



## January 2021 Data Update

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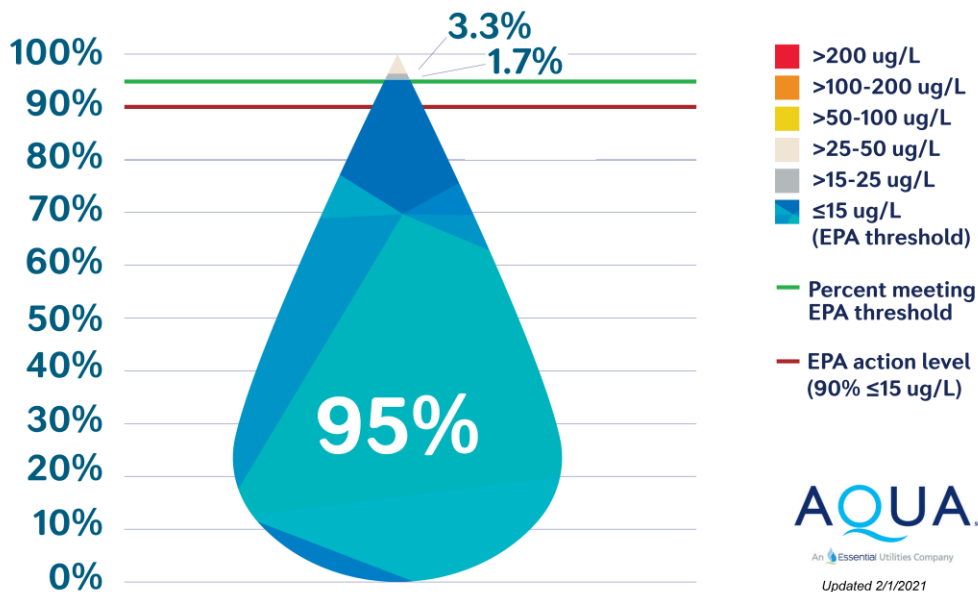
Water sampling data for the July to December 2020 six-month monitoring period indicated that **water quality in University Park has been restored to below the regulatory lead action level**. This important milestone was confirmed in January 2021 by the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency.

The positive news continues: January began a new six-month monitoring period, and sampling data again confirm that water quality remains below the lead action level regulatory threshold so far this year.

In January, the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile value was 8 ug/L and 95 percent of all compliance-sampled homes tested at or below the regulatory threshold for lead, 15 micrograms per liter (ug/L).

### 95 Percent of Compliance Samples At or Below EPA Threshold for Lead

Compliance samples, by ug/L, collected from University Park homes and businesses, January 2021



State and federal drinking water regulations require that 90 percent of regularly sampled homes have lead levels of 15 ug/L or less as measured over six-month monitoring periods.

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To view a table listing all compliance sample results from the January sampling event, please see Appendix A at the end of this document.

Restoring the water quality to below the lead action level regulatory threshold is a significant water quality milestone that we have been working towards since day one, and we thank our customers and community partners for helping us get here.

This milestone reaffirms that our treatment is working. The treatment establishes a protective coating, which stops lead inside some customers' home plumbing from interacting with fresh water flowing into their homes.

When water providers meet the lead action-level like we have, regulators continue working with the provider to confirm the treatment is "optimized." This means validating that the treatment is as effective as possible for the water system (based on other important water quality aspects like water pH). As part of our ongoing monitoring and sampling protocols, we continue collaborating with regulators on this process.

To our customers: Thank you for your ongoing patience and cooperation. As we move forward, we will continue to be here for you while we rebuild trust.

Call **877.987.2782** at any time to request water sampling.

See below for more information about compliance sampling and our process, and to view our archived data updates.



## More Information About Compliance Sampling

### The Lead and Copper Rule and Compliance Sampling Requirements

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, through its Lead and Copper Rule, requires water utilities to work with their customers to collect regularly scheduled stagnation samples, or compliance samples. These samples must be taken after water has remained in customers' pipes unused for six or more hours, therein providing high-case scenario data for lead exposure.

Under the rule, utilities must choose sample locations that represent properties with the highest inventory of lead. For example, so-called "Tier 1" locations include those with lead service lines (there are no lead service lines in University Park) or lead solder on copper pipes within homes constructed after 1982.

### Compliance Sampling in University Park

IEPA regulations require that we work with at least 40 homes and businesses in the University Park service area to conduct compliance sampling. Sample locations must be submitted to the IEPA for approval before compliance sampling can begin.

We collected regularly scheduled samples in May 2019 as part of our biannual compliance testing schedule. On June 13, 2019, we began receiving those sampling results, some of which showed elevated lead levels. As a result, alongside our extensive community outreach that included providing resources and public education, we began working with the IEPA on a treatment plan and voluntarily increased sampling frequency to help us understand and monitor progress.

To complete compliance sampling, participating customers help us collect samples after their water has been unused for six or more hours. We then send the samples to an independent lab for testing.

### What we Believe Happened and how We are Treating the Water

Water quality in University Park is restored to below the regulatory lead action level for the July to December 2020 monitoring period. In January 2021, the IEPA confirmed this important milestone, and we continue collaborating with state regulators on treatment and monitoring.

On June 14, 2019, we immediately issued an advisory requesting that customers temporarily not consume unfiltered water in the service area **to be as protective as**

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**possible** after receiving compliance samples that showed elevated lead levels in 14 homes on June 13, 2019. Right away, we began investigating and gathering information to restore the water quality for our customers.

It is important to note that no state or federal regulation required us to take this unprecedented advisory action. We voluntarily took this precautionary step to protect the public until we learned more about the extent, cause and level of the issue AND until we could formalize our voluntary system to provide alternative sources of water.

Throughout our response, we have offered resources and guidance for customers on how to consume their tap water and educational resources and tips for home water use.

Our information shows that there was never lead in the source water or our University Park infrastructure. To date, we have identified that the likely cause of elevated lead levels in a limited number of homes was due to water chemistry interacting with lead solder and other lead sources in the internal plumbing of homes built prior to 1990. Homes built after 1990 are not expected to have lead solder because the use of lead solder was banned by law in the mid-1980s.

Within 30 days of discovering the exceedance, in coordination with the IEPA, we removed several areas and hundreds of homes from the advisory based on property age and water sample results.

Since June 2019, we have been working with state regulators and national water chemistry experts to treat the water. These routine water treatments are known for their ability to create a protective coating where lead is present in customers' internal plumbing, keeping the lead out of the water we consume. It is important to note that these treatments are not harmful to humans or pets.

Restoring the water quality represents a major milestone in the community, and we remain committed to supporting our customers as we restore water confidence.



## **A Message from the IEPA**

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention indicates there is no safe blood lead level in children. Lead exposures come from a combination of environmental sources, which may include lead in water. U.S. EPA estimates that water can make up 20 percent or more of a person's total exposure to lead, and infants who consume mostly mixed formula can receive 40-60 percent of their exposure to lead from drinking water. The source of lead in water is most often from a building's plumbing system.

The IEPA and Illinois Department of Public Health support point-of-use (POU) filters as a short-term strategy for reducing lead in drinking water. *(Please note: Aqua Illinois is providing free faucet filters and pitcher filters to customers in University Park).* A POU system filters water at the point where water is being used and is installed at the water connection, typically under the sink in the kitchen or bathroom. Water pitchers with POU filters may also be used. POU filters are commercially available and can be effective at removing most lead. There are several POU cartridge filter units on the market. They can vary in price and effectiveness. Filters should routinely be replaced or maintained in accordance with manufacturers guidelines and recommendations to remain effective.

To select a lead-reducing POU filter, check with the manufacturer or a third-party website (such as [www.nsf.org](http://www.nsf.org)) to verify the product was tested and certified for lead removal (NSF/ANSI Standard 53). For additional protection for particulate lead, look for a POU filter that is also certified against NSF/ANSI Standard 42 (for class I particulate reduction, 0.5 micrometers to less than 1 micrometers). To be effective, the POU filters should be installed at locations used for drinking water or for food preparation according to the manufacturer's instructions. This includes kitchen water faucets and refrigerators with water dispensers and ice makers or in water pitchers.

POU filters should be considered an interim measure until [effective treatment is restored, or] the sources of lead have been removed and replaced with lead free plumbing materials. After replacement of lead plumbing materials or disturbance of a plumbing system, the plumbing system should be flushed for 30 minutes with aerators and screens removed from all faucets. Because you cannot see, smell, or taste lead in water, testing the water is the only way to determine if lead is present in drinking water.

To access additional information about lead in drinking water and a consumer tool for identifying POU filters certified to reduce lead, please visit U.S. EPA's website at <https://www.epa.gov/ground-water-and-drinking-water/basic-information-about-lead-drinking-water> and <https://www.epa.gov/water-research/consumer-tool-identifying-pou-drinking-water-filters-certified-reduce-lead>.



Lead in homes can also come from sources other than water. To access more information about other sources of lead, please visit IDPH's website at: <http://www.dph.illinois.gov/illinoislead>. Consider contacting your doctor to have your children tested if you are concerned about lead exposure.



**Appendix A:**  
**Compliance sample results, in ug/L, January 2021**

Samples	Home ID	ug/L
1	4	<1.0
2	5	<1.0
3	6	<1.0
4	7	<1.0
5	8	<1.0
6	9	<1.0
7	10	4.1
8	11	<1.0
9	12	<1.0
10	13	1.2
11	14	<1.0
12	16	4.1
13	17	<1.0
14	20	16
15	21	1.1
16	23	<1.0
17	27	<1.0
18	29	1.2
19	30	<1.0
20	31	<1.0
21	32	<1.0
22	33	32
23	34	<1.0
24	43	<1.0
25	44	8.2
26	45	<1.0
27	47	<1.0
28	48	<1.0
29	50	9.2



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30	53	3.0
31	54	<1.0
32	56	<1.0
33	57	13
34	58	3.8
35	60	<1.0
36	61	27
37	62	<1.0
38	63	<1.0
39	64	2.2
40	65	<1.0
41	66	<1.0
42	67	<1.0
43	70	<1.0
44	72	3.8
45	73	8.1
46	74	<1.0
47	75	1.3
48	76	<1.0
49	77	1.4
50	78	<1.0
51	79	<1.0
52	80	1.9
53	81	3.4
54	82	2.6
55	84	<1.0
56	85	10
57	87	3.2
58	88	<1.0
59	90	8.2
60	91	<1.0

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