



PROTECT YOUR TAP

a quick check for lead

Protect Your Tap in Action: New Hampshire's Campaign to Share the Guide

Amy Rousseau had a big task ahead of her. She had recently taken over working on lead in drinking water at the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) and was responsible for helping cities and towns find lead pipes so they could be replaced with safer materials. Amy was excited about the opportunity but knew identifying lead pipes buried underground would be a challenge.

Lead pipes are more likely to be found in older cities and homes built before 1986. Without complete housing records, it's difficult for towns to locate all the lead pipes. Many towns in New Hampshire don't have the time or resources to devote to creating a full list. Further, the section of pipe used to connect a home to the main water line is not easily accessible, and homeowners often don't know what it's made of. To address this problem, EPA Region 1 and NHDES developed an online guide called *Protect Your Tap: A Quick Check for Lead* to help homeowners and renters check their pipes for lead.

"*Protect Your Tap* is particularly useful," Amy said, "because towns can enlist the help of residents, who can use the guide and report their findings."

Amy knew that once town officials realized how important it was to have a lead service line inventory, they would be motivated to share *Protect Your Tap* with residents. She just needed to figure out how to get the guide to town leaders. Since New Hampshire is a small state, the campaign could be personal, like neighbors talking to neighbors. She started by reaching out to each of the 234 towns individually to teach municipal officials, water directors, and health officers about *Protect Your Tap*.

"The idea was to encourage them to share the guide on their webpages, in emails and water bills, and to even post it in town halls," Amy said. "We wanted *Protect Your Tap* to be accessible and to generate interest."

Protect Your Tap makes it easy by providing support materials such as web banners, emails, business cards, or bill inserts. This helped get the word out faster in New Hampshire, as community members had readymade materials for publicizing the guide. (continued)

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Best Practices

- Put a spotlight on it. Add *Protect Your Tap* to your organization's website and share a direct link to it on social media.
- Take advantage of *Protect Your Tap's* support materials. There are emails, articles, business cards, bill inserts, and more available that are easy to understand and ready for use.
- Make it personal. Share *Protect Your Tap* among your own networks and talk about it with friends.

epa.gov/protectyourtap

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When Amy took *Protect Your Tap* materials to a school, parents reacted with enough interest that she was inspired to host a table at the Discover Wild New Hampshire Day organized by the NH Fish & Game Department. Unfortunately, the popular event was canceled due to COVID, but Amy hopes NHDES can highlight *Protect Your Tap* at future events.

NHDES also put the *Protect Your Tap* guide on the front page of its own website, where it could immediately catch the attention of visitors. Eventually, the guide was moved to a different part of the website, but Amy encourages other organizations to keep it on the front page if possible. Another great option is to share *Protect Your Tap* on social media, which can engage all ages and drive people right to the guide.

While she now has a new role at NHDES, Amy is excited to see how her new colleague will promote *Protect Your Tap* using grant funding awarded to the state.

"Once she is up to speed," Amy says, "I am going to sit down with her to discuss *Protect Your Tap*."

New Hampshire's *Protect Your Tap* campaign started with personal connections, and that's how it will continue.

Acknowledgements

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) acknowledges New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services PFAS (Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances) Response Administrator, Amy Rousseau for providing information for this case study.

Learn More

To learn more about lead in drinking water and the *Protect Your Tap: A Quick Check for Lead* online guide, visit:

epa.gov/protectyourtap

The collage consists of three overlapping images. On the left is a newspaper article from the **UNION LEADER** with the headline "Lead exposure, drinking water and cleaning up contamination top priorities for EPA in New England". The article mentions that in 2018, 31 Rochester children under 6 had elevated lead levels in their blood. In the center is a social media post from **NH Dept Env Services** dated 10/21/19, which says "How do you know if there's lead in your home? NHDES and the US EPA teamed up to create #ProtectYourTap, an online guide to help homeowners identify lead pipes and reduce lead exposure in drinking water: goo.gl/iecyM9 #NLPW2019". The post includes a photo of a hand filling a glass from a faucet. On the right is a webpage from the **NEW HAMPSHIRE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES** titled "October 2019: Protect Your Tap: Tips to Reduce Lead Exposure in Drinking Water". The page features a photo of a lead pipe and lists tips such as "Flush your plumbing before using the water for drinking and cooking" and "Only use cold water for drinking, cooking and making baby food and formula".