



American Water Works
Association

The Authoritative Resource on Safe Water®

How to Develop Your Own Crisis Communications Plan

Deirdre Mueller
AWWA Sr. Communications Manager

What is Crisis Communication?

- ... a science-based approach for communicating effectively and accurately to diverse audiences in situations that are high-concern, high-stress, emotionally charged, and/or highly controversial.

-- Vincent Covello



Why is Crisis Communication so important in the water profession?

- Our culture loves stories about crises
- Water professionals intersect with health, safety, and environmental risk.
- Internet/Social Media make it easy for misinformation to spread.



Sampling of potential crisis communications challenges

- Contamination
- Lead in Water
- Monochloramines
- Drought
- Algal blooms
- Boil Water Notice
- Water Main Break



How can we benefit from it?

- Cut back on internal confusion
- Enhance knowledge and understanding
- Build trust and credibility
- Produce appropriate levels of concern



Crisis Communication Principles

- Have a plan already in place.
- Communicate proactively
- Be honest, frank and open
- Collaborate with other credible sources
- Meet the needs of the media
- Speak clearly and with compassion
- Involve the public as a legitimate partner



Have a plan already in place

- Situation Analysis
- Identify: Goals, Objectives, Strategies, Tools and Tactics
- Implement: Key Issues, Audiences, Messages, Timeline, Method(s) of Communication, Costs
- Practice and Evaluate



Communicate Proactively



for drinking, cooking or preparing baby formula, because hot water dissolves lead more quickly.

Filter the Water-Many home water filters are effective at removing lead. If you purchase a filter, make sure it is certified for lead removal and that you maintain it properly. Find out more on filter certification at www.nsf.org.



Let's Get the Lead Out!

The surest way to protect against lead in water is to get the lead out altogether.

Replace lead service lines

If you have a lead service line, talk to a licensed plumber about getting it replaced. Contact your utility to see if there are payment options or rebate programs.

Replace other plumbing that contains lead Hire a licensed plumber to look for and replace lead solder, fixtures or other potential sources of lead.



For More Information

There are a number of resources available for more information about lead, water filtration systems and other related issues.

CDC-Lead in Drinking Water-The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has information on lead's health effects and tips for protection from water and other common sources of exposure. www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/lead

DrinkTap.org-A public service of the American Water Works Association, drinktap.org was created to provide people information about a variety of water-related issues, from water quality to conservation.

Epa.gov/lead-The federal agency responsible for the safety of America's drinking water. EPA hosts a comprehensive website that addresses all sources of lead in the home.

Nsf.org-NSF International provides consumer information about water filter capabilities, including claims to reduce lead. The NSF can also be reached at 800.NSF.8010.



Dedicated to the World's Most Important Resource™

4858/2016

Lead Keep Your Water Safe

Test Your Water
Check Pipes and Plumbing
Protect Your Family
Get the Lead Out!



American Water Works Association

For more information on the health risks of lead, see our [Lead in Drinking Water brochure](#).

RELATED LINKS

- Steps to Reduce Exposure
- Lead Pipe Replacement Program
- Lead Testing Centers
- Other Lead Sources

DISCLAIMER: The maps provided by the Boston Water and Sewer Commission (BWSC) are based on property surveys conducted during the installation of the Automated Meter Reading system, as well as information directly provided by customers and acquired during physical inspections. BWSC does not guarantee the accuracy of these records and maps, which shall be used for the sole purpose of providing property owners and residents with information regarding their private water services, and not for any commercial, legal or other use. These records will be updated on a monthly basis, or at such alternate time as BWSC deems appropriate. BWSC reserves the right to alter, amend or terminate at any time the display of these maps and records.

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Be Frank, Honest and Open

“We don’t have records of exactly when and where plumbers and builders installed lead pipes. In many cases, you may not have these records either.”

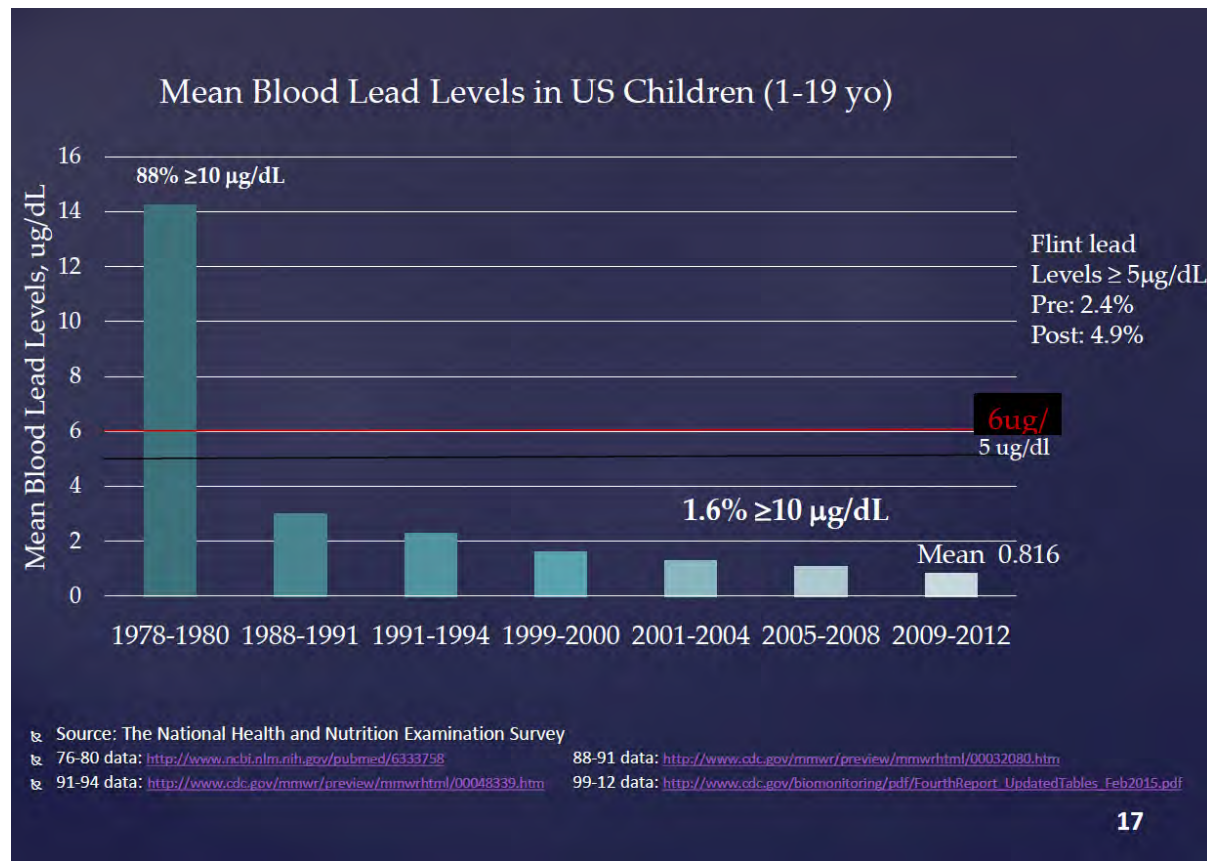
-- Denver Water

“But the fact remains: as long as lead is present, some risk remains.”

-- AWWA CEO David LaFrance



Speak Clearly and with Compassion



Collaborate with Other Credible Sources

LEAD SERVICE LINE REPLACEMENT COLLABORATIVE

- What is the Collaborative?

- A diverse collaborative of national public health, water utility, environmental, labor, consumer, housing, and state and local government organizations



- What is the goal of the Collaborative?

- To accelerate voluntary lead service line (LSL) replacement in communities across the United States



Meet the Needs of the Media

- Give regular, timely updates.
- Offer a list of resources.
- Have a list of experts available.
- Have a designated process for media requests. Make sure everyone knows that process.
- Make use of all your mediums: personal communications with key stakeholders, press conferences, press releases, website, social media.



Involve the Public as a Legitimate Partner

- Engage early and often. Explain the process to them.
- What can they be doing to protect themselves?
- Make sure you're sharing information in the places where they look for it.
- Hold public meetings, talk to HOAs, have a presence at community events.



Questions?



Deirdre Mueller · dmueller@awwa.org · 303.347.6140

