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**Date:** Fri, 27 Aug 1999 12:07:24 -0400  
**Reply-To:** "Leadfree Electronics Assembly E-Mail Forum."  
<Leadfree@IPC.ORG>,  
"Davy, Gordon" <gordon\_davy@MD.NORTHGRUM.COM>  
**Sender:** Leadfree <Leadfree@ipc.org>  
**From:** "Davy, Gordon" <gordon\_davy@MD.NORTHGRUM.COM>  
**Subject:** [Diving in a lead mine](#)  
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This is a follow-up to Richard Ackerson's posting in which he mentioned diving in a lead mine. To learn more, I visited the mine's web site <http://www.2dive.com/>. The mine was opened in 1980. Quoting now, "Bonne Terre offers such excellent diving conditions, that 15,000 certified divers a year flock to West End Diving's 'Billion Gallon Lake Resort' to participate in the adventure of diving the mine." Perhaps some of the subscribers to this forum would be interested in visiting!

I talked to the owner, Mr. Doug Goergens, and asked him about the lead content in the water. He explained that the Department of Natural Resources tests the water four times a year. The water is very clear, and the lead content is low enough for full-body contact and for watering livestock. It is roughly twice the level allowed for human drinking, but is easily reduced to an acceptable level by filtering. In fact, the water is sometimes pumped out to supply drinking water for the nearby town. When I told him about the project to remove lead from electronics to protect landfills, he was completely amazed. If the level of lead in the water of a lead mine is safe, why worry about lead in water from near a land fill that contains one percent electronic waste (and lead a tiny fraction of that)? What more proof could one ask for?

As for acid rain dissolving metallic lead, lead used to be used for drain pipes in chemical sinks because it does not dissolve in acid, and the lead plates in lead-acid batteries sit in concentrated sulfuric acid. The prospect of dissolving lead with acid rain is implausible, and with ground water sounds even more unlikely - for one thing, the water will contain ample sulfate. If water that was desired for drinking water actually did contain too much lead (as a soluble salt), it would be very easy to remove it. Back when I took

chemistry, the first experiment in quantitative analysis was to precipitate lead sulfate.

Lead if it gets into a person is bad news, but that is not the issue. The issue is (or should be) whether there is a credible scenario by which lead in electronics gets into a person. Kids don't chew on CCA's, it doesn't produce a fume as with leaded gasoline (even when incinerated), it doesn't dissolve in water, there are no reports of lead in drinking water, and no victims. Let those who believe present a credible scenario, with data and calculations, not intuition and just-so stories.

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The author's views expressed here are not necessarily those of his employer.

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