

## Milwaukee's Program to Replace Lead Service Lines

There is no safe level of lead in the body. Lead can be unsafe when it is swallowed with food or water, or breathed in. Lead can affect learning, mental health, and increase the risk of diseases later in life. Lead is especially dangerous to very young children when it is swallowed or breathed in. Lead has been used to make many products including paint, pipes and plumbing materials, ceramics and cosmetics.

There is no lead in Milwaukee's drinking water when it leaves our treatment plants. But lead is often present in water because lead can dissolve into the water as it sits in lead services lines that connect your house to the water main in the street. Lead also may be present in interior plumbing and fixtures. In the 1900s, lead was cheap, easy to work with and a readily available material to use for services lines and plumbing.

**Milwaukee Code of Ordinances § 225-22.5 requires replacement of the lead service line with copper from the water main to the curb stop (city-owned) and from the curb stop to the meter (customer-owned) when:**

- (1) a leak or failure is found on either the customer-owned section or the city-owned section of the lead service line **OR**
- (2) when the city-owned section is replaced for any reason. This includes:
  - planned replacement of a water main that is connected to lead service lines
  - replacement of a lead service line serving a child care
  - should a lead service line be severed or damaged by a contractor during a DPW street reconstruction or sewer main replacement project, DPW will notify MWW and MWW will coordinate with the property owner to replace both the customer-owned and city-owned sections of the lead service line with copper.
- 3) when a property owner chooses to replace their customer-owned section of lead service line when it is NOT required, the city must replace its city-owned section of lead service line.

### **Who pays for the Lead Service Line Replacement when replacement is required by the city?**

A cost-share is available for properties with 1-4 dwelling units if they choose to use the city contractor to do the work. Currently, owners pay \$1,843.00. The city pays the rest. The owner can pay their share as a special assessment over 10 years.

Properties with 5 or more dwelling units are typically investment properties operated for a profit and better able to bear the costs of service line replacement than residential properties containing 1-4 dwelling units. If the property owner chooses to use the city's contractor to replace the owner's section of lead service line, the owner may repay the city for the full cost of the replacement as a special assessment over 10 years.

Replacement of the city-owned sections of lead service lines are paid by MWW rate revenue because the section is utility property.

**For all properties, if an owner decides to replace a lead service line when it is NOT required, the owner must hire a licensed contractor, pay 100% of the cost, and is not eligible for a special assessment or cost-share.**

Customers are advised that sources of lead may be present in internal plumbing and that property owners may want to hire a licensed plumber to replace it.

MWW provides a voucher to the customer(s) at a property, to be exchanged at the customers' discretion, for one filter pitcher, in these construction situations in which a lead service line will not be replaced:

- A planned or emergency water shut-off affects a property with a lead service line.
- A property with a lead service line is within the vicinity of a water main replacement, but is not directly connected to the section of main being replaced.
- A Department of Public Works sewer replacement or street reconstruction is proximate to a property with a lead service line.