

# **Frequently Asked Questions about Rowan County's Lead and Copper Testing Kit Program**

**February 5, 2021**

## **Why am I receiving a Lead and Copper Water Testing Kit?**

In a letter dated January 15, 2021, Rowan County provided you with information regarding elevated levels of lead above the Action Level found in four homes in the Northeast Water System (NEWS).

The source of lead is limited to privately-owned plumbing materials as determined by the knowledge of the distribution system materials and inspections completed on (2) two of the (4) four homes exceeding the Action Level.

Rowan County has been working with Salisbury-Rowan Utilities (the operator of the public drinking water system), the State of North Carolina, and experts from Virginia Tech University to determine the best long-term treatment solution for the NEWS system.

Until the proper treatment solution is selected, and in the interests of fully protecting public health as our work with the State of North Carolina and Virginia Tech continues, the Rowan County Board of Commissioners recently approved a plan to provide you (and every other connection on the NEWS system) with the FREE enclosed water testing kit, as well as a previously shipped Brita pitcher and certified filters.

## **Why should I take part in the water testing? What benefits do I receive if I take part?**

The FREE water sampling kit has been provided so you can voluntarily take and return a water sample for a lead and copper test. Included in the testing kit will be a pre-paid delivery packet so you can return your sample FREE of charge. A certified laboratory will conduct tests on your sample and the results will be shared with you.

The testing program is the best way to ensure that our long-term solution will reduce the levels of lead in your water for years to come. The more samples we receive from our NEWS customers, the more information we receive to determine the proper solution to the issue.

To thank you for your help with our testing program, *Rowan County is offering you a \$72.00 credit on your water bill* if you return a water sample following the enclosed instructions and using the pre-paid delivery packet.

## **How can lead get into our drinking water?**

It is important to note that lead does not enter drinking water at the water plant. Lead enters drinking water through its interaction with lead service lines and plumbing materials in a water distribution system or in a customer's home or business. Because the distribution lines serving your home are relatively new, household plumbing is believed to be the cause.

Household plumbing materials and service lines containing lead are often found in homes built before 1986, as well as homes with faucets, valves, and components made of brass. Even brass faucets, fittings, and valves labeled as "lead-free" may contribute to lead in drinking water.

With your filter, you will find a document titled, "EPA Concerned About Lead in Your Drinking Water?" that provides further details about how lead can enter drinking water.

**What steps can I take now to avoid exposure to lead in drinking water?**

- Properly use the Brita water pitcher and certified filters provided by Rowan County. We ask that you carefully read the provided BRITA LONGLAST User's Guide before using your pitcher and filters to ensure they will work properly.
- Take part in our FREE water testing program.
- Let cold water run at the faucet for at least three minutes before using it for drinking or cooking.
- Use only cold water. Hot water has the potential to absorb more lead from the piping and heating or boiling your water does NOT remove lead from drinking water.
- Regularly clean your faucet aerators. Lead particles can collect in your aerator.

**What is Rowan County doing to address the issue?**

Rowan County has been working with Salisbury-Rowan Utilities (the operator of the public drinking water system), the State of North Carolina, and experts from Virginia Tech University to determine the proper long-term treatment solution.

To provide a short-term solution, Rowan County recently shipped you a free Brita water pitcher and certified filters to use for your drinking water. If you did not receive the pitcher, contact Rowan County at 704-216-8180.

**When and how will I get the results of the test?**

It could take approximately 30 days to receive your results from the date you mail the sample to the laboratory. If levels of lead in your water sample exceed the Action Level, a letter will be mailed to you within 48 hours of our receiving the results.

Even though the letter will be mailed within 48 hours, this does not necessarily mean that you will receive the letter within 48 hours. Because of this, we would also like to call and email you to make sure that you are aware of the results within 24 hours. **Please consider providing to us a telephone number and email address so we can immediately reach you.** You may email your name, address, phone number and email address to [water@rowancountync.gov](mailto:water@rowancountync.gov) or call Siobhan Allen at 704-216-8193.

**If I have questions about my water test, who can I contact?**

You can contact the number provided in the water testing kit or contact Rowan County at 704-216-8180.

**Where can I go to find out more information?**

You can visit the Rowan County website at [www.rowancountync.gov/water](http://www.rowancountync.gov/water).