



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
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## EPA Environmental News

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### **EPA supplying bottled water to well water customers in North Whitehall Township**

**PHILADELPHIA (November 7, 2008)** -- The U. S. Environmental Protection Agency is supplying bottled water to North Whitehall Township residents whose private drinking water wells show elevated lead levels. All the residents live on property formerly owned by Mohr Orchards or other commercial fruit growers.

EPA recently conducted water sampling from about 75 randomly selected homes in the area as part of an investigation into arsenic soil contamination from pesticide use on the property. Testing was also done for lead, which was also used in some pesticides. Results of those tests so far show 47 homes with elevated lead levels above 11 parts per billion, a precautionary action level set for this site. Lead results ranged from non-detect to 604 parts per billion. All test results are preliminary, and action is being taken to be precautionary and protective. Retesting is needed to confirm and further understand these results.

Until all wells in the area can be tested, EPA is recommending that area well water users use bottled water for drinking, cooking and preparing baby formula. Residents can still use private well water for washing and bathing. Additionally, EPA is recommending that women who are pregnant and families with infants should rinse their dishes with bottled water.

The area of concern encompasses about 1.5 square miles on both sides of Route 309 in the Schnecksville/Orefield area of North Whitehall Township, Lehigh County, Pa.

Because EPA only tested a small number of private wells in its initial round of sampling, only those residents with elevated lead levels will be supplied with bottled water. Not all residents in the area use well water. EPA is reviewing tax maps and water company customer lists to help identify private wells in the area. Sampling will also be repeated at some locations already sampled to determine any variability in the lead contamination.

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Residents with questions or concerns can contact:

For general Information about the site:

David Polish  
EPA Community Involvement Coordinator  
215-514-7068

For health-related information:

Lora Werner  
Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry  
215-814-3141

Dr. Mark White or Barbara Allerton, RN  
Pennsylvania Department of Health  
717-346-3285

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