition of “lead free”. The intent of the Act is to prevent the introduction of “new” pipe, fittings, etc. into drinking water service that doesn’t meet the new definition of “lead free”. Because the repaired meter is not “new”, it may be repaired and re-installed.

USEPA will be coming out with this guidance in writing. As soon as the Department receives this written guidance it will be communicated to all affected PWS. In the meantime, if you have any questions in this regard, please contact Steve Drda (402-471-1008) or Doug Woodbeck (402-471-0521) with the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Public Health, Public Drinking Water Program.