Lead and Lead Service Line Replacement (LSLR) FAQ

Minneapolis
Public Works

Is there lead in Minneapolis tap water?

- No, Minneapolis tap water leaves the treatment plant lead-free and is delivered to homes and businesses through a system of steel and iron water mains. These water mains do not contain lead. However, at some older properties, the pipe that connects the property to the water main is made from lead. Because of this, we treat the water in a way that prevents lead from getting in the water. The City adds a compound (orthophosphate) to create a protective coating in pipes.
- Drinking water is not a common source of elevated blood lead levels in Minneapolis.
- The City regularly monitors and tests the water for lead – our water meets or is better than all federal and state safety guidelines.
- Our water is tested more than 500 times per day to maintain high quality and safety.

Other ways to protect yourself from lead exposure in your drinking water

If your home's plumbing materials contain lead, you can reduce your risks by following these tips:

- Clean faucet aerators. Aerators are small screens at the tips of faucets that can collect lead particles.
- Run the cold water before use. If your water has been sitting in the pipes for over six hours, run the cold water for 2 to 3 minutes to bring in fresh water. (When water temperatures are colder, you can feel the temperature change when fresh water has reached the tap.)
- Use cold water for drinking, cooking, and preparing baby formula. Hot tap water can have higher levels of lead. Boiling water will not reduce lead.
- Filter the water you drink and use for cooking. If you use a water filter, make sure it is certified for lead removal and is maintained properly. Find more information about filter certification at **www.nsf.org**
- After work is done that may have disturbed the protective coating on the pipe delivering water to your home, flush your home plumbing. See Flushing Your Home Plumbing - City of Minneapolis (minneapolismn.gov) (https://www.minneapolismn.gov/resident-services/utility-services/water/water-quality/water-quality-lead/plumbing-faucets/home-flushing/)

Should I be concerned about having a lead service line?

Minneapolis water is safe. The water is delivered lead-free to homes and businesses through a system of steel and iron water mains. The City regularly monitors and tests the water for lead at homes having lead service lines and our test results are well under the federal levels for lead.

In Minneapolis, elevated blood lead levels are most often associated with lead exposure from lead paint and dust. Water is rarely the cause of elevated blood lead levels. If you have concerns about childhood lead exposure, check with your family doctor, pediatrician, or health care provider to determine if a blood test for lead is recommended.

For additional peace of mind, the City of Minneapolis offers a free at-home lead test kit for customers. We can send it out to you with instructions for how to collect the sample. Then you send it back to us and we process the sample at our laboratory and mail the results to you. See 'Water Lead Test Kit Request' on the City's web site.
https://www.minneapolismn.gov/government/programs-initiatives/lead-testing/water-lead-test-kit/

The City's map indicates I have a lead line but it looks like a copper pipe is coming into my home, are you sure I have a lead service line?

In Minneapolis nearly all water service lines that are characterized in our inventory as "lead" are only lead from water main to the water service shutoff valve (in the boulevard). The portion from the shutoff valve to the home was made of galvanized steel. The galvanized steel was more likely to deteriorate and fail over the decades. Prior to 1990, property owners in Minneapolis *could* replace failed galvanized with copper and leave the lead pipe from the water main to the shutoff valve in place. If the lead portion remains, the service line is classified as lead.

How do I get my lead service line replaced?

In Minneapolis, the water service line is owned by the property owner. As a result of a recent change in State law, public funding can now be used to replace private infrastructure such as water service lines. State and Federal funds are now available for cities and public water systems to begin replacing water service lines on behalf of their customers. In 2024, the City of Minneapolis began using these funds to start replacing lead service lines.

How and when was it determined that property owners own the full water service lines from the street into the home?

Since we first began as a public water utility in 1867, property owners were responsible for making their individual connections to the public water mains and the associated maintenance of those private water service lines. This ownership was codified in ordinance in 1994.

How are you determining which neighborhoods and blocks to target for lead service line replacement?

State and federal funding have criteria we must use to prioritize water service lines for replacement. These include neighborhood factors such as:

- Daycares and schools.
- Neighborhoods with a history of underinvestment and low-income residents.
- Streets with scheduled pavement projects to avoid having to repair the street surface more than once and conserve taxpayer dollars.

How will a replacement project impact my yard and property?

It is a common misconception that a trench needs to be dug in your front yard to complete the service line replacement. This is NOT the case. To replace your service line, the contractor will dig two 6' X 6' utility holes: one over the water main in the street, and another over the shutoff valve in the boulevard/sidewalk. The crew

will then utilize a small directional drill machine in the utility holes to install the new copper service line. The installation process should not be disruptive to your yard nor landscaping. The replacement will likely be completed within the same day.

How can I apply to have my lead service line replaced?

- Across Minneapolis, about 40,000 properties have lead service lines. 2024 was the first summer of a 13-year program to replace them. We are developing the overall program based on state and federal funding prioritization criteria. At this time, we are unable to say when your property will be included in a prioritized replacement area. We will update our web page about the program as we have more information available [refer to 'Lead Service Line Replacement' project web page: https://www.minneapolismn.gov/government/projects/lead-service-lines/

- Property owners can replace their water service line at their own expense at any time. The cost of the replacement can be assessed on the property tax bill over a term of 5 or 10 years depending on the cost of the replacement. If you would like to replace your water service line using your own funds and the assessment option, you can contact Minneapolis Water Distribution at 612-673-5600 and staff can assist you with the process.