

Press Release – Office of the Town Administrator – February 4, 2022

The Town of Tisbury was informed by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection that routine testing at the Tisbury School and Vineyard Montessori School showed lead levels above compliance standards (1 part per billion) at one handwash sink at the Tisbury School and at a sink at the Vineyard Montessori School. The sink at the Tisbury School was in an area inaccessible to students and was not used for drinking or cooking purposes.

Testing throughout the Town of Tisbury public water supply system has not revealed levels of lead that exceed Massachusetts or Federal thresholds for lead in potable water, leading us to conclude that the overall water supply is safe, and that there may be elevated lead levels within the Tisbury School's pipes and/or faucets. Based on these initial test results, an abundance of caution, and the overall age of the Tisbury School plumbing system, the Town of Tisbury, in collaboration with the Tisbury School and the Martha's Vineyard Regional School District, will be carrying out the following actions:

1. Cease using all faucets and water fountains within the Tisbury School for drinking water and the preparation of food until the water from them can be tested for lead.
2. Conduct lead testing at all faucets and water fountains at the Tisbury School to determine if there are any other fixtures or areas with the elevated lead levels.
3. Provide bottled water throughout the school and cafeteria until the lead status of all faucets and water fountains is known.
4. Post signs at all sinks that they are for handwashing only.¹
5. Replace all pipes and fixtures during the Tisbury School renovation project.

These are our preliminary action steps, and we will continue to investigate this issue, review new data as it is received, and update our response as necessary. The Tisbury Select Board and all Town Departments, including the Tisbury Water Works and Board of Health, will continue to work together with the Tisbury School, and the Martha's Vineyard Regional School District to ensure all students and staff are provided with safe potable water. We all look forward to welcoming students and staff to a completely lead-free Tisbury School at the completion of the school renovation project but will carry out all activities necessary to ensure no occupant of the Tisbury School is exposed to lead levels above threshold standards. For more information on lead testing in Massachusetts schools, please follow this link: <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/lead-and-copper-in-school-drinking-water-sampling-results>.



Ross P. Seavey,
On behalf of John W. Grande, Town Administrator

¹ "Is it safe to bathe in water with elevated levels of lead? Yes. Lead is not easily absorbed through the skin. It is not a problem to wash hands, bathe, or shower in water containing lead." <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/lead-in-drinking-water-faq-for-school-and-childcare-facilities>