

AB 1953 – Overview

AB 1953 would phase out lead from brass plumbing used to convey drinking water in water utility distribution pipes and in consumer plumbing fittings and faucets. Beginning in 2010, only the lead-free plumbing components meeting the AB 1953 0.25% lead standard could be sold in California.

- **Lead leaching into drinking water poses a serious health risk - there is no safe level of lead, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.** Exposure to low concentrations of lead can result in serious ailments, including learning impairment in infants and reduced IQ. Unlike some other chronic diseases, 100% of lead poisoning is caused by preventable environmental contaminants.
- **AB 1953 would change existing law by reducing the lead allowed in plumbing used to convey drinking water.** AB 1953 changes the “lead free” definition to a 0.25% weighted average of lead for pipes, fittings, and fixtures intended to convey or dispense water for human consumption. Enforcement of the AB 1953 standard would occur in the same way enforcement of the existing lead standard is carried out.
- **The 0.25% lead standard is appropriate for drinking water plumbing.** The 0.25% standard is supported by the scientific studies, and major water agencies, and is recognized by the metal manufacturing industry as the standard for “no-lead” brass.
- **The plumbing industry already makes a 0.25% lead brass.** Over 29 companies manufacture various plumbing components today that meet a 0.25% lead content standard, or better; this list continues to grow.
- Lead-free alloys can be used to make plumbing parts that have historically contained lead. **For less than \$5, an existing Chicago Faucet Company faucet was easily modified** by simply replacing two leaded-brass parts with AB 1953 stainless steel replacements. This simple change reduced the lead content to **half** the allowable amount.
- **At least nine major utilities already use the 0.25% lead standard.** These regional and metropolitan utilities serve over 16 million families and businesses across the country and already use a 0.25% lead standard for the plumbing components they buy and install.
- **AB 1953 savings far outweigh the minor costs of the new brass.** These implementation costs are expected to be more than offset by savings, estimated at \$800 million per year, in health care and special education as well as in higher earnings for non-lead exposed individuals.
- **Support for AB 1953 is broad and diverse.** AB 1953 is supported by members of industry, health organizations, the environmental justice community, environmental interest groups, the research community, municipalities, and public policy organizations.