



Lead-Safe Water Guide

Lead can be unsafe to people, especially very young children when it is swallowed or breathed in. There is no safe level of lead in the body. Lead has been used to make many products including paint, pipes and plumbing materials, ceramics and cosmetics.

Children under the age of 6 are especially at risk to lead poisoning because their growing bodies absorb more lead than adults. Their brains and nervous systems are more sensitive to the harmful effects of lead.

Babies and young children are more likely to swallow lead because they often put their hands and other objects that have lead from dust or soil into their mouths. The younger the child, the more likely water is a source of lead exposure because water makes up a large part of their diet, including formula mixed with water for bottle-fed infants.

Prevent childhood lead poisoning by keeping children from being exposed to lead and test your children for lead exposure. The only way to know if your child has been affected by lead is to get a blood lead test. All children in Milwaukee should be tested three times before age 3. Some children may need to be tested up to age 6.

If you are pregnant or you have a child under age 6, talk to a doctor about lead testing. Pregnant women should know about lead hazards to prevent exposure to a developing baby.

Drinking water safety

Milwaukee's water quality meets all federal and state guidelines when it leaves the treatment plants. However, lead is often present in drinking water because service lines and interior plumbing may contain lead.

In Milwaukee, water service lines installed before 1963 may contain lead. Pipe solder, brass fixtures and/or faucets made before 2014 also may contain lead. Lead can dissolve into the water when water sits in lead pipes for an extended period of time.

Take action to reduce the risk of lead exposure

Residents of buildings where lead service lines are present should adequately flush water lines after very long periods of not using it to reduce potential lead hazards, but the use of NSF/ANSI Standard 53 certified lead filters is the best resource of lead-water safety.

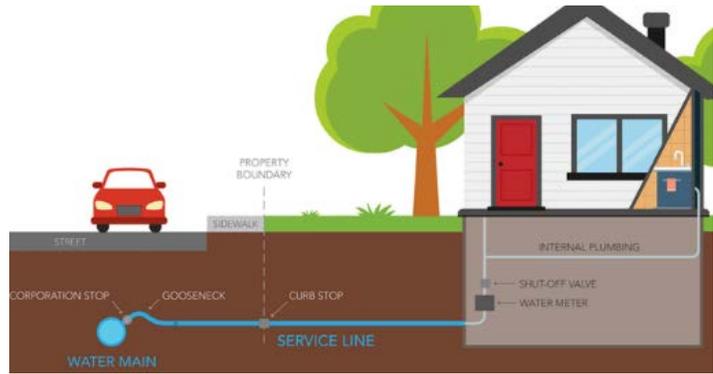
At-risk populations of women and children living in buildings where lead service lines are present, including women who are pregnant, may become pregnant (women ages 15-45) or who are breastfeeding, and children up to the age of 6, should drink and cook only with water that has been filtered with an NSF/ANSI Standard 53 certified lead filter.

If using water directly from the faucet (without a filter), only cold water that has been well-flushed for at least three minutes should be used. Not running your water for the recommended length of time may increase your risk of lead exposure.

To reduce the risk of lead exposure, Milwaukee adds food grade phosphate to the water during the treatment process. This forms a protective coating inside pipes and plumbing fixtures. However, we are recommending customers to follow the steps in this brochure to reduce the risk of lead exposure.

What is the service line?

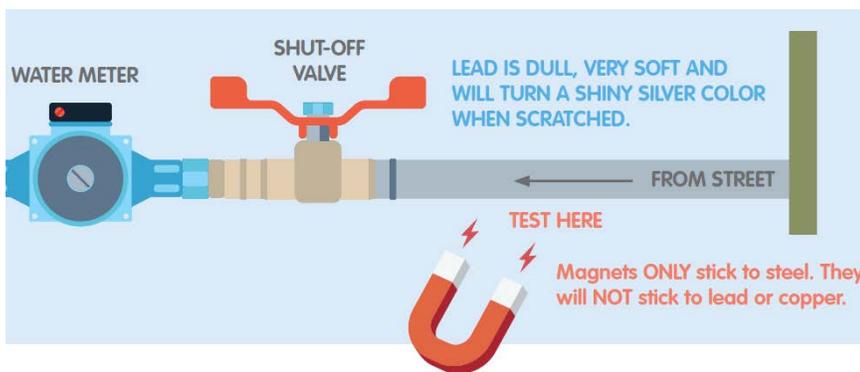
The service line connects the water main in the street to the property. Water mains are not made of lead. Many services lines are made of lead. The water utility owns the portion of the service line from the water main to the curb stop. The property owner owns the section of the line from the curb stop to the water meter.



Do I have a lead service line?

You can look up your address to see if it has a lead service line at Milwaukee.gov/water or call Milwaukee Water Works Customer Service at (414) 286-2830.

Test your service line to see if it is made of Lead



2. Find an area to test on the pipe between the wall or floor and the shut-off valve. (See picture above) The pipe may be wrapped in insulation, pull it back to reveal the pipe.

3. Use a magnet to see if it sticks to the pipe. If it sticks, the pipe is made of galvanized steel.

4. If the magnet does not stick, use a key or a coin to scratch the pipe. If the scratch is copper-colored like a penny, the pipe is copper. **This is safe!**

5. If the scraped area is shiny and silver, the service line is made of lead. **This is not safe!**

6. After touching a lead service line, wash your hands with soap and water.

If you find that your service line is made of lead and your property is not listed on our website, please call Customer Service at (414) 286-2830. If you are the current resident and do not own the property, please share your results with your landlord.

If your home has a service line or internal plumbing containing lead, it also most likely has lead-based paint. Homes built before 1978 likely contain some lead-based paint. Lead-based paint hazards are the main cause of lead poisoning in children. Find safety tips for protecting your children from lead paint hazards at LeadSafeMKE.com.

How can I reduce the risk of exposure to lead in drinking water if my home has a lead service line or lead plumbing and fixtures?

1. Replace your lead service line and/or plumbing with copper. Lead service line replacements are strongly encouraged. If you decide to replace your service line, please contact a licensed plumber for an estimate. Your plumber will coordinate with the Milwaukee Water Works to replace the portion owned by the utility. Partial replacements and repairs are not allowed.

2. Use a drinking water filter certified to remove lead and maintain it properly. Households with residents or visitors who are at-risk populations should only use bottled water from a known lead-free source or cold, filtered tap water (using NSF/ANSI Standard 53 certified water filtration device). Always follow the manufacturer's guidelines to install and maintain the filter. Remember to change the filter cartridges on water filter systems regularly. Find more information about filters at LeadSafeMKE.com.

3. Flush your water until it is cold. Before using tap water for drinking or cooking, flush your water by running faucets on cold for a minimum of three minutes (or longer if necessary) until the water is noticeably colder. This brings in fresh water from the main. Do this especially after very long periods of not using it. Not running your water for the recommended length of time may increase your risk of lead exposure.

4. Always use water from the cold water tap for cooking and drinking. Hot water can dissolve lead from plumbing more quickly. Boiling water does not remove lead. Hot water can safely be used for bathing, washing hands, dishes and laundry.

5. Periodically remove aerators from faucets. Rinse out any debris and then re-attach. Aerators may collect grime which may include particles of lead. Do this once a month, or more frequently if there is water utility work nearby.

6. Flush your pipes after any water main replacement, street construction or home remodeling projects that include plumbing work. Physical disturbance of the lead service line or lead plumbing by these activities may temporarily release lead into the water.

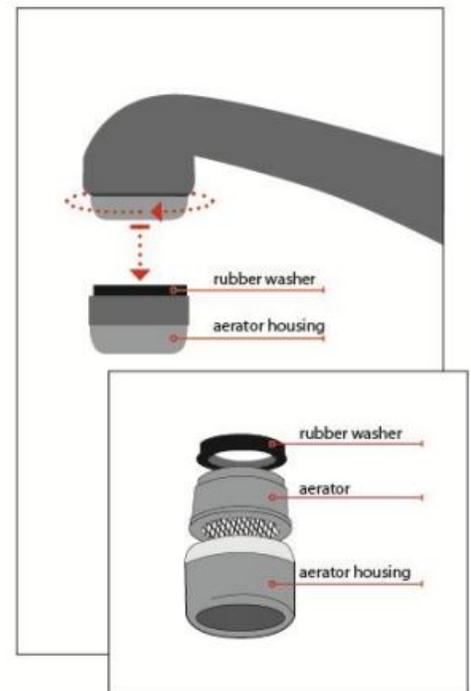
Flush your household plumbing at the end of each work day during active construction and when the project is completed:

1. Remove aerators from the end of every faucet and rinse particles from them.
2. Start in the basement or lowest level and work your way to the top floor. Fully open each cold water tap and allow the water to run.
3. Your water should be clear after 10 minutes. Start at the top floor and turn off the water at each faucet, finishing in the basement.
4. Re-attach the aerators to the faucets. The cost to flush four taps for 10 minutes is about 16 cents.

Not running the water for the recommended length of time may increase your risk of lead exposure.

Financial assistance may be available

If your lead service line is found to be leaking, you may be eligible for financial assistance to help cover the cost of replacement.



If you discover a leak in your lead service line, please call our Control Center at (414) 286-3710. We will send an investigator to your property to assess the leak.

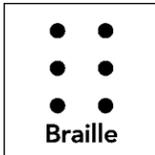
If your lead service line will be disturbed by work being conducted by the Milwaukee Water Works, we will contact you to prepare you for the project and to review your eligibility for financial assistance.

In cases of a leak or disturbance, residential property owners of 1-4 units who agree to use a city contractor qualify for a reduced replacement cost of \$1,754.00. Both residential and commercial properties will be offered 10-year special assessment financing. For more information, call Customer Service at (414) 286-2830.

LeadSafeMKE.com **Espanol.LeadSafeMKE.com**

City of Milwaukee Health Department **Milwaukee.gov/Health** **(414) 286-8800**

Milwaukee Water Works **Milwaukee.gov/Water** **(414) 286-2830**



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