



## FAQ—2016 Lead Water Testing

**Q. Why is the Detroit Water and Sewerage Department testing the water in Detroit for lead?**

A. One of the most important commitments the Detroit Water and Sewerage Department (DWSD) makes to its customers is ensuring that customers receive safe drinking water that meets all regulatory standards under the Safe Drinking Water Act. DWSD is required to sample for lead in water every three years at homes across the city. The most recent lead testing in Detroit homes occurred in 2014 and found that 100% of the homes tested had lead levels well below the EPA's action level.

**Q. If the last sampling was conducted in 2014, why is DWSD testing for lead now?**

A. DWSD is taking a proactive stance and testing homes in advance of the mandated period in an effort to more thoroughly assess the potential for lead in drinking water.

**Q. Does my drinking water in Detroit contain lead?**

A. The water in Detroit meets all regulatory standards under the Safe Drinking Water Act. The water leaving our treatment plants does not contain lead, but lead can be released to drinking water from lead service lines and home plumbing. When lead is present in water, it is the result of corrosion in the water distribution system and in household plumbing that contains lead. The water provided to DWSD customers contains a corrosion inhibitor to minimize leaching from lead service lines and other lead components. Detailed information about lead in water can be found on DWSD's website under Water Quality Reports at [detroitmi.gov/dwqd](http://detroitmi.gov/dwqd).

**Q. What is 'corrosion control'?**

A. Corrosion control is a standard practice applied by the Great Lakes Water Authority (GLWA) and water systems across the United States. GLWA is the water treatment provider for DWSD. Corrosion control reduces corrosion of lead and other pipe materials in the water distribution system and the plumbing inside of homes and buildings. GLWA uses orthophosphate as the corrosion inhibitor that reacts with metal surfaces inside water mains and home plumbing, forming a protective barrier between drinking water and metal surfaces. Orthophosphate is an essential nutrient present in many foods.

**Q. When will DWSD begin testing the water in homes for lead?**

A. The testing period for 2016 is June 1 through September 30, 2016.

**Q. What area(s) of the city are being included in the testing?**

A. In addition to homes that have been previously tested for lead by DWSD, in 2016, we will be conducting tests within the following zip codes at homes that meet testing criteria:

48204, 48209, 48210, 48212, 48213, 48221, 48227, 48235, 48238

**Q. I live a block outside of the zip code testing areas. Can my home still be tested?**

A. In addition to the homes previously tested by DWSD, the 2016 testing will be within the zip codes designated. More zip codes may be added before the testing period ends. If your home is

not in the targeted areas or you do not meet the testing criteria, you can call 313-964-9300 for more information about testing options. There will be a fee for testing, and facility fees vary.

**Q. What is the evaluation process for determining whether homes meet testing criteria?**

A. A DWSD employee will visit the homes of new volunteers to visually inspect the service line inside the home to see if the home meets one or more of the following criteria:

- Homes with lead service lines
- Homes with copper piping with lead solder installed between the years 1983-86
- Homes that contain lead plumbing

**Q. What is a lead service line?**

A. A service line connects the water main in the street to your house. In Detroit homes, especially those built prior to 1948, the lines may be made of lead. DWSD owns and maintains service lines starting at the water main located in the street to the customer's property boundary. Customers are responsible for the service lines from their property boundary to their home.

**Q. What homes typically have lead service lines?**

A. Many, but not all homes built before 1948 have lead service lines. The State of Michigan Building Code of 1947 prohibited lead pipe in new construction.

**Q. How do I know if I have a lead service line?**

A. Service lines can be made of plastic, copper, lead or galvanized steel. Locate where the service line comes into your home near the main water shutoff valve and water meter. If a magnet sticks to the pipe, it is galvanized steel. Gently scratch the surface of the pipe with a coin. If the scraped area is shiny, silver in color, and a magnet doesn't stick, it is made of lead. If it is copper in color and a magnet doesn't stick, it is copper. If the pipe is white or grey and the piping is joined with a clamp, screw or glue, it is plastic.

Homes built before 1948 may have a partial lead service line or other lead components between the water main and the home that cannot be identified through visual inspection.

**Q. My home is located in the sample testing area. How can I have my water tested?**

A. If your home is located in the zip codes listed, or if you have previously had your water tested for lead by DWSD, call us at 313- 964-9300. An experienced professional is available from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. to schedule an appointment to determine if your home meets testing criteria. If your home meets all criteria, a sample kit with instructions will be delivered to your home by a GLWA representative. The sample will only be valid for 10 days after it is collected. It is critical to call the phone number on your sampling instructions as soon as you complete the test so the sample can be retrieved and analyzed by GLWA. GLWA will mail your results to you.

**Q. Is there a charge for the testing?**

A. No. If your home meets the criteria, there is no charge during the sample testing period.