

## **PENNSYLVANIA LEAD BAN**

Pennsylvania's *Plumbing System Lead Ban and Notification Act* (PA Lead Ban) became effective on January 6, 1991, and applies to all plumbing construction or repairs done after that date. Pennsylvania's law is similar to the 1986 amendments to the federal Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) and requires the use of lead-free materials in construction or repair of any public water system (PWS), any facility connected to a PWS, or any plumbing that provides water for human consumption.

Lead-free is defined as any pipes or pipefittings that contain less than 0.25 percent lead, and any solders or flux that contain less than 0.2 percent lead. The law was further strengthened by the 1996 amendments to the federal SDWA. The amended law bans plumbing suppliers from selling after August 6, 1998, both leaded solder or flux and pipe, fittings or fixtures that are not lead-free and do not meet acceptable lead leaching standards. Pipes, fittings or fixtures that meet the lead leaching standards in the American National Standards Institute/National Science Foundation (ANSI/NSF) Standard 61: *Drinking Water System Components – Health Effects* are deemed to be acceptable.

### **Why Ban Lead?**

Although lead may be found in many places in our modern society, water is probably the easiest to control. Our drinking water can contain a significant amount of lead (up to 40 percent of a person's total lead exposure) as a result of corrosion of pipes, solder, and fixtures found in buildings or in the mains or service connection of a PWS. Solder containing lead is a major target under the PA Lead Ban since it is more likely to exceed allowable lead-content levels.

Pregnant women, their unborn children, young children (especially under the age of six), and middle-aged men and women are especially vulnerable to the health effects of lead. Exposure to lead above recommended levels may lead to delays in normal physical and mental development in babies and young children, cause slight defects in attention span, hearing and learning abilities in children, and may slightly increase blood pressure in some adults. Long-term exposure to lead above recommended levels may result in stroke, kidney disease, or cancer.

### **Summary of the PA Lead Ban**

- PA's Lead Ban applies to all plumbing, not just plumbing used for drinking water.
- The Lead Ban forbids the sale and use of leaded solder, flux, pipe and pipe-fittings. These products were to have been removed from sale by January 6, 1991.
- Solders banned for sale in Pennsylvania include 50/50 and 85/15 tin-lead acid and solid core solders, leaded solders labeled for plumbing use or leaded solders not labeled as to content.
- Other leaded solders may be sold only if the package bears a prominent label stating that it is illegal to use the solder or flux in the installation or repair of any plumbing. Also, leaded solder is not allowed to be located in the plumbing section of the retail facility, nor in the proximity of plumbing materials in any establishment.
- The Lead Ban applies to all water users including private homes or facilities that obtain drinking water from private wells.
- A builder must certify that materials used in the construction of a new plumbing system, which is to be connected to a PWS are lead-free. A PWS must refuse connection to any person who fails to provide that certification unless the local municipality has a plumbing code that prohibits the use of leaded materials.

## Further Information:

### Plumbers

You may only use lead-free materials in any construction or repair work you do in Pennsylvania. Specific materials that may not be sold or used include:

- Lead Pipes.
- Copper or brass fixtures, pipe or fittings not meeting the lead-free definition and not meeting the lead leaching limits set in ANSI/NSF Standard 61 after August 6, 1998.
- Solid and acid core solders or flux containing more than 0.2 percent lead.
- Solders not labeled lead-free or not labeled for lead content.
- Lead-containing solders labeled for plumbing use.

The Lead Ban does not apply to:

- Bulk lead normally used to repair cast iron pipe joints.
- Bar lead solder normally used in construction and repair of sheet metal, such as ductwork, roofing, etc.
- Any other lead solder not used in the plumbing industry (except 50/50 or 85/15 tin-lead solder). Solders that have automotive, electronic, industrial or other applications not related to plumbing are not banned. These solders have specifications distinct from solders commonly used for plumbing applications.

### Private Wells

Although certification is not required for hook up to a private well, the PA Lead Ban applies to all plumbing applications. Home buyers, home owners, real estate agents, and contractors should be sure that only lead-free materials are used in all new plumbing construction and repairs.

### Violation of the Lead Ban

If plumbing materials containing lead are used in Pennsylvania after January 6, 1991:

- The plumber may be required to replace the banned materials with lead-free materials at the plumber's own expense. In addition, a supply of an alternate, approved drinking water (bottled water) may be required until the plumbing is replaced.
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- Monetary penalties may be assessed.

Federal law forbids the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the Veteran's Administration (VA) from insuring or guaranteeing a mortgage, or from furnishing assistance, for a newly constructed residence if the new residence's potable water system is not lead-free.

### For Additional Information:

Contact your local municipality if you suspect a local plumbing code violation.

If there is not a local plumbing code or if you suspect a violation of the ban of sale, please contact:

PA Department of Environmental Protection  
Bureau of Safe Drinking Water  
P.O. Box 8467  
Harrisburg, PA 17105-8467  
717-772-4018

For more information, visit [www.dep.state.pa.us](http://www.dep.state.pa.us), keyword: Drinking Water.