



Suburban Property Inspections

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NICKEL FACT SHEET

Brief Overview:

Category:	Metals
Acceptable Level:	No current MCL, previously 0.1 mg/L
Source:	Natural occurring, Industry
Effect:	Short and Long-term Health Effects
Follow up:	Test for Nickel and other metals
Treatment:	Ion Exchange, Lime Softening, Reverse Osmosis.

Details:

Source: Nickel is a metal found in natural deposits as ores containing other elements. The greatest use of nickel is in making stainless steel and other alloys.

Production of nickel was 84.6 million lbs. in 1986, down slightly from 1982 report of almost 90 million lbs. In 1986 it was estimated that industries consumed nickel as follows: transportation, 25%, chemical industry, 15%, electrical equipment, 9%, petroleum, 8%, household appliances, 7%, machinery, 7%, and other, 11%.

Nickel compounds can be made as a by-product during various industrial processes that use nickel catalysts, such as coal gasification, petroleum refining, and hydrogenation of fats and oils. They have also been identified in residual fuel oil and in atmospheric emissions from nickel refineries.

Nickel is one of the most mobile of the heavy metals when released to water, particularly in polluted waters, where organic material will keep nickel soluble. Through nickel does accumulate in aquatic life, it does not become magnified along food chains. Nickel released to soil may leach into ground water or be washed into surface water.

Effect: Short-term: Nickel is not known to cause any health problems when people are exposed to it at levels above the MCL for relatively short periods of time.

Long-term: Nickel has the potential to cause the following effects from a lifetime exposure at levels above the MCL: decreased body weight; heart and liver damage; skin irritation. There is no evidence that nickel has the potential to cause cancer from lifetime exposures in drinking water.

Follow up: Treat and re-test for metals.

Treatment: Ion Exchange, Lime Softening, Reverse Osmosis.

Following installation of this system, the consumer should have the treated water tested for nickel to verify nickel 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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