



## Orthophosphate Used to Address Lead in Water

This summer the Washington Aqueduct, which provides drinking water to DC and several other jurisdictions, plans to add orthophosphate to the drinking water treatment process in order to address the elevated concentration of lead in the tap water in some District homes. The Washington Aqueduct introduced this new chemical treatment on June 1st in a small area of the District's northwest quadrant. Last month we reported that the Washington Aqueduct planned to use zinc orthophosphate to help reduce lead leaching. But as a result of concerns from Arlington County that zinc could cause problems at its waste water treatment plant, the plan was modified and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) approved the use of orthophosphate, instead.

Orthophosphate is a commonly used "corrosion inhibitor" that is added to finished drinking water. Orthophosphate works by forming a protective coating inside of lead service line pipes and fixtures in customers' homes to help prevent lead from leaching into drinking water. It may take six months or longer for the reduction in lead levels to occur. Orthophosphate is a food-grade chemical and is generally recognized as safe by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and the EPA.

***"We are continuing to work to address the issue of elevated lead levels in tap water in some District homes,"*** said Jerry N. Johnson, WASA General Manager. ***"The DC Water and Sewer Authority, the District's water distributor; the Washington Aqueduct, which produces and treats the water; the EPA, the regulator for drinking water in the District; and the DC Department of Health are working in***

***partnership to ensure that residents and visitors have safe and clean drinking water."***

***"We have been monitoring a small area in the city where the first phase of adding orthophosphate to the water supply began on June 1st. We have been pleased thus far with results we've seen, and there have been no reports of problems from residents,"*** said Johnson. The Washington Aqueduct's plan to add orthophosphate to the entire water distribution system this summer is a welcomed next step in addressing this issue.

As part of WASA's effort to ensure that the community is fully aware of the steps WASA and its partners are taking to address the lead problem, we will continue to collect and monitor the data and determine if additional steps by Washington Aqueduct to change the water chemistry are warranted.

While encouraged by our progress, it is important to remember that the full benefit of the new treatment may take several months to significantly reduce the corrosive effects of water in lead pipes. So WASA is urging its customers to continue taking recommended steps to reduce potential exposure to lead in drinking water. When water has not been used for six hours or longer, residents with lead service line pipes, or those who are concerned about lead in their water, should draw cold water for drinking or cooking only after a high water use activity (such as bathing or washing clothes), so that a total of at least 10 minutes of flushing has occurred.

For more information, contact the Lead Services Hotline at **202-787-2732** or email **wqp2003@dcwasa.com**.

# WASA Makes A Community Water Pledge

At a press conference Thursday, June 17th, WASA announced a new "Community Water Pledge" that marks a new phase in the Lead Services Program. In looking to the future, we will be focusing attention and resources on the practical issues that concern our customers and the public.

"From water chemistry to operations to communications, we now understand the lead service line issue better than we did upon first discovering it, because we've learned much from scientific research and analysis, as well as feedback from our customers," said General Manager, Jerry N. Johnson.

WASA has also reached a settlement agreement with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on our compliance with the Federal Lead and Copper Rule. Johnson made it clear at the June 17th press conference that WASA was committing to using the agreement with EPA as the *minimum* standard for performance.

Most of what EPA requires is numbers driven and not sufficient to reassure the residents of our community. "WASA's response cannot be numbers driven, we live here, and we are going to forge real solutions," said Johnson.

WASA's *Community Water Pledge* includes:

- Significantly accelerating the replacement of over 1800 lead service lines – the EPA agreement requires 1,615 this year.
- Considering eliminating all lead service lines in public space – a step not required by the EPA.
- Continuing to work with the District government to identify public grant funds and partnering with a local financial institution to create a loan program to help customers finance the replacement of lead service line pipes on private property.
- Continuing to reach out to nationally and internationally respected advisors, like the DC Department of Health and the George Washington University School of Public Health, to assist us in fully understanding all related health issues.
- Clearly communicating to customers critical and timely information through direct mail, newsletters, a consumer confidence report, website updates, frequent media briefings and community meetings.
- Creating a new mobile water quality response unit to ensure quick, effective responses to water quality concerns.
- Hiring a new manager of our lead services program to ensure strong oversight and coordination of a complex inter-departmental and inter-agency program.

## Water Discounts Available to Eligible Residents

WASA customers may be eligible to receive discounts on their water bills of 400 cubic feet (4 gallons) of water per month through our Customer Assistance Program (CAP). Residents do not have to be homeowners to be eligible. All applicants must fall within federal income guidelines, and need to provide proof of income (such as a paycheck stub), current utility bills and proof of age. Also, residents must apply and be re-certified every October. For more information or to request an application, call the DC Energy Office Hotline at 202-673-6750.

**Customer Service: 202-354-3600**  
**24-Hour Emergencies: 202-612-3400**

## 2-for-1 Ticket Deal to DC United Game DCWASA Water Wise Use Night Special:

Order a \$22 sideline ticket to the August 11th game against the Colorado Rapids at RFK Stadium and get a **companion ticket free**. Call DC United at 202-587-5000 or email [dcwaterwise@dcunited.com](mailto:dcwaterwise@dcunited.com) and mention the DCWASA Water Wise Use Night special to get your free companion ticket.

**District of Columbia Water and Sewer Authority**  
Customer Service Department  
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For more information, visit WASA's website at [www.dcwasa.com](http://www.dcwasa.com).  
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