



Suburban Property Inspections

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BERYLLIUM FACT SHEET

Brief Overview:

Category:	Metals
Acceptable Level:	0.004 mg/L MCL, Primary Drinking Water Standard
Source:	Natural occurring, Industry
Effect:	Short and Long-term Health Effects Test for Beryllium and other metals
Follow up:	metals
Treatment:	Activated Alumina, Coagulation/Filtration, Ion exchange, Lime Softening, Reverse osmosis

Details:

Source: Beryllium is a metal found in natural deposits as ores containing other elements and in some precious stones such as emeralds and aquamarine. The greatest use of beryllium is in making metal alloys for nuclear reactors and the aerospace industry.

Production of beryllium metal was 490,000 lbs. in 1986. It is released principally in the smoke stacks and ash wastes of power plants which burn coal. It is also found in discharges from other industrial and municipal operations. Rocket exhaust products also consist of various beryllium compounds.

From 1987 to 1993, according to the Toxics Release Inventory beryllium releases to land and water totalled over 340,000 lbs. These releases were primarily from copper rolling and drawing industries which use it as a hardener in alloys. The largest releases occurred in Pennsylvania and Ohio.

Very little is known about what happens to beryllium compounds when released to the environment. It appears unlikely to leach to ground water when released to land. Erosion or runoff of beryllium compounds into surface waters is not likely to be in a soluble form.

Effect: Short-term: EPA has found beryllium to potentially cause the following health effects from acute exposures at levels above the MCL: inhalation may cause acute chemical pneumonities; less toxic via oral exposure.

Long-term: Beryllium has the potential to cause the following health effects from long term exposures at levels above the MCL: damage to bones and lungs. There is limited evidence that beryllium may cause cancer from lifetime exposures at levels above the MCL.

Follow up: Treat and re-test for metals.

Treatment: Activated Alumina, Coagulation/Filtration, Ion exchange, Lime Softening, Reverse osmosis

Following installation of this system, the consumer should have the treated water tested for beryllium to verify reduction is being achieved and the system is functioning properly.

For more information visit the USEPA web site:

For further technical assistance, call Suburban Property Inspections at 1-866-866-6700, or call the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency Safe Drinking Water Hotline at 1-800-426-4791.



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