

Note: Some links may not work anymore because they are broken. Also, the lead-in-water language has now been corrected by USEPA and water utilities and so working links may not show the mistakes pointed out below.

TABLE 1. HOW EPA BECAME THE SOURCE OF MIS-LEADING PUBLIC EDUCATION MATERIALS STATING THAT “WATER ACCOUNTS FOR UP TO 20% OF A PERSON’S TOTAL EXPOSURE TO LEAD,” AND THEREFORE DOWNPLAYING LEAD IN WATER HEALTH RISKS.

1. USEPA Public Education language mandated in the Federal Register.

*Lead in drinking water, although rarely the sole cause of lead poisoning, can significantly increase a person’s total lead exposure, particularly the exposure of infants who drink baby formulas and concentrated juices that are mixed with water. EPA estimates that drinking water can make up **20% or more** of a person’s total exposure to lead. FR 141.85 p 685 (1991).*

2. EPA incorrectly mischaracterizes its own language, but compensates by acknowledging a much higher risk to infants drinking formula.

*Although the main sources of exposure to lead are ingesting paint chips and inhaling dust, EPA estimates that **10 to 20 percent of human exposure to lead may come from lead in drinking water. Infants who consume mostly mixed formula can receive 40 to 60 percent of their exposure to lead from drinking water.***

<http://water.epa.gov/drink/contaminants/basicinformation/lead.cfm>

3. Utilities [e.g. Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA)] change the federally mandated language of “20% or more,” to “up to 20%,” and drop compensating language about higher risk to infants drinking formula.

*Most cases of lead poisoning are from contact with peeling lead paint and lead paint dust. Although lead in tap water is rarely the single cause of lead poisoning, it can increase a person’s total lead exposure, particularly in infants who drink baby formula or concentrated juices that are mixed with water. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimates that water can make **up to 20%** of a person’s total exposure to lead.*

<http://www.mwra.state.ma.us/04water/html/boston.pdf>

Is drinking water the main source of lead exposure?

*Lead contamination from lead-based paint, dirt, and dust accounts for most of the exposure. Lead from drinking water can make **up to 20 percent** of a person’s total exposure to lead.*

http://www.mwra.state.ma.us/04water/html/Lead_Faucets.htm

Most cases of lead poisoning are from contact with peeling lead paint and lead paint dust. While lead in tap water is rarely the single cause of lead poisoning, it can increase a person’s total lead exposure, particularly in infants who drink baby formula or concentrated juices that are mixed with water.

http://www.bwsc.org/COMMUNITY/lead/lead_sources.asp

4. The US EPA then combines Massachusetts Water Resources Authority citations, attributing it to MWRA.

Lead in Water: (from the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority)

*While lead in tap water is rarely the single cause of lead poisoning, it can increase a person’s total lead exposure, particularly in infants who drink baby formula or concentrated juices mixed with water. The EPA estimates that water, in some cases, can make **up to 20%** of a person’s total exposure to lead.*

http://www.epa.gov/region1/eco/ne_lead/keep_it_clean.html

5. Other utilities now cite the US EPA as the source of the language “up to 20%”

*While lead in tap water is rarely the single cause of lead poisoning, it can increase a person’s total lead exposure, particularly in infants who drink baby formula or concentrated juices that are mixed with water. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimates that water can make **up to 20%** of a person’s total exposure to lead.*

e.g. http://www.guc.com/Data/Sites/1/media/services/water/lead_factsheet.pdf