



# Focus on: Lead in Cookware

## Lead in cookware law

In 2024, the Washington State Legislature passed a law restricting cookware containing lead ([Chapter 70A.565 RCW](#)).<sup>1</sup> In 2025, this law was changed to focus on types of cookware that are most likely to expose people to lead.

It is illegal to make or sell aluminum or brass cookware in Washington if it contains lead in the following concentrations:

- As of Jan. 1, 2026, no more than 90 parts per million (ppm).
- As of Jan. 1, 2028, no more than 10 ppm.

## Why is lead a concern?

Lead is a naturally occurring metal that is highly toxic to people and wildlife. Lead exposure primarily comes from materials and products found in and around our homes.

Lead and lead compounds are widely detected in the environment, people's bodies and can impact children's development. **There is no safe level of lead exposure for children.** Race, income, and other related factors reflect disproportionate exposure to certain demographics.

## Why did Washington pass this law?

In Washington, [researchers in King County found concerning levels of lead in cookware](#)<sup>2</sup> used by specific immigrant populations brought from their country of origin. For example, **pressure cookers, woks, and aluminum pots were found with high levels of lead.**

Researchers also tested cookware available online and purchased locally. Some of these items had concerning levels of lead that leached into food cooked in these products.

## What items are covered by the law?

The law defines items covered by this law as follows:

- **Cookware** is defined in the statute as any aluminum or brass pot, pan, bakeware, utensil, rice cooker, pressure cooker, or other container or surface used to cook food.
- **Cookware components**, whether attached to cookware or separate, are defined as parts of cookware made from aluminum or brass, such as lids, rivets, fasteners, valves, and vent pipes.
- **Utensils** are tools made from aluminum or brass, such as knives, forks, spoons, spatulas, and other tools used to prepare, serve, or eat food.

## How do businesses prove they are complying with the law?

Manufacturers, wholesalers, and retailers are NOT required to:

- Prove their products comply with the law (unless a violation is discovered).
- Report or provide certification of compliance about products or sales to Ecology.
- Use a specific test method to test for lead (if you choose to test products).

## Concerned about compliance?

We understand that some cookware that meets global standards for lead content and some components made of recycled materials may not meet Washington's new limits. If you are concerned that your products don't meet the new law, we encourage you to [contact us](#).<sup>3</sup>

## Frequently asked questions

### Why did the Legislature change the law in 2025?

The law passed in 2024 had a lower limit, but manufacturers were concerned they couldn't meet the new requirement in time. They asked the Legislature to change the law so they could still sell their products in Washington. Additionally, the wording of the original law unintentionally covered items the Legislature didn't intend to cover, such as refrigerators. The new wording focuses on cookware items that are the most likely to expose users to lead and gives manufacturers more time to comply with lower limits.

### What changed from the 2024 version to the 2025 version of the law?

The biggest change is what the law covers:

- "Cookware" is now limited to aluminum and brass items.
- Stainless steel cookware is no longer covered by the bill, even if there are layers of aluminum or brass inside the stainless steel.
- The body of electronic cooking devices with removable cooking containers—such as slow cookers, rice cookers, and pressure cookers—is no longer considered cookware under the law. The removable container used for cooking the food is still covered under the law if it is made of aluminum or brass.

Items such as ranges, cooktops, refrigerators, and freezers are no longer considered cookware under the law.

In addition, the new law:

- Increases the amount of lead allowed in items covered under the law from 5 ppm to 90 ppm from Jan. 1, 2026, through Dec. 31, 2027.
- Effective Jan. 1, 2028, the amount of lead allowed in items covered under the law falls to 10 ppm.

- Allows Ecology to adopt a lower limit by adopting an administrative rule, instead of asking the Legislature to change the statute. That rulemaking may occur sometime after 2030. The previous date for rulemaking was 2034.
- Clarifies that the statute doesn't restrict Ecology's authority to adopt rules about lead in cookware under the [Safer Products for Washington Program](#).<sup>4</sup>

### Does this law apply to individuals or households?

No. However, if you have lead-contaminated cookware, we recommend avoiding its use for food preparation. Learn more about how to [identify and reduce exposure to lead-contaminated cookware](#).<sup>5</sup>

### Related Information

- [Washington's toxics in products laws](#)<sup>6</sup>
- [Actions against lead](#)<sup>7</sup>
- [Lead sources and exposure](#)<sup>8</sup> | Washington State Department of Health

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>[app.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=70A.565](http://app.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=70A.565)

<sup>2</sup>[kingcounty.gov/en/dept/dnrp/about-king-county/about-dnrp/newsroom/2024-news-releases/03-29-lead-contaminated-cookware](http://kingcounty.gov/en/dept/dnrp/about-king-county/about-dnrp/newsroom/2024-news-releases/03-29-lead-contaminated-cookware)

<sup>3</sup>[LeadInCookware@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:LeadInCookware@ecy.wa.gov)

<sup>4</sup>[ecology.wa.gov/safer-products-wa](http://ecology.wa.gov/safer-products-wa)

<sup>5</sup>[kingcounty.gov/so-so/dept/dnrp/waste-services/hazardous-waste-program/news-events/news/helping-families-reduce-exposure-to-lead](http://kingcounty.gov/so-so/dept/dnrp/waste-services/hazardous-waste-program/news-events/news/helping-families-reduce-exposure-to-lead)

<sup>6</sup>[ecology.wa.gov/waste-toxics/reducing-toxic-chemicals/washingtons-toxics-in-products-laws](http://ecology.wa.gov/waste-toxics/reducing-toxic-chemicals/washingtons-toxics-in-products-laws)

<sup>7</sup>[ecology.wa.gov/lead](http://ecology.wa.gov/lead)

<sup>8</sup>[doh.wa.gov/community-and-environment/contaminants/lead](http://doh.wa.gov/community-and-environment/contaminants/lead)



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