Charge to the Committee

EPA published the Lead and Copper Rule (LCR) on June 7, 1991 to control lead and copper in drinking water at the consumers' taps. The LCR established a treatment technique to minimize lead and copper in drinking water (unlike most other rules that establish a Maximum Contaminant Level). When lead levels in drinking water exceed the action level of 15 µg/L, the LCR requires corrosion control treatment as the primary means of controlling lead in the drinking water. Public education for lead is also triggered by the initial lead action level exceedance. Lead service line replacement is an additional action required under the LCR when a system that has installed corrosion control treatment fails to meet the action level for lead. Under the 2000 LCR revisions, water systems are required to replace only the portion of the lead service line that it owns. When a water system replaces only a portion of the lead service line (the portion it owns), this is referred to as a partial lead service line replacement (PLSLR). Further regulatory background is presented in Appendix A.

Overall Charge

EPA is seeking SAB evaluation of current scientific data to determine whether partial lead service line replacements are effective in reducing lead drinking water levels. EPA has identified several studies for the SAB to consider for the evaluation, listed in Appendix B. The SAB may also consider other relevant studies for the evaluation.

Specific Issues

Issue 1 – Studies Examining Associations Between Elevated Blood Lead Levels and PLSLR

A recently published study by the Centers for Disease Control (Brown et al., 2011) examined an association between children's blood lead level, lead service lines, and water disinfection in Washington, DC using data from 1998 to 2006. How does this study inform the available information on the effectiveness of partial lead service line replacement in reducing drinking water exposure to lead?

Issue 2 – Studies Evaluating PLSLR with Tap Sampling Before and After Replacements

There are a number of studies that evaluated partial lead service line replacement with tap sampling conducted both before and after the replacement (Britton et al., 1981; Gittelman et al., 1992; Muylwyk et al., 2009; Sandvig et al., 2008; Swertfeger et al., 2006; USEPA 1991a; USEPA 1991b; Weston et al., 1990). These studies use a variety of sampling protocols and the timing of sampling after replacement differed between studies. What conclusions can be drawn from these studies regarding the effectiveness of partial lead service line replacement in light of the different sampling protocols and different timing of sampling? Please comment on the changes in lead concentrations in drinking water after partial lead service line replacements and the duration of those changes.

Issue 3 – Studies Comparing PLSLR with Full Lead Service Line Replacements

There are a number of studies that compared partial lead service line replacements with full lead service line replacements (HDR Engineering, 2009; Sandvig et al., 2008; Swertfeger et al., 2006). What conclusions can be drawn from these studies regarding the relative effectiveness of partial lead service line replacement versus full lead service line replacement in reducing drinking water lead levels in both the short-term and long-term?

Issue 4 – Studies Examining PSLR Techniques

Some studies have looked at other factors that can influence lead levels following a partial lead service line replacement, such as pipe cutting, flushing to clear the lines, and pipe joining techniques (Boyd et al., 2004; Kirmeyer et al., 2006; Sandvig et al., 2008; Wujek, 2004). What conclusions can be drawn from these studies regarding techniques that should be followed for partial lead service line replacements to reduce lead drinking water exposures? Please comment on whether a standard operating procedure can be developed to minimize spikes in drinking water lead levels after partial lead service line replacement.

Issue 5 – Studies Examining Galvanic Corrosion

Galvanic corrosion is a possibility if copper pipe is joined directly with the remaining portion of the lead service line. Several studies examined the issue of galvanic corrosion (Boyd et al., 2010; DeSantis et al., 2009; Deshommes et al., 2010; Rieber et al., 2006; Triantafyllidou et al., 2010). What conclusions can be drawn from these studies regarding the potential for elevated lead levels at the tap from galvanic corrosion? Please comment on the inclusion of a dielectric between the lead and copper pipes as a way to minimize spikes in drinking water lead levels after partial lead service line replacements. Please comment on the inclusion of the dielectric as part of the standard operating procedures for partial lead service line replacements.

APPENDIX A – Regulatory Background on the EPA Lead and Copper Rule

The LCR is a complicated rule because exposure to lead from drinking water results primarily from the corrosion of household plumbing materials and water service lines. EPA published the LCR on June 7, 1991 to control lead and copper in drinking water at the consumers' taps. The LCR established a treatment technique to minimize lead and copper in drinking water (unlike most other rules that establish an MCL). The LCR requires corrosion control treatment as the primary means of preventing lead and copper from contaminating drinking water. For systems serving 50,000 or fewer people, installation of corrosion control treatment is triggered when more than 10 percent of the samples from households with plumbing materials more likely to produce elevate levels of lead exceed an action level (15 µg/L for lead or 1300 µg/L for copper). Systems must treat drinking water to make it less corrosive to the materials it comes into contact with on its way to consumer's taps. Public education for lead is also triggered by the initial lead action level exceedance. Lead service line replacement is an additional action required under the LCR when a system that has installed corrosion control treatment fails to meet the action level for lead. Lead service line replacement is the issue on which we are seeking SAB input.

Water systems exceeding the action level for lead after installing corrosion control must replace annually at least 7 percent of the initial number of lead service lines in its distribution system. The LCR requires that a water system replace that portion of the lead service line that it owns. When there is split ownership, the water system typically owns to the edge of the property line. In these cases where the system does not own the entire lead service line, the system must notify the owner of the line that the system will replace the portion of the service line that it owns and offer to replace the owner's portion of the line. A system is not required to bear the cost of replacing the privately-owned portion of the line, nor is it required to replace the privately-owned portion where the owner chooses not to pay the cost of replacing the privately-owned portion of the line. A system can stop replacing lines if it can meet the lead action level for two consecutive 6-month monitoring periods.

There are three ways a lead service line can be considered replaced under the LCR. First, sites where all service line samples test at or below the lead action level of 0.015 mg/L can be considered replaced. Second, sites where the entire line is replaced – either the water system owns the entire line or the homeowner agreed to pay for the replacement of their portion of the line when the system was replacing its portion. Third, when the homeowner does not agree to pay to replace their portion of the lead service line, then the system will replace the portion under its ownership. This third type of replacement is referred to as a partial lead service line replacement. (It should be noted that systems that meet the lead action level also sometimes replace their portion of lead service lines that they encounter while doing routine maintenance or emergency repairs to the distribution system. These "voluntary" replacements are not subject to the requirements of the LCR and occur fairly frequently.)

Under the current version of the LCR, a utility only controls that portion of the service line which it owns[1]. EPA promulgated the current lead service line replacement requirements in 2000 as part of the LCR Minor Revisions Rule. In developing these requirements EPA considered the available studies evaluated partial lead service line replacement with tap sampling conducted both before and after the replacement. Based upon the available data EPA promulgated the current requirements for lead service line replacement.

Under the LCR, when the system does not own the entire lead service line, the system must notify the owner of the line that it will replace the line that it owns and offer to replace the owner's portion of the line. The system is not required to pay for the replacement of the privately-owned portion of the line nor is it required to replace that portion where the owner chooses not to pay for its replacement. The LCR does contain additional requirements when the owner does not agree to replace their portion of the line, resulting in partial lead service line replacement. The system must also do the following: At least 45 days prior to the partial lead service line replacement, notice must be provided to the residents of all building served by the line explaining that they may experience a temporary increase in lead levels in their drinking water, along with guidance on measures consumers can take to minimize their exposure to lead. In addition, the water system shall inform the residents served by the line that the system will, at the system's expense, collect a sample from each partially-replaced service line for analysis of lead content within 72 hours after the completion of the partial replacement of the service line. The system shall collect the sample and report the results to the owner and residents served by the line within three business days of receipt of results.

[1] When EPA promulgated the LCR in 1991, the Agency required water systems to replace the portion of the lead service line which the System controlled. The Agency's definition of control of lead service lines went beyond utility ownership alone to include a rebuttable presumption that the utility controls the water service line up to the wall of the building unless the utility does not own the line and neither has the authority to replace, repair or maintain the service line, nor has the authority to set standards for construction, maintenance, or repair of the line. This definition would have facilitated removal of full lead service lines. The Agency was sued, and the Court remanded this definition of control back to the Agency because EPA had not provided adequate opportunity for public comment on that aspect of the proposed rule. The Court did not rule on the substantive legal issues regarding EPA's authority to require utilities to take actions on private property. EPA revised the regulations in response to the remand.

APPENDIX B – Studies Identified by EPA

Studies identified by EPA for Issue 1:

Brown, M.J., et al., 2011. Association between children's blood lead levels, lead service lines, and water disinfection, Washington, DC 1998-2006. *Environmental Research,* 111(1):67-74.

Studies identified by EPA for Issue 2:

Britton, A. and Richards, W.N., 1981. Factors Influencing Plumbosolvency in Scotland. *Journal of the Institute for Water Engineers and Scientists*. Vol. 35, No. 5, pp. 349 - 364.

Gittelman, T.S. et al., 1992. Evaluation of Lead Corrosion Control Measures for a Multi-source Water Utility. *Proceedings of the 1992 AWWA Water Quality Technology Conference*. Toronto, Ontario, Canada. pp. 777 - 797.

Muylwyk, Q. et al., 2009. Lead Occurrence and the Impact of LSL Replacement in a Well Buffered Groundwater. *Proceedings of the 2009 AWWA Water Quality Technology Conference*. Seattle, WA.

Sandvig, A et al., 2008. Contribution of Service Line and Plumbing Fixtures to Lead and Copper Compliance Issues. Prepared for the American Water Works Research Foundation, Report 91229.

Swertfeger, J. et al., 2006. Water Quality Effects of Partial Lead Service Line Replacement. *Proceedings of the 2006 AWWA Annual Conference*. San Antonio, TX.

USEPA., 1991a. "Maximum Contaminant Level Goals and National Primary Drinking Water Regulations for Lead and Copper; Final Rule." Federal Register. Vol. 56, No. 110, p. 26505. June 7, 1991.

USEPA., 1991b. "Summary: Peach Orchard Monitoring, Lead Service Line Replacement Study." Prepared by Barbara Wysock. Office of Drinking Water Technical Support Division. April 1991.

Weston and EES, 1990. Lead Service Line Replacement: A Benefit-to-Cost Analysis. American Water Works Association, Denver, CO. p. 4-46.

Studies identified by EPA for Issue 3:

HDR Engineering, 2009. An Analysis of the Correlation between Lead Released from Galvanized Iron Piping and the Contents of Lead in Drinking Water. Prepared for the District of Columbia Water and Sewer Authority. September 2009.

Sandvig, A et al., 2008. Contribution of Service Line and Plumbing Fixtures to Lead and Copper Compliance Issues. Prepared for the American Water Works Research Foundation, Report 91229.

Swertfeger, J. et al., 2006. Water Quality Effects of Partial Lead Service Line Replacement. *Proceedings of the 2006 AWWA Annual Conference*. San Antonio, TX.

Studies identified by EPA for Issue 4:

Boyd, G. et al, 2004. Pb in Tap Water Following Simulated Partial Lead Pipe Replacements. *Journal of Environmental Engineering*. Vol. 130. Number 10. pp. 1188 – 1197.

Kirmeyer, G. et al, 2006. Lead Pipe Rehabilitation and Replacement Techniques. Prepared for the American Water Works Research Foundation, Report 90789.

Sandvig, A et al., 2008. Contribution of Service Line and Plumbing Fixtures to Lead and Copper Compliance Issues. Prepared for the American Water Works Research Foundation, Report 91229.

Wujek, J.J. 2004. Minimizing Peak Lead Concentrations after Partial Lead Service Line Replacements. Proceedings AWWA Water Quality Technology Conference. San Antonio, TX.

Studies identified by EPA for Issue 5:

Boyd, G., Reiber, S., and Korshin, G., 2010. Galvanic Couples: Effects of Changing Water Quality on Lead and Copper Release and Open-Circuit Potential Profiles. *Proceedings of the 2010 AWWA Water Quality Technology Conference*. Savannah, GA.

DeSantis, M. et al., 2009. Mineralogical Evidence of Galvanic Corrosion in Domestic Drinking Water Pipes. *Proceedings of the 2009 AWWA Water Quality Technology Conference*. Seattle, WA.

Deshommes, E. et al., 2010. Source and Occurrence of Particulate Lead in Tap Water. *Water Research.* pp. 3734 – 3744.

Reiber, S., and Dufresne, L., 2006. Effects of External Currents and Dissimiliar Metal Contact on Corrosion of Lead from Lead Service Lines. Prepared for USEPA Region III.

Triantafyllidou, S. and Edwards, M., 2010. Contribution of Galvanic Corrosion to Lead in Water After Partial Lead Service Line Replacements. Prepared for the Water Research Foundation, Report 4088b.