



DUE DILIGENCE REQUIRED

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I am at a loss to find the proper language and terminology to describe what has become the debacle in Flint, Michigan, over the discovery of high levels of lead in that city's drinking water supply. There has been a lot of finger pointing, accusations, and enough blame to shame everyone in the water industry. The call for "heads to roll" stretches from regulators, to system management, down to plant operations. All fueled by the mainstream media stories and video segments that struggled to get the facts straight from the beginning. This incident may have occurred in Flint, Michigan, but it could have happened in "Anywhere, USA". The fact is that at some point in the past, someone thought that lead might be a good material to fashion water pipes, fittings and appurtenances with. Since then we have discovered that this was not a good idea. Good science has proven that concentrations of lead above certain levels can eventually lead to a variety of health issues. There is plenty of liability to go around and the blame game is getting tiresome. The people that worked within that system whether regulators, managers, or operators all have one thing in common, they are humans, and humans are prone to making mistakes. Those of us who have served the drinking water industry are acutely aware of the rather mundane work we do on a daily basis. It is entirely feasible that the stars aligned in such a

pattern to create the perfect storm. Now is the time to work the problem people. Let's not let this happen again.

Let's return for a moment to the time when we had just completed our course work to be certified operators. When the instructors repeated over and over again that we were now responsible in some way, shape, or form for the general public's health. That the task has now become your responsibility 24/7 to be looking out for someone other than yourself. We may have been part of the problem, but we can also be part of the solution. Plant operations, distribution maintenance, and system management requires "Due Diligence"!

I know we cannot be responsible for the use of lead for the components of our industry. But when we come across these foul components in excavations, customers homes, and our own water plants we can be part of the solution. No, we are not going to excavate every service line to see if by chance it is connected to the water main with a lead gooseneck. But when we do come across them, we can remove them. Eventually we will get "the lead out".

Eventually it may even become unnecessary to test for Lead and Copper. But for now let us practice "Due Diligence" and "Get the Lead Out". It can only produce "Quality on Tap". 💧💧