


Governor Phil Murphy





Governor Murphy Outlines Comprehensive Statewide Plan to Address Lead Exposure in New Jersey

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Governor Murphy Outlines Comprehensive Statewide Plan to Address Lead Exposure in New Jersey

Strategy Includes Multi-Pronged Approach and Collaboration Across State Departments to Address Lead Remediation and Abatement

TRENTON – Governor Phil Murphy today unveiled his comprehensive statewide plan to address lead exposure in New Jersey to protect all residents, especially children, from the dangers of lead. The plan identifies policy actions across multiple state departments and agencies to comprehensively address lead exposure due to lead-based paint, lead service lines and plumbing, and contaminated soil.  (<https://twitter.com/GovMurphy>)

“Our country’s deteriorating water infrastructure has sparked a national conversation regarding the best path forward to protect our communities from the dangers of lead exposure,” **said Governor Murphy**. “While modernizing our aging water infrastructure is a critical piece in ensuring access to clean drinking water, we must also work creatively and collaboratively to prevent lead exposure from lead-based paint in homes and contaminated soil in our communities. My comprehensive statewide plan brings together experts from our cabinet departments, stakeholders, and advocates to create strong partnerships and implement policies to protect New Jersey’s children and families from lead. Together, guided by the actions outlined in our strategy, we will overcome this public health challenge that has been building for decades to ensure that our residents are safe from lead exposure for generations to come.”  (<https://www.facebook.com/governorphilmurphy>)  (<https://www.youtube.com/njgovernoroffice>)  (<https://www.instagram.com/govmurphy/>)  (<https://www.snapchat.com/add/philmurphy>)

Governor Murphy’s statewide strategy addresses the following areas:

Financing

Governor Murphy proposes a \$500 million bond to support the replacement of lead service lines and remediation of lead-based paint in homes across New Jersey. The Governor also supports efforts to allow water utilities to mitigate the cost of lead service line replacement for homeowners.

Accountability and Transparency

In order to increase transparency and ensure that all necessary locations are tested for lead within the appropriate timeframes, the New Jersey Departments of Children and Families, Community Affairs, Education, Environmental Protection, Health, and Human Services will collaborate to establish a publicly available, comprehensive lead testing strategy that addresses housing, schools, and daycare facilities. The strategy will address necessary disclosures and notifications for residents, as well as enforcement mechanisms to ensure compliance with testing, disclosure, notification, remediation, and abatement requirements.

Inventories

Infrastructure records across the state are incomplete and inaccurate, and the State does not have the exact number and locations of homes with lead paint, plumbing, and infrastructure. The data is needed in order to address the full scope of the problem and to support notification and disclosure efforts to the public.

The Department of Environmental Protection will improve the statewide inventory of lead service lines, and the Department of Community Affairs will reinstate the Lead-Safe Housing Registry, both in an effort to understand the true scope and distribution of lead contamination throughout the state.

Schools

As Governor Murphy announced on October 7, 2019, the Department of Education will develop new regulations to accelerate its current lead-testing protocol. All New Jersey public schools will be required to test for lead in water every three years and share the testing results with the Department of Education, where they will be publicly shared in a state-maintained database. The Department of Education will also increase enforcement mechanisms to hold schools accountable and ensure compliance. In addition, the Administration will prioritize funding from the Securing Our Children’s Future Bond Act to reduce lead exposure in schools.

Public Health

Early detection and intervention are the most effective strategies to combat lead exposure. The state will undertake a coordinated multi-pronged public health strategy led by the Departments of Health, Human Services, and Children and Families to strengthen data and reporting infrastructure, support prevention efforts including targeted education and outreach efforts, and continue to support the needs of children impacted by lead through comprehensive interventions and supports.

The Administration’s work to strengthen data and reporting infrastructure will support efforts for more targeted outreach, prevention efforts, and identification of high-risk populations. The Administration will also work to better coordinate and ensure access to services and supports across programs for children in need. Further, the departments will work to include blood lead level testing as a requirement for entry into public child care, preschool, and schools.


Housing

Housing is the primary source for lead exposure, and 80 percent of lead poisoning cases are caused by lead-based paint in homes built before 1978. The Governor supports legislation to create a “Lead-Safe” certificate program requiring inspection and disclosure of lead hazards at point of sale and inspection and remediation for all rental homes that were built before 1978.

Working with other state agencies, the Department of Environmental Protection will develop a plan to replace all lead service lines across New Jersey within 10 years.

Workforce Development

In order to pursue required upgrades and improvements to the state’s water infrastructure, it is imperative that our workforce is trained and certified in remediation and maintenance. At least one-third of water and wastewater operators are at or near retirement age. Home inspectors and renovators must receive additional training and certification to address lead issues. As of August 2019, there were only 60 certified lead evaluation contractors and 46 contractor certified lead abatement contractors in New Jersey.

The Department of Labor and Workforce Development, the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education, and the Department of Education will develop workforce training and career outreach programs to high schools, vocational-technical schools, and community colleges to recruit younger generations into the trades. Additionally, the Departments will consider how licensing requirements can better align with other neighboring states. 

"Access to reliable and up-to-date information about lead-safe housing in New Jersey will allow us to tackle the issue of lead poisoning head-on – knowledge is power," said **Lieutenant Governor Sheila Oliver, who serves as Commissioner of the Department of Community Affairs.** "Our families deserve to know how they can protect themselves and their children from lead poisoning, 80 percent of which is caused by exposure to lead-based paint in the home. By reinstating the Lead-Safe Housing Registry at DCA, the State is getting a true scope of the problem while equipping residents with the information they need to make sound decisions about where they live."

"I would like to commend the Governor on a bold plan to address one of the most important issues that we face in New Jersey—ensuring our water is safe to drink," said **Joseph L. Fiordaliso, President, New Jersey Board of Public Utilities.** As part of its regulatory responsibility the Board approves rates and oversees water service issues for investor owned utilities including water and wastewater infrastructure. The Board also oversees the Distribution System Improvement Charge Program which provides financial support for infrastructure projects. I look forward to working with the Governor and doing our part to implement his water quality vision."

"Safe drinking water is a basic human right and vital for children to grow and thrive," said **Christine Norbut Beyer, Commissioner of the Department of Children and Families.** "Governor Murphy continues to show his commitment to protecting New Jersey's children from the health and developmental dangers of lead-tainted water by advancing vital pieces of the Task Force's recommendations and investing in the state's communities and utility infrastructure. These are necessary components for keeping NJ's children and families safe, healthy and connected."


"This initiative moves us toward a comprehensive statewide strategy that will prioritize, accelerate and coordinate the lead-remediation efforts in our state," said **Lamont O. Repollet, Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Education.** "This is a strategy that will benefit New Jersey's communities, and our school children, for generations to come."


"Aging water infrastructure is a challenge that demands a coordinated, statewide approach," said **Catherine R. McCabe, Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection.** "Together with the Governor and our sister agencies, the DEP will help speed necessary investments in drinking water infrastructure to address lead and other challenges, ensuring safe drinking water for all New Jersey residents."

 (<https://twitter.com/GovMurphy>)

"Our job in public health is to prevent, screen, and intervene in lead exposure," said **Judith Persichilli, Acting Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Health.** "Too often, children who have been exposed to lead in paint chips, dust, or leaded pipes will not exhibit symptoms. That's why it is so important for children to be tested. The Department has renewed its #KNOWLEAD public awareness campaign to educate families about ways to prevent exposure to lead. In addition, the Department continues to educate families and health care providers about the need for all children to be tested for lead at ages 1 and 2. Families can also focus on giving their children healthy foods with calcium iron and Vitamin C that can prevent lead from being absorbed into the body. The Department of Health's nutrition and #KNOWLEAD posters are available in several languages at <https://www.nj.gov/health/childhoodlead/>.

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"Human Services stands ready to work with our partners across the Murphy Administration on our shared public health strategy to support children and families impacted by lead," said **Carole Johnson, Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Human Services.** "Knowledge, action and coordination are crucial when it comes to preventing and responding to lead exposure. Under Governor Murphy's leadership, we will continue to focus on helping families get the services and supports they need."

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"It's become increasingly apparent that we must improve our state's water infrastructure, which includes creating a pipeline to train the next generation of water and utility workers to take on the essential job of repairing, maintaining, and modernizing New Jersey's water systems," said **Robert Asaro-Angelo, Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development.** "While we've already made inroads through our wastewater treatment apprenticeship program, we are ready to expand our work with our partners to develop workforce training programs and recruitment strategies to meet the increasing challenges of maintaining our public water system."

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