

Communication for a Lead-Safe Community

Municipality Communication Toolkit

GetTheLeadOutPgh

November 2022

Communication for a Lead-Safe Municipality

Congratulations, your community is working to protect your residents from exposure to lead and the harmful effects of lead poisoning.

There are a whole host of ways you can communicate with your citizens:

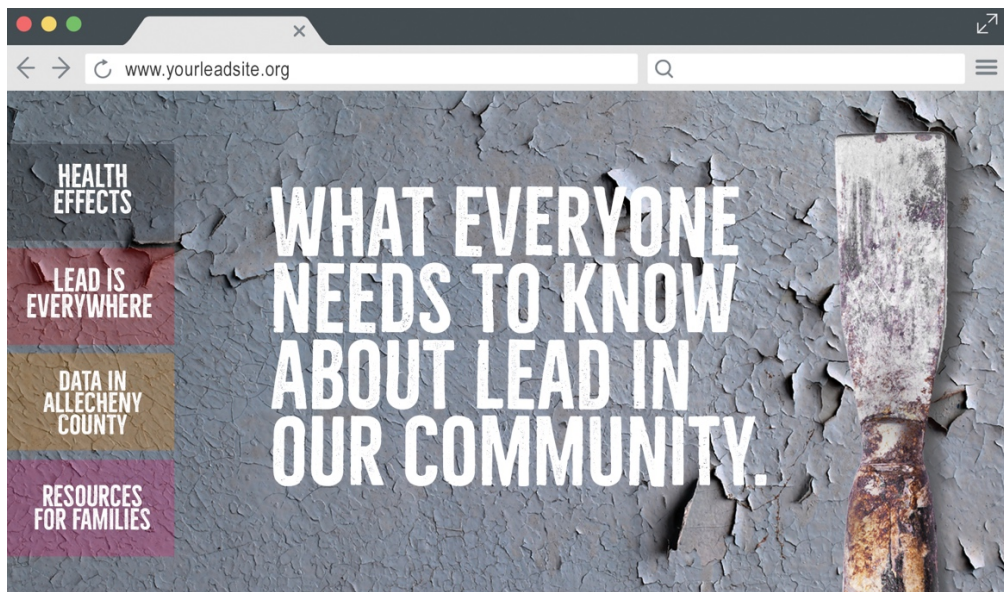
- Website
- Emails
- Newsletters
- Social media
- Local media
- Community events
- Bulletin boards

This toolkit is designed to help you leverage your current communication channels to educate the community around lead: your website and social media. If you'd like to learn more about other communication strategies, please contact us at info@gettheleadoutpgh.org.

Your Municipality's Website

Your municipality's website is a trusted source of information for the community. Please find below helpful information that you can include to help inform your website visitors.

You don't need a new website; simply build a webpage that includes the following information.



What everyone needs to know about lead in our community.

Health Effects

- Lead is a poison that affects nearly every system in the body, including the brain and nervous system. Lead is especially dangerous to children under the age of six, as their brains and nervous systems are more sensitive to the damaging effects of lead and their growing bodies absorb more lead.
- Lead can cause serious health problems, especially for pregnant women and young children. The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has indicated that no safe blood lead level in children has been identified. Even low levels of lead in blood have been shown to affect IQ, ability to pay attention, academic achievement, and other behavioral issues. There are no effective treatments for the permanent cognitive and behavioral damage that occurs when a toddler has lead poisoning.
- Lead poisoning contributes to:
 - Damage to the brain and nervous system
 - Slowed growth and development
 - Learning and behavior problems (reduced IQ, ADHD, juvenile delinquency, and criminal behavior)
 - Hearing and speech problems
 - Other problems can include: kidney disease, hypertension, heart disease, anemia, slowed puberty

Lead is Everywhere

- Lead has been eliminated from gasoline, paint, and solder; however, you can still be exposed to lead from many different sources including:
 - Dust containing lead from pre-1978 lead paint
 - Paint chips
 - Contaminated soils
 - Water
 - Ceramic plates, bowls, and glasses
 - Imported candy, toys, cosmetics, and jewelry
- [Paint and dust](#)
 - Lead paint was commonly used until 1978. With 85% of our Pittsburgh-area homes built before 1978 and more than 1,700 new cases of lead poisoning in our children: we've got a problem.

- When the lead paint chips, crumbles, begins peeling, or is disturbed by demolition/renovation, the resulting dust contains lead and poses a health risk.
- [Water](#)
 - Lead-containing pipes were used until 1986. These pipes can wear down and release lead into the drinking water. Plumbing fixtures and fittings can also contain lead, if they were purchased before 2014. All these sources present a health risk.
 - Municipal water authorities are required to test for lead in drinking water every three years. These utilities are required to maintain healthy drinking water.
- [Soil](#)
 - Lead paint on the outside of buildings may weather and cause lead contamination in nearby soil. Demolished buildings or vacant lots may also have lead in the soil, especially if lead-containing products were used in the once-standing property.
 - Other sources of lead in soil are past use of leaded gasoline and industrial sites, such as smelters, batteries and incinerators.

[Data About Lead in Allegheny County](#)

- In January 2018, Allegheny County put in place a universal lead testing policy. The regulation requires that children must have two blood lead levels measured twice before age 2 years. Universal testing for blood lead levels in Allegheny County ensures that families and doctors will know if their children or patients are at risk for complications related to elevated lead levels and then receive information about how to reduce those levels.
- Exposure to lead through contaminated paint is a significant risk in Allegheny County and may explain some of this disparity. Lead paint was banned for consumer use in 1978, houses built prior to this are at an increased likelihood of containing lead-based paint. The older the home the higher the likelihood of containing lead-based paint. In the county 39.1% of all county housing units were built before 1950 and more than 80% were built before 1978. A higher percentage of homes built prior to the banning of lead paint can translate to an increased risk of exposure for children living in this area.
- Find out if lead is present near you at bit.ly/ACLeadMap.

Resources for Families

- [Get the Lead Out, Pittsburgh](#) – FAQs and resources by audience, including free home remediation program and health department services for families whose children are exposed to lead.
- [Get the Lead Out, Pittsburgh](#) – “10 ways to protect your children from lead poisoning” info sheet is available in several languages.
- [Women for a Healthy Environment](#) – Opportunities to advocate for prevention at a community level.

Your Municipality’s Social Media Channels

Social media is an important asset in your communications toolbox. Follow the below best practice and review the sample social media posts to inform your audiences about lead exposure and the help available to them.

Social Media Best Practices

- Post 3-5 times weekly
 - A regular posting schedule is a key part of ensuring placement in any social media algorithm and allows the audience to know what to expect
- Keep content brief and intentional
 - All post copy should be brief (2-3 sentences, max)
 - Make sure spelling and grammar are correct and all links are operational
 - Check if there are partner pages you can tag or a hashtag that should be included
 - All posts should be shared with an image, graphic, or link
- Perform daily channel checks
 - Respond to messages and comments
 - Engage with posts your organization is tagged in
 - Like and comment on partner/funder posts
- Engage with partners, funders, and other like-minded organizations
 - Leveraging these relationships will showcase your organizations connections and increase brand awareness
- For content related to lead-safe policy and related information, follow Women for a Healthy Environment (WHE) and Get the Lead Out, Pittsburgh (GTLO).
 - WHE

- [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#)
- GTLO
 - [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#)

Sample Social Media Posts/Copy

Post 1

COPY: Lead is a poison that affects nearly every system in the body, including the brain and nervous system. Lead is especially dangerous to children under the age of six, as their brains and nervous systems are more sensitive to the damaging effects of lead and their growing bodies absorb more lead.

Learn more about #LeadPoisoning in Allegheny County at GetTheLeadOutPgh.org. #GetTheLeadOutPgh

IMAGE: No Safe Level of Lead



Post 2

COPY:

Did you know that water is NOT the most prevalent source of #LeadPoisoning in our community? Learn more about lead exposure and get help for your family at GetTheLeadOutPgh.org. #GetTheLeadOutPgh

IMAGE: Top Sources of Lead.jpeg



Post 3

COPY:

In #AlleghenyCounty, 80% of homes were built before 1978 when lead was banned from paint. Is your family safe from lead poisoning?

Learn more at GetTheLeadOutPgh.org, then visit bit.ly/ACLeadSafeHomes or bit.ly/ACHDHomeInspection to have your home tested for lead. #GetTheLeadOutPgh

ATTACHMENT: Your Home.mp4