

Lead is a naturally occurring element found in small amounts in the earth's crust. While it has some beneficial uses, it can be toxic to humans and animals, causing negative health effects. Lead service lines are plumbing pipes made of lead or lead-based solder that have been used for centuries to supply water to homes. They are often found in older cities and homes built before 1986. Lead pipes were typically used in the water delivery industry because they are malleable, flexible, and resistant to corrosion. Lead plumbing pipes can be a public health hazard because lead can leach directly into drinking water and cause health problems, especially for children and pregnant women.

The federal Lead & Copper Rule Revisions require all community public water systems to develop a service line inventory that accurately identifies the material type for each service line that is delivering water to homes and businesses from the public water system. This data will be used to determine which lines are eligible for replacement.

What is a Water Service Line?

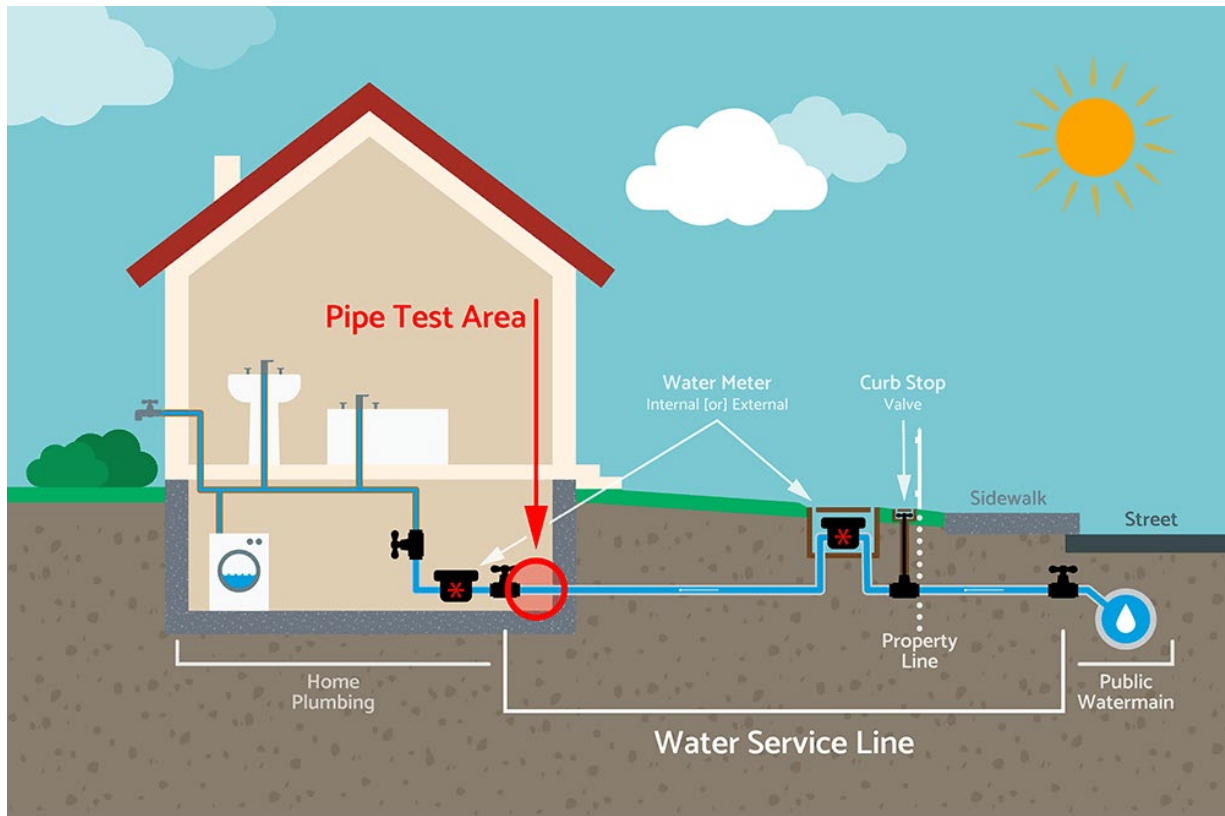


A water service line is the connection from the drinking water main to the foundation of the home (or building). Each home's service line consists of two portions: TLWC owns the portion of the line from the drinking water main to the meter pit ("system-owned"), and the homeowner owns the portion of the line from the curb stop or meter pit to their home's foundation ("customer-owned").

Identifying service line materials

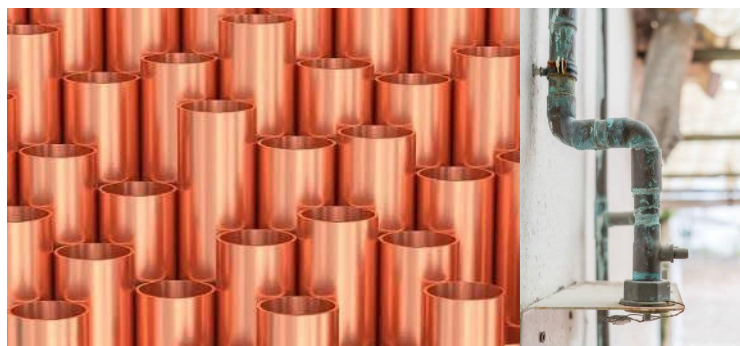
If you received a letter stating your service line is unknown, follow the steps below.

Find where the water line enters your home and inspect the pipe. If you can access the pipe but you aren't sure what it is, perform a "scratch test" using a key or coin and test it for magnetism.



(In the diagram above, TLWC does not yet have meters, but there are Curb Stops at the property lines).

Copper: If the scratched area is copper in color, like a penny, your service line is copper. Copper is **not magnetic**.



Galvanized Steel: If the scratched area is dull gray and **magnetic**, your service line is galvanized steel. These pipes are likely **threaded at the connections**.



Lead: If the scratched area is soft and shows bright silver, your service line may be lead. It may have a bulb in the pipe near where it enters your home. Lead is **not magnetic**.



Poly (HDPE)/Plastic (PVC): These plumbing materials are made of plastic, both types look and feel like plastic. Poly service lines usually have labeling on the side that includes information such as manufacturer's name, size, and pressure rating. Poly service lines are typically black in color but can sometimes be blue. If your service line is traditional PVC, it will most likely be white in color. Poly/Plastic materials are **not magnetic**.



Black HDPE



Blue HDPE



PVC

Submit your findings

Once you've completed the "scratch test" submit your findings through email to customerservice@terracelakeswater.com, or call at 208-440-4756.

Other contributions to lead in water

Older parts of your faucets and spot-specific repairs to your plumbing may contain lead. The most common sources of lead in drinking water are lead pipes or solder, and brass or bronze faucets and fixtures.

Ways to lower risk of lead consumption

1. **Flush your cold tap** for several seconds (until it feels uniformly cold) before using water for drinking or cooking.
2. **Do not use hot tap water** for cooking, drinking or preparing baby formula. Start with cold water and warm it on the stove or in the microwave.
3. **Clean out aerators** regularly and replace any chipped or broken screens, faucets, aerators, or gaskets. While removed, run water to flush out any sediment or particles.
4. If you choose to use a pitcher or point-of-use **filter**, ensure it specifies lead reduction. Maintain the filter according to the manufacturer's instructions.

Remember: Lead in water typically comes from plumbing materials in your home. TLWC's source water wells are not a significant source of lead in your drinking water.

- Boiling water does not remove lead.
- Whole house filters may remove lead at your house connection, but not at your tap. These also remove chlorine, increasing your chance of bacterial and fungal growth.
- Find [other ways to reduce lead exposure on the EPA's website](#).

If your home was built before 1960 and you know or suspect you have a lead water service line, or you are unsure what it is, please let us know! Email customerservice@terracelakeswater.com or call 208-440-4756.

FAQs

How do I know what my portion of the service line is made of?

- Homes built after 1950 are more likely to have copper service lines.
- If you received a letter stating your service line is unknown, follow the steps below to identify your service line material.
- You can often identify the material used in your service line through a visual inspection at the point where the water service line enters your home. Find where the water line enters your home and inspect the pipe. If you can access the pipe but you aren't sure what it is, perform a "**scratch test**" using a key or coin and test it for **magnetism**.
- You can scrape a small section with a coin if it is dirty or discolored.
 1. If the scraped area is shiny and silver, your service line is lead. Lead is not magnetic.

2. If the scraped area is copper in color, like a penny, your service line is copper. Copper is not magnetic.
3. If the scraped area remains a dull gray, your service line is galvanized steel. Galvanized steel is magnetic.
4. The plumbing material may be PEX / plastic. In this case, it would appear to be plastic, not metal.

Why is this information being requested?

- The Lead and Copper Rule (LCR) is a federal regulation established by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) that limits the amount of lead and copper allowed in public drinking water at a consumer's tap, requiring water systems to monitor levels and take action if concentrations exceed set limits, primarily by controlling corrosion within the plumbing system to prevent lead and copper from leaching into the water; this rule aims to protect public health by minimizing exposure to these harmful metals, especially for vulnerable populations like children and pregnant women. Regulated public water systems (like the TLWC) are now required to complete a service line inventory to aid in determining materials in the service lines and identifying lines eligible for replacement.

What if my internal premise plumbing is galvanized steel?

- If a copper pipe is connected to a galvanized line, a dielectric junction must be installed to reduce the potential for corrosion. It is recommended that internal galvanized lines be updated as well.

I have a lead or galvanized line, should I be worried for my family's health?

- Your health care provider is your best source of information and support for your family's health.
- Visit the EPA's [Information about Lead in Drinking Water](#) page for more information and resources.

Are there lead pipes in the system-owned portion of the water system?

- To date, TLWC has not identified any lead service lines throughout the water system.

What are other ways I can reduce my family's exposure to lead?

- Replace old plumbing materials and fixtures, particularly lead, galvanized, or brass.
- Run your cold tap for several seconds before use, and always use the cold side for consumption. You can warm water for cooking or formula on the stove or in the microwave.
- Find [other ways to reduce lead exposure on the EPA's website](#).