Lead Service Line Replacement Program

The City of Milwaukee replaces lead service lines (LSL) with copper to reduce the risk of exposure to lead in drinking water. The program began in January 2017 at the direction of Common Council Resolution 160742. In June 2018, the resolution was amended (160742) to make mandatory the replacement of lead service lines at all State of Wisconsin certified and licensed child care facilities in Milwaukee.

The lead service line from the water main to the water meter is replaced if:
• A lead service line is found to be leaking or damaged
• The utility-owned section of the LSL is replaced on a planned or emergency basis

The Milwaukee Water Works (MWW) immediately notifies a property owner that replacement is required.

The water utility owns the section of service line from the water main to the curb stop at the property line. The property owner owns the section from the curb stop to the water meter. MWW records that list properties with a lead service line are available at milwaukee.gov/water.

If replacement is required, the property owner can use the city contractor to replace the private section of the service line:
• The water utility will hire the contractor and pay the cost up front.
• Properties with 1-4 dwelling units are eligible for a city cost-share. The cost is currently $1,600 compared to the 2018 average full cost of $6,026. The subsidy is not available to properties with more than four dwelling units.
• All property owners using the city contractor can repay the cost to the city immediately or repay the city using special assessment financing over 10 years. Interest is charged on any unpaid balance. This is similar to how street projects are assessed to properties.
• MWW provides customers with a ZeroWater 10-Cup filter pitcher NSF/ANSI Standard 53 certified, and public health educational materials to reduce customers' risk of exposure to lead in water during the construction project.

OR

• The property owner can hire and pay a contractor to replace their section of lead service line while the city replaces the utility-owned section. If the owner chooses to replace and pay for replacement of the private section of the lead service line, they are asked to get an estimate from a licensed plumber and notify MWW Customer Service at (414) 286-2830. The utility will then replace its section of the lead service line.

MWW revenue from water rates pays for replacement of utility-owned sections of LSLs. City and Safe Drinking Water Loan funds (SDWL) pay the difference between the actual cost and the city subsidy to replace privately-owned sections of LSLs.
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.