



PORTLAND PARKS & RECREATION

Healthy Parks, Healthy Portland

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For Immediate Release

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Portland Parks & Recreation water quality testing update

(Portland, OR) –

On Sunday, June 5, Portland Parks & Recreation sent out a [press release](#) regarding voluntary testing of water at some of its facilities as well as information on past elevated lead results at one facility, Multnomah Arts Center (MAC).

At that time PP&R began both precautionary measures and a testing process for priority sites. Please note that for testing results, PP&R is adhering the guidance put forward by [Oregon Health Authority](#) and the [Environmental Protection Agency](#) that lead in drinking water at schools and day cares should not exceed 20 parts per billion (ppb). PP&R will fix any plumbing fixture used for drinking and/or cooking that tests over the 20 parts per billion threshold.

The following update shows that of 180 specific samples taken, 163 (or about 91%) came back with levels lower than 20 parts per billion. 17 of the 180 samples came back with levels higher than 20ppb.

- PP&R began testing at three priority sites during the week of June 6, 2016 (Fulton Community Center, Portland Children’s Museum, and MAC). PP&R had already implemented precautionary measures at these sites: although there were no previous test results for Fulton and Portland Children’s Museum, a precautionary flushing protocol was implemented at all water fixtures. At MAC, all fixtures were marked “Do not drink” and PP&R provided drinking water because previously elevated lead levels were detected at this site.
- With precautionary measures already in place, on Tuesday, June 14, PP&R received the water quality test results as follows:
 - **Fulton Community Center:** None of the 12 samples taken exceeded 20ppb for lead. One drinking fountain was not sampled because it was out-of-commission at the time of sampling. PP&R will have it tested as soon as possible after repairs are complete.
 - PP&R is releasing Fulton from the flushing requirement.
 - **Children’s Museum:** Of 76 samples taken, 5 exceeded 20ppb lead – four sinks and one drinking fountain. Those sink faucets which exceed 20ppb

lead are all now signed "do not drink". The one drinking fountain (located in a staff area) which exceeded 20ppb had already previously been turned off.

- PP&R is releasing Portland Children's Museum from the flushing requirement where test results did not exceed 20ppb
- **Multnomah Arts Center (MAC):** Of 75 samples taken, 11 exceeded 20ppb lead. Those fixtures which exceeded 20ppb were already signed "do not drink" or were shut off entirely to the public since June 4. The highest reading at MAC registered 447 ppb, at a fixture located in a storage area, and has not been in use recently. Bottled water is still being provided until PP&R can assure full mitigation and retesting.
 - One brand-new drinking fountain with confirmed results of well below 20 ppb has been reopened for public use at MAC.
 - **MAC Cottages:** The Cottages at MAC that are adjacent to the facility have a separate water system. Occupancy for the cottages includes preschool, arts studios, and multipurpose office space. The cottages at MAC were considered at low risk. The June 14 results show that only one sink (in a men's bathroom) in these cottages showed elevated levels of lead. That sink has now been marked "do not drink."
- Upon reviewing operational and engineering data during the week of June 6th, 2016, PP&R also decided to add the Mt. Tabor Annex to the top priority sites due to the fact that it hosts a preschool, even though it does not fit the 1970-1985 high-risk building age criteria. It was acquired by PP&R in the 80's, and it is likely that some facility modifications took place at that time which may have included plumbing work. The Mt. Tabor Annex was tested for lead on the week of June 13, 2016, and had the precautionary measure of water fountains taken out of service and drinking water provided during the testing phase.
 - **Mt. Tabor Annex:** Of 17 samples taken, 1 shows 20ppb lead. This was a drinking fountain on the first floor which had already been turned off. Preschool staff indicated that this fountain had not been frequently used.
 - PP&R is releasing all other Mt. Tabor Annex fixtures for use
 - Mt. Tabor Annex was tested by a Certified Industrial Hygienist due to volume and need for expediency.

The recent test results completed by the Portland Water Bureau for Fulton Community Center, Portland Children's Museum and Multnomah Arts Center, and Mt. Tabor Annex are available at this site: <http://www.portlandoregon.gov/bibs/LeadInfo>

The next step is for an independent Certified Industrial Hygienist to review results and recommend next steps to remedy any fixture over the 20 parts per billion threshold. PP&R will post more information on review results and recommendations when they are available.

Additional and ongoing updates to this story are as follows:

- PP&R is still reviewing information regarding steps that were taken at Multnomah Arts Center between 2011 and now. We will release any new information on that matter when available.

- After a review of records, as of June 17, 2016, the bureau has determined that there have been a small number of PP&R sites previously tested over the past several decades. No sites, beside the previously reported Multnomah Arts Center, had elevated lead test results prior to June 2016.
 - PP&R has had some customer-requested testing at sinks or fountains at the following facilities: Community Music Center (2001), Pittock Mansion (2005), Buckman Field (office & fieldhouse in 2010), and Mount Tabor Yard (2000 and 2016). All showed lead levels below EPA guidelines.
 - PP&R found results from an additional test (2003) of a sink at the Multnomah Arts Center “cottages” located at an adjacent address that confirmed no elevated levels. The occupancy of the cottages includes preschool, arts studios, and multipurpose office space.
 - PP&R discovered additional previous testing at Multnomah Art Center from 1987 that showed water “meets federal standards for drinking water.”
 - Results from previously tested sites (prior to June 2016) are available for review [here](#).

“We strive to provide ‘Healthy Parks, Healthy Portland’,” says Portland Parks & Recreation Director Mike Abbaté. “We will continue to work with technical experts and our Commissioner-in-charge to develop protocols for testing of our facilities.”

On June 8, 2016, the Oregon Department of Education and the Oregon Health Authority began recommending that all schools, including preschools and day cares, test for lead over the summer. Therefore, the next priority list PP&R will create will include sites where all preschools are located (regardless of age of the building or plumbing).

“We have taken every step necessary to protect public health,” says Portland Parks Commissioner Amanda Fritz, a retired Registered Nurse. “We will continue to work to fix problems efficiently, and to provide information to our community as more details become available”

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