



Healthy School Facilities | State of Oregon Action Steps | September 22, 2016

Scope

Oregon's role in the Healthy School Facilities initiative ensures the health and safety of the public, particularly children, by facilitating partnership among agencies with a focus on public health outcomes.

Following significant attention regarding concerns about lead in school drinking water, and parallel to the Oregon Department of Education's (ODE) rulemaking process and the new 2016-'17 school year, stakeholders, parents and the general public continue to have questions about the mechanics of ODE's rules and steps underway by state and local officials to ensure health and safety of children and school employees.

State and local partners are bringing a range of government agencies and environmental and public health officials together to put testing plans in action and ensure effective communication with the public.

Activities to Date

- April 4—Governor's Directive for ODE/OHA to work together on lead in school water.
- May 17—OHA, Governor's Office, ODE meet to discuss lead in school drinking water.
- May 23—Beaverton SD in the news related to lead in school drinking water.
- May 27—Press coverage of lead in drinking water at Portland Public Schools.
- May 31—OHA, ODE share best practice information on addressing lead in school water.
- May 31, June 1—ODE provides technical information to Portland Public School parents as part of meetings convened by districts after concerns were raised about lead in school water.
- June 7—OHA requests ODE and ELD inform schools and child care facilities to test for lead in drinking water (revision July 9).
- June 8—ODE, OHA issue joint news release recommending schools test drinking water for lead over summer; ODE makes similar recommendation to school administrators.
- June 23—ODE presents draft Healthy and Safe Schools rule to State Board of Education.
- July 11, 13—ODE, OHA hold meetings to discuss proposed Healthy and Safe Schools rule.
- July 15—OHA, ODE staff present on testing for and addressing lead in school drinking water at Oregon School Safety Officials conference.
- July 25—ODE holds meeting to receive feedback from school district representatives on draft Healthy and Safe Schools rule; OHA participates as a partner.



- July 27—OHA staff presents on testing for and addressing lead in school drinking water at Oregon Association of School Business Officials conference.
- August 2—ODE holds public hearing on first draft of Healthy and Safe Schools rule.
- August 5—ODE releases revised Healthy and Safe Schools rule to field for comment.
- August 11—ODE holds public hearing on revised rule.
- August 17—Oregon Board of Education approves rules.
- August 24—OHA and ODE host webinar for school districts, parents and staff and post to the healthoregon.org/healthyschools webpage. More than 400 viewers have tuned in.
- Ongoing communication and Q&A between OHA/ODE staff and school districts including through the HealthySchool.Facilities@state.or.us email.
- September 1—Districts submit radon plans to OHA.
- September 15—ODE releases a template—model—Healthy and Safe Schools Plan.

Activities Planned

- **October 1, 2016**—Districts must provide a preliminary report on all elements of the Healthy and Safe Schools Plan outlined in the new rules.
- **January 2017**—Districts submit final Healthy and Safe School Plans to ODE.

Communication Priorities

State agencies and partners will clarify effects of new Healthy School Facilities rules, including their roles and responsibilities. State agencies and partners will provide a brief recap of what's happened to date, refresh on regulatory roles and responsibilities, and build public confidence in next steps. This will and has happened through:

- Weekly meetings of a Joint Information Center communications team.
- Webinar scheduled for August 24, hosted by OHA, ODE, Governor's Office.
- A coordinated, OHA-hosted website on risks and best practices.
- Newsletter and social media communication by OHA, ODE, school districts, county health departments.

Next Steps, Planning Priorities

Oregon is prioritizing this work through an interagency planning and coordination approach known as an *Incident Management Team* (IMT), where staffs and resources are pooled to address the healthy facilities issue across programs and divisions. IMTs provide incident management expertise in logistics, finance, planning, public information, operations, safety, and community issues. The Healthy School Facilities IMT initiative meets at least once per week and will include OHA, ODE, DEQ, Governor's Office, representatives of local educational service districts (ESDs) and school districts; and county public health departments.



As part of the IMT unified command structure, a multi-agency *Joint Information Center* (JIC) has been established to lead and coordinate, among partner agencies, all external and internal communications. The JIC ensures all communications messages, materials and activities are routed through and approved by JIC members, before dissemination to the public.

Oregon is prioritizing the following during August and September:

- Bring all partners into the planning, IMT and JIC discussion.
- Identify immediate threats to environmental health in school and child care facilities; use this information to inform planning and solutions.
- Clarify existing mandates/statutory requirements related to environmental health and safety, and healthy school facilities; contribute to ODE rulemaking.
- Create plan for compliance; clarify agencies' roles and empower them to make changes; ensure health outcomes in school and child care settings.
- Finalize plan for lab reporting of lead test results to OHA.
- Build database of lead and radon test results, and find easy ways to communicate results and coordinate with partners and the public. Ensure labs are certified and working across agencies.
- Provide technical assistance to school districts, labs, others involved in ODE rulemaking process.