



Lead Consumer Notices

What you Should Know about Lead in Drinking Water and Consumer Notices

- Requirements
- Actions for Consumers to take
- About Lead and Copper Rule Consumer Notices
- How can Consumers Assist their Local PWS to Identify their Service Lines
- Resources Summary

Lead is typically not present in the source of drinking water, like rivers or lakes, but instead enters the water supply through corrosion of lead-containing plumbing materials within a home's plumbing system. Particularly in older homes with lead pipes and solder; meaning the contamination happens after the water leaves the treatment plant and enters the household plumbing.

- Federal law (known as the U.S. Lead and Copper Rule Revisions or LCRR), which was finalized in 2021 by the EPA and required compliance starting October 16, 2024, requires public water suppliers (PWS) to submit water service line inventories, make them publicly available, and notify consumers with service lines that are classified as lead, galvanized requiring replacement, or of unknown materials.
 - Please refer to [MassDEP's Consumer's Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQ\) Webpage about the LCRR Service Line Inventory](#) for more information on what inventories consist of, what is a service line, and how consumers were required to be notified of their service line materials: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/consumers-frequently-asked-questions-about-the-lcrr-service-line-inventory>
- PWS (community systems and non-transient non-community systems) are subject to the LCRR, which required them to submit a complete inventory of all service lines in their distribution system to MassDEP by **October 16, 2024**.
 - A service line is a pipe connecting the water main to the interior plumbing of a building. Ownership of the service line varies by water system but is frequently split between the water system and the property owner. In cases where ownership is split, ownership of the customer tends to begin at the curb stop (*figure 1*).

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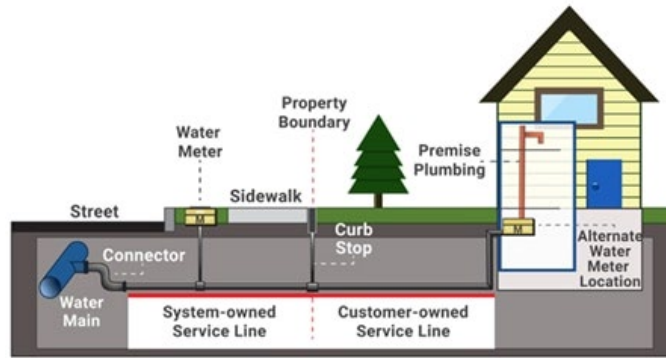


Figure 1

- This inventory identifies the materials of the service lines and categorizes each service line as lead, galvanized requiring replacement (GRR), non-lead, or lead status unknown.
 - Please refer to [MassDEP's interactive map](https://lead-service-line-inventory-mass-eocaa.hub.arcgis.com/) of PWSs that have submitted their service line inventories: <https://lead-service-line-inventory-mass-eocaa.hub.arcgis.com/>. The map is regularly updated as we continue to review and incorporate submissions.
- PWS were required, by **November 15, 2024**, to notify all consumers (commonly called Consumer Notice) with service lines that are classified as lead, galvanized requiring replacement, or of unknown materials.
 - Notices – which clearly identify the service line material(s), public health risks, recommended actions and contact information for the local PWS– were delivered to the home or facility owner by mail, and/or hand delivery.
 - PWS are also required, **after October 16, 2024**, to notify consumers within **24-hour if they** exceed the 90th percentile¹ lead action level of 15 parts per billion must now notify all affected consumers within **24-hours** of the exceedance. This is called a **Tier 1 Public Notice**. This is a new requirement must be met in addition to issuing routine Public Education materials. To see the latest 90th percentile lead results for your PWS, please see <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/results-of-lead-sampling-for-public-water-systems>.

Actions for Consumers to Take

To routinely reduce or remove lead from tap water while working with their local public water system to address lead, galvanized requiring replacement

¹ The level of a lead below which 90% of all water samples taken in a monitoring period fall, essentially a level that is exceeded by only 10% of the samples.

(GRR), or unknown service lines, consumers are recommended to use some of the following good drinking water practices:

- **Use only cold, fresh water** for drinking, cooking, and preparing baby formula. Run your water. The more time water has been sitting in your home's pipes, the more lead it may contain.
 - **After water has been sitting overnight or longer, or sitting while away at work, flush your home's pipes before drinking by running the tap, taking a shower, doing laundry, or doing a load of dishes or other non-consumptive, non-drinking or cooking purposes, to avoid wasting water.**
 - For more information about flushing in buildings, see <https://www.mass.gov/doc/massdep-building-flushing-information/>.
- **If you have a filter, use it properly.** Using a filter can reduce lead in drinking water. If you use a filter, it should be certified to remove lead. Read any directions provided with the filter to learn how to properly install, maintain, and use your cartridge and when to replace it.
- **Clean your aerator.** Regularly remove and clean your faucet's screen (also known as an aerator). Sediment, debris, and lead particles can collect in your aerator. If lead particles are caught in the aerator, lead can get into your water.
- **Do not boil the water to remove lead.** Boiling water will not reduce lead. Excessive boiling can increase lead levels as lead remains behind when the water boils away.
- **Contact your health care provider** if you have any health-related questions or contact your local health department to find out if your child needs to be tested for lead. A blood lead level test is the only way to know if your child is being exposed to lead. For more information on Massachusetts' childhood lead testing program, contact the Department of Public Health at 1-800-532-9571 or see www.mass.gov/orgs/childhoodlead-poisoning-prevention-program.

About Lead and Copper Rule Consumer Notices

- Massachusetts's PWS are required, in accordance with the LCRR, to distribute notices using templates provided to them by MassDEP with the required topics and mandatory language. See the [LCRR Consumer](#)

Notification Templates here: [https://www.mass.gov/lists/lead-copper-forms-and-templates#lead-&-copper-rule-revisions-\(lcrr\)-](https://www.mass.gov/lists/lead-copper-forms-and-templates#lead-&-copper-rule-revisions-(lcrr)-).

- All LCRR consumer notifications must include language regarding health effects per [40 CFR 141.85\(a\)\(1\)\(ii\)](#). To maximize public health protection, MassDEP is using the lead and copper rule improvements (LCRI) health required language for these notices. For more information on this language, see [Lead and Copper Rule Improvements | US EPA: <https://www.epa.gov/ground-water-and-drinking-water/lead-and-copper-rule-improvements>](#).
 - This information must be included exactly as written in the templates and is presented in *italics* in the template. Required topics that must be covered include:
 - a statement that the person's service line is lead, GRR, or the material is unknown but may be lead as applicable
 - an explanation of the health effects of lead, written exactly [as transcribed in the template](#)
 - steps persons at the service connection can take to reduce exposure to lead in drinking water
 - information about opportunities to replace lead service lines as well as programs that provide financing solutions to assist property owners with replacement of their portion of a lead service line, and
 - a statement that the water system is required to replace its portion of a lead service line when the property owner notifies the water system that they are replacing their portion of the lead service line.
- If a PWS changes language beyond the highlighted areas in the template, or uses their own templates, they must submit their templates to MassDEP at least 2 weeks prior to their planned distribution date and receive approval from MassDEP before distributing.

How can Consumers Assist their Local PWS to Identify their Service Lines

- In some cases, customers may be encouraged to assist their PWS to identify their portion of the service line by submitting photos of their service line via secure communications to their local water supplier.
- **Customers should reach out to their PWS to submit basic contact info and to share one or more photos of their service line. Working**

with their PWS is the best first step to help determine actions needed to reduce potential exposure to lead through drinking water.

- Customers may be able to submit photos via the [Mass Lead Service Line Identification \(MA-LSLI\) Web App](https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/f9ee39b7972f443ca63e8b936cd7f92b): <https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/f9ee39b7972f443ca63e8b936cd7f92b>. To check if your PWS has signed up to use the web application, visit the MA-LSLI Web App page and find the PWS under the “Your Water Supplier.”
 - If your PWS is not listed on the web application, reach out to them directly to submit service line photos and information. PWS contact info can be found here: <https://www.mass.gov/drinking-water-health-safety>.
 - The latest list of MA public PWS is available at <https://www.mass.gov/water-supplier-operations>, then go down to Reporting and Public Notification and click on the Excel list *PWS, Active Sources and Contacts Spreadsheet*.
- The PWS will then be able to review the photos and perform follow-up procedures if needed to ensure that the service line material was identified correctly and record this information in their service line inventory.
- If a homeowner identifies their service line as a lead line, **it does NOT** mean they are required to replace it, however, MassDEP strongly encourages the removal of all lead service lines.
- Financial assistance may be available through local water suppliers to help ensure this critical work is completed.
 - If a homeowner is concerned with the cost of replacement, they should reach out to their PWS and ask if they offer lead service line replacement financial incentives.
 - Homeowners can also check with their homeowner’s insurance company to see if they cover lead service line replacement.

Resources Summary

- **Find your local public water supplier contact information:** The latest list of MA public PWS is available at <https://www.mass.gov/water-supplier-operations>, then go down to Reporting and Public Notification and click on the Excel list *PWS, Active Sources and Contacts Spreadsheet*.

- **Lead in Tap Water Guide.** MassDEP offers an [online guide](https://www.mass.gov/guides/is-there-lead-in-my-tap-water) on lead in tap water: <https://www.mass.gov/guides/is-there-lead-in-my-tap-water>. Consumers should reach out to their PWS for questions on existing lead sampling initiatives, but the guide also includes information on testing tap water and filtration resources. There is also a section on “How to reduce potential exposure to lead” which includes information on running the tap and MA Department of Public Health resources.
- **Frequently Asked Question about Service lines:** [MassDEP’s Consumer's Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQ\) Webpage about the LCRR Service Line Inventory](#)
- **Map of available PWS service line information:** [MassDEP’s interactive map](#) of PWSs that have submitted their service line inventories: <https://lead-service-line-inventory-mass-eoea.hub.arcgis.com/>.
- **Latest 90th percentile lead results for your PWS,** see <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/results-of-lead-sampling-for-public-water-systems>.
- **Flushing in buildings information,** see <https://www.mass.gov/doc/massdep-building-flushing-information/>.
- **EPA Lead in drinking water information:** <https://www.epa.gov/ground-water-and-drinking-water/basic-information-about-lead-drinking-water>
- **MassDEP Drinking Water Program Contact information:**
Email: Program.director-dwp@mass.gov.
Phone #: 617-292-5770
Webpage: <https://www.mass.gov/lead-in-drinking-water>