



Former Mohr Orchard Site

Residential Well Water Recommendations
North Whitehall Township
Lehigh County, Pennsylvania



Introduction

IMPORTANT!



Use bottled water for cooking, drinking, and baby-formula preparation if you live on former Mohr Orchard property and the amount of lead in your drinking water is 11 ppb or above OR you do not know the amount of lead in your drinking water.

The Pennsylvania Department of Health (PADOH) and the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR), a federal public health agency, are evaluating public health concerns at the former Mohr Orchard Site in North Whitehall Township, Lehigh County, PA.

The purpose of this fact sheet is to provide homeowners with information on how to reduce their exposure to lead in their drinking water.

Background

As part of the investigation into soil contamination from past pesticide use at the former Mohr Orchard site located in North Whitehall Township in Lehigh County, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) collected and tested private water well samples from homes located in the site area.

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Based on sampling information, EPA set a site-specific action level for lead at 11 parts per billion (ppb) for this site. After one round of sampling, 46 of 61 private wells were found to have elevated lead levels in their water. As a precautionary public health measure, EPA has supplied bottled water to those residents whose water tested above the action level. Because a majority of the wells that were tested had elevated lead levels after the first round of sampling and in an effort to protect the health of all residents in the site area who use well water, EPA is encouraging and offering to sample all residential wells for lead.

Only one of all of the residential wells sampled exceeded the safe drinking water standard for arsenic (10 ppb) and this home has been offered bottled water.

Guidance For Homeowners

The federal Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) and the Pennsylvania Department of Health (PA DOH) recommend homeowners take the following steps:

For residents with a residential well sample with a lead concentration above 11 ppb:

- Use bottled water for cooking, drinking, and baby-formula preparation until the situation is further evaluated and/or remedied. (The EPA will provide bottled water to these residents.)
 - ⇒ Residents can continue to safely use their well water for other household uses such as bathing, showering, and washing clothes and dishes.
 - ⇒ As an extra precautionary step, families with young children or pregnant women may want to do a final rinse of their baby's dishes with their bottled water.
 - ⇒ Boiling water to "purify" it will INCREASE lead concentrations and should NOT be done.
- Families with children are advised to contact their family physician to discuss blood lead testing. Blood lead screening is generally recommended Commonwealth-wide for children five years of age and under. In addition, your doctor may want to consider testing older children and/or adults, particularly women of childbearing age, depending on the level of lead found in your water, individual water consumption patterns, and other factors.
- EPA is evaluating the source of lead in the water. Future actions as well as recommendations to homeowners will be based on those findings and conclusions.

For residents living on former Mohr Orchard property with a residential drinking well that has not been sampled:

- Test your well water for lead. The EPA is contacting all residences located on the former orchard property and offering to sample their well water for lead and arsenic.
 - ⇒ If you were not contacted by EPA, you may request a test via their website at www.epaosd.org/former_mohr_orchard or by calling EPA Community Involvement Coordinator, Mr. David Polish at (215) 514-7068.
- Consider using bottled water for cooking, drinking, and baby-formula preparation until the results of your well water testing are available.

Public water supplies serving homes in the former Mohr Orchard area have not exceeded the Safe Drinking Water Act standards for lead (action level = 15 ppb) and the public water is considered safe to drink.

For concerned residents living outside the former Mohr Orchard property, we recommend periodic testing of private residential wells by a certified laboratory. For a list of PADEP certified laboratories: www.depweb.state.pa.us/labs/lib/labs/2008-1103_accredited_laboratories.pdf



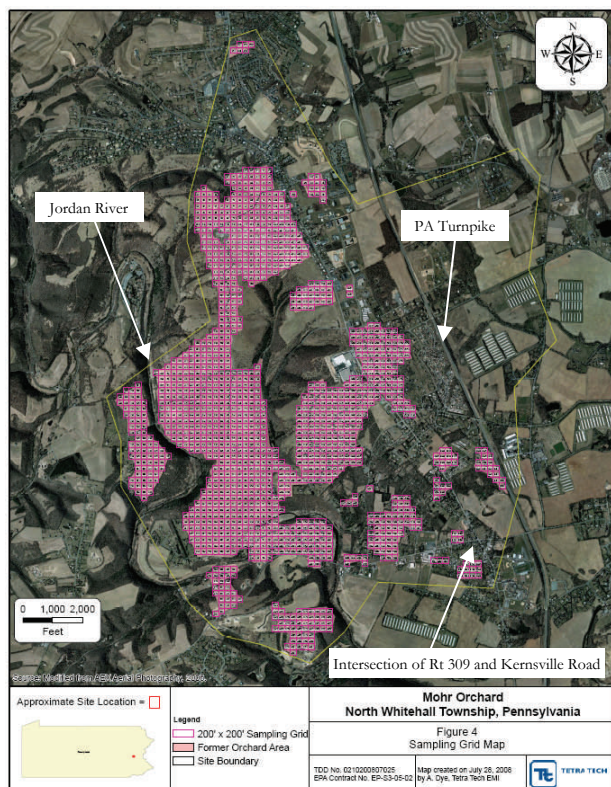
Residents can safely use their well water to bath, shower, and wash clothes and dishes.



Lead contaminated water should not be used for mixing or preparing infant formula.

Because most bottled water does not contain fluoride, a fluoride supplement may be necessary for children.

About the Site



- * The site is approximately 1.5 square miles of former Mohr Orchard property located in North Whitehall Township.
- * If you are unsure if your home is located on former Mohr Orchard property you may find out by calling the EPA Community Involvement Coordinator, Mr. David Polish at (215) 514-7068.
- * A more detailed version of this map is available on the EPA website at: www.epaossc.org/former_mohr_orchard

Lead in Water

Lead may be found in ground water as a result of past industrial or farming practices.

Lead is also commonly found in household plumbing materials and water service lines. It sometimes enters tap water through corrosion of plumbing materials.

⇒ Homes built before 1986 are more likely to have lead pipes, joints, and solder.

- * However, new homes are also at risk. Even legally “lead-free” pipes may contain up to 8 percent lead. These pipes can leave significant amounts of lead in the water, particularly for the first several months after installation.

⇒ The level of lead in water can increase when water “stands” in contact with lead based solder and brass faucets containing lead.

Lead also occurs naturally in the environment. It can be present in the ground, stuck to soil particles, in surface waters, and in the groundwater.

Contact Information

For health information:

Agency for Toxic Substances
and Disease Registry
Region 3 Office
Lora Siegmann-Werner
(215) 814-3141
lkw9@cdc.gov

Pennsylvania Department of
Health
Dr Mark White
Or
Barbara Allerton
(717) 346-3285

For Environmental Information:

U.S. Environmental
Protection Agency
Richard Fetzer
On-Scene Coordinator
(215) 341-6307
Or
David Polish
Community Involvement
Coordinator
(215) 814-3327

EPA's website about the site:
[www.epaossc.net/
former_mohr_orchard](http://www.epaossc.net/former_mohr_orchard)

For a list of certified drinking water laboratories:

[http://
www.depweb.state.pa.us/
labs/lib/labs/2008-
1201_accredited_laboratories
.pdf](http://www.depweb.state.pa.us/labs/lib/labs/2008-1201_accredited_laboratories.pdf)

For a list of certified drinking water treatment units:

[http://www.nsf.org/certified/
dwtu/](http://www.nsf.org/certified/dwtu/)

Health Effects

Lead can affect almost every organ and system in your body. The most sensitive is the central nervous system, especially in children.

At high levels, lead may:

- * Decrease reaction time
- * Cause weakness in fingers, wrists, or ankles
- * Possibly affect memory
- * Damage the kidneys
- * Damage the reproductive system

Lead may also cause anemia, a disorder of the blood.

Children are more vulnerable to lead poisoning than adults.

- * As babies, they can be exposed in the womb if their mothers have lead in their body.
- * Children exposed to lead in the womb of their mothers may be born prematurely and have lower weights at birth.
- * Low level exposures to lead over a long time can cause lifetime developmental and behavioral problems in children including learning disabilities.

Test Young Children for Lead

Talk to your doctor about having children five years old and under tested for lead, since many children with elevated lead levels do not show any obvious symptoms.

- * Children may be exposed to lead from other sources, especially inside homes built before 1978.

What's Next?

The PADOH and ATSDR will review additional environmental data and continue to be available to the community to respond to health concerns.

The EPA will continue the ongoing investigation.

The PADOH and ATSDR will remain available to provide health information to the community and health professionals.