

Lead Service Line Inventory FAQs

Is there lead in my water?

Lead does not occur naturally in water. Lead in water is caused by corrosion of older pipes, plumbing fixtures, and faucets. The risk for homes built after 1978 is very low, but lead pipes, solder, brass fittings and faucets containing lead were not banned nationally until 1986. Lead pipes were banned in 1986 by Congress under the Safe Drinking Water Act.

Water provided by the Board of Public Works is lead-free when it leaves our treatment plants, and our water mains (the pipes that distribute water throughout the community) are not made of lead. The BPW manages water quality at the treatment facility to help prevent corrosion throughout the system.

Does the BPW test for lead in water?

As required, we have been testing for lead in our water since 1992 and have not had any violations. The water that leaves our plants is lead-free. A corrosion inhibitor, called polyphosphate, is added to the water to prevent pipe corrosion in the distribution system creating a protective coating on the inside of the pipes. We meet all requirements under the Lead and Copper Rule and report our findings annually in our water quality report.

What is the Lead and Copper rule?

In 1991, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) published a regulation to control lead and copper in drinking water. Revisions to the rule in 2021 require water utilities to provide an inventory of all of the service lines, both water utility-owned (public) and customer-owned (private) by October 16, 2024. More information can be found at: <https://www.epa.gov/dwreginfo/lead-and-copper-rule>.

What is the Lead Service Line Inventory?

The BPW will be performing site evaluations of service lines to confirm the presence or absence of lead. Any service lines installed after 1986 are known to be lead free.

How do you determine that the service line is not lead?

The BPW has built an inventory of all water service lines connected to its system in accordance with the new EPA Lead and Copper Rule. The BPW used tax records to determine the year that homes were built prior to 1990. For these homes and any unknown locations, the staff uses

historical data and field identification methodologies approved by the Environmental Protection Division to confirm non-lead pipes.

Should I be concerned about BPW not knowing what my service line is made of?

It is important to note that finding a line of unknown material does not mean you have been exposed to lead. BPW's treatment process greatly reduces the possibility lead from service lines could end up in your water. However, the existence of an unknown line may increase your risk of exposure. The enclosed letter and this FAQ serve to notify you of this risk, inform you of steps being taken by BPW, and provide information to help you reduce your risk of lead exposure. If you feel our finding is inaccurate, or if you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact us at 864-488-8800 or via email at lcr@gbpw.com.

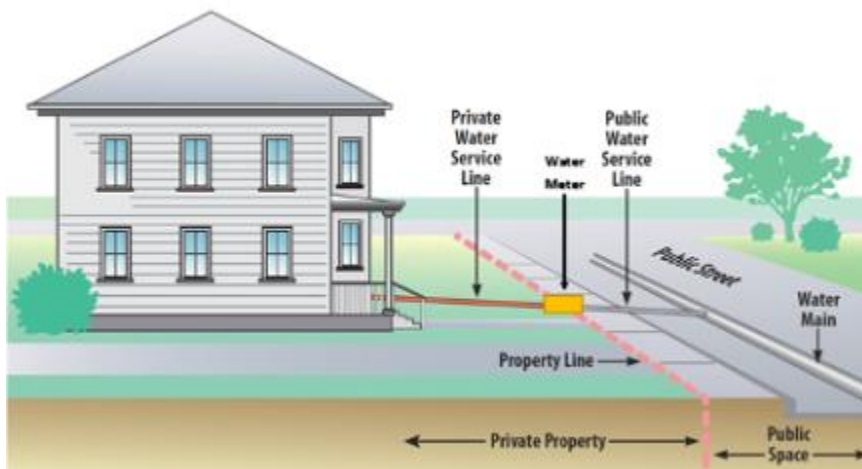
If my service line is not lead, does this mean I don't have it inside of my home?

We are not able to confirm the material of household interior plumbing. Customers can check interior pipes with a penny (or key) and a magnet. Look for where the water pipe enters the building through a basement wall or crawl space. Scratch the pipe. If it is lead, it will shine bright silver when scratched, and a magnet will not stick to it.

What are service lines and who owns them?

The water service line is the pipe that connects a home or other type of building to the BPW-owned water distribution system. The water mains feed individual service lines that run to a meter pit where the water meter is housed below ground. The service line then continues from the meter pit to the building and connects to the interior plumbing. In the BPW, customer service lines are commonly made of PVC or other types of plastic, copper, and, sometimes, galvanized steel.

The BPW owns the portion of service line that runs from the water main (large pipe underground by the road) to the water meter. The portion of service line that runs from the meter to a home/building is privately owned by the customer. The BPW does not control the variety of materials used in plumbing components in your home.



The illustration above shows how a water service line connects individual customers to water mains.

What are the health concerns?

Exposure to lead in drinking water can cause serious health effects in all age groups. Infants and children can have decreases in IQ and attention span. Lead exposure can lead to new learning and behavior problems or exacerbate existing learning and behavior problems. The children of women who are exposed to lead before or during pregnancy can have increased risk of these adverse health effects. Adults can have increased risks of heart disease, high blood pressure, kidney, or nervous system problems.

Is my water safe to drink?

Your water is tested hourly by state-certified water professionals before distribution to your home to confirm it meets safe drinking standards. The BPW meets all regulatory requirements. Our current and historical water quality reports are available on our website at <https://www.gbpw.com/sites/default/files/2024-03/2023BPWWaterReport.pdf>.