

TECHNICAL

BRIEF

Pressure Gauges for Drinking Water Systems

In 2011, the Reduction of Lead in Drinking Water Act was signed into law. The Act has reduced the lead content allowed in drinking water systems and plumbing materials by changing the definition of “lead-free” in Section 1417 of the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA). On January 4, 2014, the Reduction of Lead in Drinking Water Act became effective nationwide, making it illegal to install pipes, pipe fittings, and other plumbing fixtures that are not “lead-free” into potable water systems. In general terms, “lead-free” is defined as restricting the permissible levels of lead in the wetted surfaces of products to a weighted average of not more than 0.25 percent. Specifically, the Reduction of Lead in Drinking Water Act:

- Changes the definition of “lead-free” by reducing lead content from 8% to a weighted average of not more than 0.25% in the wetted surface area of the product
- Maintains that products use solder and flux that contains no more than 0.2% lead
- Eliminates a provision that required certain products to comply with “voluntary” standards for lead leaching by establishing a method for calculating the weighted average lead content of the wetted surfaces of the product

Although the Reduction of Lead in Drinking Water Act does not require product testing some entities may require that all plumbing products that come in contact with potable water be certified by an ANSI accredited third-party testing body. There are several States that have laws pertaining to the allowable lead content of pipes, pipe fittings, and fixtures, some of which require product certification. There may also be local laws, jurisdictions or entities in other States that require product certification. As an example, plumbing inspectors who enforce State and local plumbing codes will have the right to question installers, who must be able to prove that no non-compliant products are installed in potable water systems. Under the Reduction

of Lead in Drinking Water Act there is no single way to show that a product is “lead-free”, thus making it difficult for installers to prove compliance. The easiest way to ensure a component meets the new definition of “lead-free” is to use only tested and certified products, such as those listed in NSF/ANSI Standard 61-G or NSF/ANSI Standard 372. Certified products will usually contain the logo from the ANSI accredited certifying body and text indicating the NSF/ANSI test standard.



Certified to
NSF/ANSI 61-G



Certified to NSF/ANSI 61
Section 9-G



Certified to
NSF/ANSI 372

The EPA encourages manufacturers to use third party certification or to create a system to document compliance with the SDWA and to provide important information to subsequent purchasers or users of the product, including retail stores, plumbers and consumers. Additionally, a recent survey of States found that 47 have requirements for water treatment and distribution system components to comply with NSF/ANSI test standards and most of them require an ANSI-accredited third party certification. If you are unsure or unable to determine if a product meets the SDWA, contact the manufacturer to confirm product certification.

Ref: *Summary of the Reduction of Lead in Drinking Water Act and Frequently Asked Questions*
(EPA 815/S-13/003)

Ref: *How to Identify Lead-Free Certification Marks for Drinking Water System & Plumbing Materials*
(EPA 600/F-13/153)