

Torstar file photo

The Halton District School Board recently released its report on school drinking water testing.

10 THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT WATER TESTING AT HALTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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1) As of 2017, Ontario government regulations specified that all school fixtures used for drinking water or in food preparation were to be tested. All elementary school fixtures were to be tested before Oct. 31, 2019, and all secondary schools before Oct. 31, 2021. The Halton District School Board is on target.

2) During the most recent HDSB water testing, 1,569 fixtures were tested with a total of 3,138 samples taken. Of those, 33 schools had a fixture with a lead concentration above acceptable amounts.

3) Fixtures are sink taps, drinking fountains or water-bottle-filling stations. Fixtures that are not designated for drinking purposes, such as found in auto shops, are not tested.

4) When testing water for lead, two samples are

taken; one is a standing sample taken directly from the fixture without running the water first, the other a flushed sample taken after running the tap for five minutes and letting the water sit.

5) Should a sample have a lead concentration and the flushed sample be below the threshold, regulations require staff to perform five-minute daily flushes of every water line and a 10-second flush at every fixture used for drinking water or food preparation. Ministry of Environment regulations require that flushing be continued for two years.

6) If the flushed sample is above the ministry's threshold of 10 micrograms per litre, the water supply to the fixture is shut off and the fixture is covered to prevent usage until a retest or replacement confirms the lead levels are within acceptable amounts.

7) Contrary to what many people believe, the majority of HDSB schools do not have lead pipes. Lead may be found in the soldering and, in some cases, in the brass that makes up the fixtures, according to HDSB Superintendent of Facility Services Maia Puccetti.

8) Recent reports of drinking water tests at Oakville's White Oaks Secondary School that showed exceedance levels were recorded over the summer months during a period of construction when little water was flowing, said Puccetti.

9) Flushed samples at WOSS indicate results within or below the threshold. Testing will continue, "but we have met ministry expectations," said Puccetti.

10) Ontario is one of the few provinces that require schools to test their water for lead.

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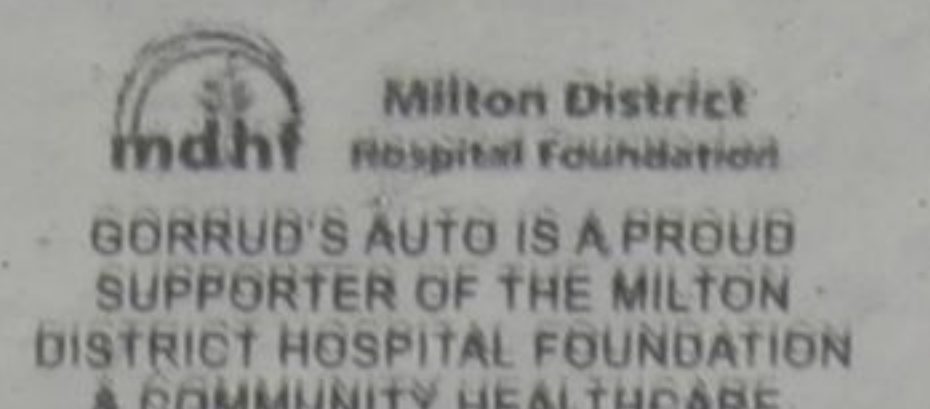
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