



中華人民共和國香港特別行政區政府總部食物及衛生局
Food and Health Bureau, Government Secretariat
The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region
The People's Republic of China

Our ref.: FHB/H/16/113
Your ref:

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1 September 2015

Ms Maisie LAM
Clerk to Panel on Health Services
Legislative Council Panel on Health Services
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central, Hong Kong

Dear Ms LAM,

Panel on Health Services

**Administration's response on issues arising from the discussion
at the special meeting on 24 August 2015**

At the special meeting of the Panel on Health Services held on 24 August 2015, Members discussed the public health measures for the lead in drinking water incidents. The supplementary information requested by Members at the above meeting is set out below.

(a) *Standard procedures and practices for collecting water samples for lead testing*

2. The Water Supplies Department (WSD) has made reference to the international standard ISO5667 (Part 5) when formulating the procedures of sampling for testing the quality of drinking water as supplied to consumers' premises to ensure that the samples taken are representative of the quality of water to be consumed by an individual

on routine basis. The standard procedures and practices adopted by the WSD for collecting tap water samples for lead testing are set out in the Annex, which can also be found in WSD's website (i.e. http://www.wsd.gov.hk/filemanager/en/share/pdf/Water_Sampling_Procedure_and_Cleaning_Procedure_for_Sampling_Bottles-e.pdf).

(b) *Charges/costs for providing whole blood lead level (BLL) testing service by the Hospital Authority (HA)*

3. The HA arranges its accredited laboratories and accredited overseas laboratories to perform tests of whole BLL. Setting aside the work of blood taking and depending on the number of blood samples tested per week, the average BLL testing cost of each blood sample ranges from \$270 to \$340. The average BLL testing cost of each blood sample hinges on the total quantity of blood samples that are to be tested. For blood samples that are sent to overseas laboratories for testing, the average BLL testing cost of each blood sample is around \$300.

(c) *The number of cases found to have borderline raised BLL which are from the households of the affected public rental housing (PRH) estates whereby the drinking water samples were found to contain lead that exceeded the World Health Organization (WHO) value*

4. As at 27 August 2015, there are a total of 130 cases tested with borderline raised BLL. Among them, five cases come from households of the affected PRH estates whereby the drinking water samples were found to contain lead that exceeded the provisional guideline value of WHO's "Guidelines for Drinking-Water Quality"(2011) for lead in drinking water.

Yours sincerely,



(Miss Fiona CHAU)
for Secretary for Food and Health

Encl.

c.c. Development Bureau (Attn: Mr. Vincent Mak)

Water Sampling Procedure

(with reference to ISO 5667 Part 5)

(A) Assessment of Sampling Location

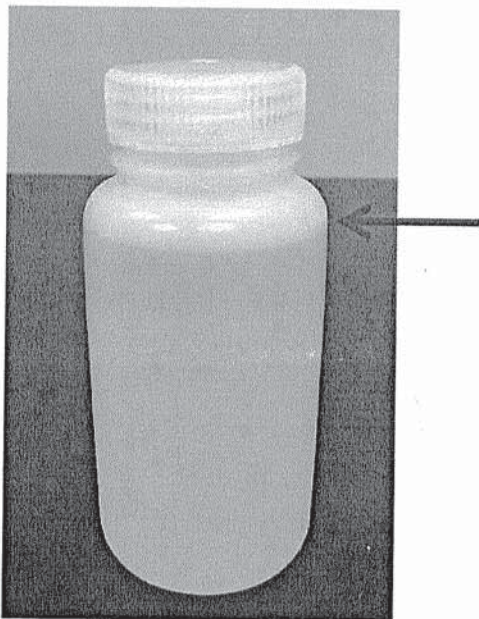
Please take note of the conditions of the environment, sampling taps and pipes at the sampling location. If the following situation(s) is/are encountered, **DO NOT TAKE SAMPLES**.

1. Unsatisfactory environmental condition e.g. surroundings dusty, covered with debris, or poorly ventilated;
2. Leaking taps;
3. Taps connected to anti-splash nozzles, rubber tubings or other accessories;
4. Taps connected to heaters or water filters (that cannot be detached); or
5. Taps with sand strainers that cannot be detached.

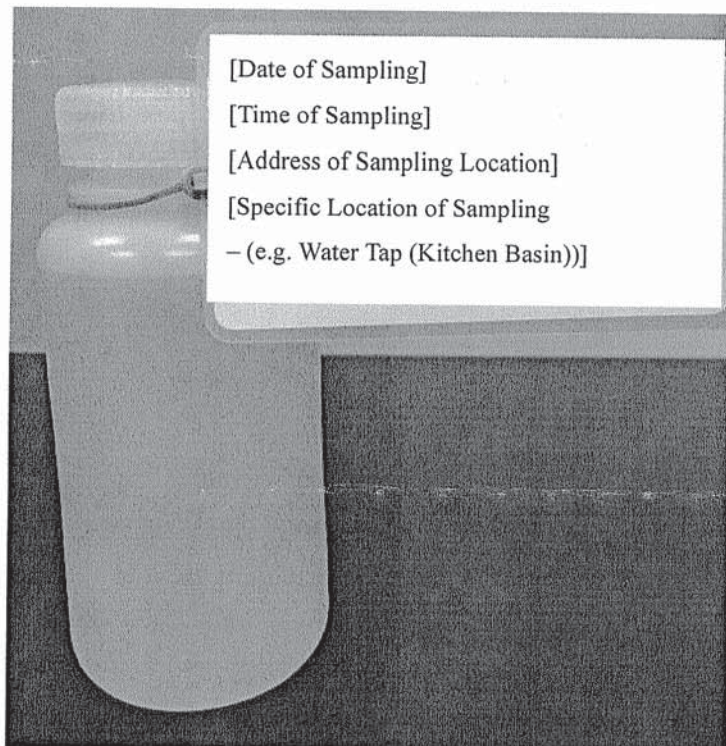
(B) Sampling Method

1. Detach sand strainer or water filter from tap with appropriate tools;
2. Check for the correct sample bottle and label;
3. Turn on cold water tap at maximum flow and start timing;
4. Let water flow for 2 to 5 minutes depending on how often the tap is used (If the internal plumbing system has not been used for a long period of time, flush the system thoroughly before sampling);
5. After flushing, open cap of the sample bottle;
6. Keep holding the sample bottle cap in one hand while sample is being collected to ensure it does not come into contact with anything to avoid contamination;
7. Fill the sample bottle carefully to prevent overflow (Figure 1);
8. Carefully put the cap back on the sample bottle;
9. The following should be noted during sampling:
 - i. Never rinse the bottle; the sampling bottle shall be so held that the water does not come in contact with the hand before entering into the bottle;
 - ii. Make sure that all samples are correctly labeled (sampling point, date and flushing time) (Figure 2);
 - iii. Reinstall tap sand strainer or water filter with tools;
 - iv. Store water samples in ice-boxes with freezer packs and deliver to laboratory on the same day.

(Figure 1) Fill the sampling bottle carefully to prevent overflow.



(Figure 2) Make sure that all samples are correctly labeled (sampling point, date and flushing time)



Cleaning Procedure for Sampling Bottles

Please follow the procedure below for cleaning polyethylene bottles (250 ml) and caps:

1. Rinse bottles and caps once with tap water.
2. Fill bottles to just overflowing with diluted 'Decon 90 (5%)' and put caps on bottles.
3. Shake bottles slightly and let them stand for at least 2 hours.
4. Remove caps and empty bottles.
5. Rinse bottles and caps in flowing tap water until no foam is observed.
6. Rinse bottles and caps once with deionised water.
7. Fill up bottles with 1:1 nitric acid (HNO_3) and put caps on bottles.
8. Shake bottles slightly and let them stand for at least 2 hours.
9. Remove caps and empty bottles.
10. Rinse bottles and caps 3 times with deionised water.
11. Dry bottles and caps in oven at 50 °C.