

How your plumbing can affect your water

Meet your service line.

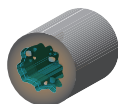
The service line is the pipe that carries clean water into your property. It connects to the city's network of water mains.

Service lines can be made of materials, such as plastic or copper. But some of these pipes may also be made with lead or galvanized metal.

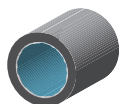
Our treatment protects water against corrosion.

"Corrosion" is when small amounts of metal dissolve from plumbing into water over time. It's important to know that dissolved lead is not visible.

The good news? Our treatment keeps water safe to drink. We add *Zinc Orthophosphate* during treatment. This forms a protective coating inside pipes. It reduces risk of exposure to lead from plumbing.



Service line with **no** corrosion control

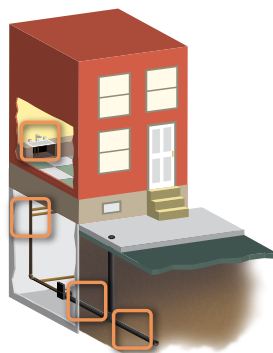


Service line with **successful** corrosion control

We continuously test to make sure this process works. We've successfully used this treatment to protect Philadelphia's drinking water for over 25 years.



Lead can hide in older plumbing, including:



- Pipes
- Plumbing fixtures
- Faucets
- Solder & pipe fittings

i Look for lead beyond your plumbing: **Peeling paint** and **lead dust** are the most common sources of exposure within a home, not water.

You can request a water test

We conduct free water tests for customers with concerns about lead plumbing.

Visit water.phila.gov/lead-test or call (215) 685-1460

Requests are processed as they are received. We're experiencing an increase in requests. We appreciate your patience!

Health effects of lead

There is no safe level of exposure. Exposure to lead in drinking water can cause serious health effects in all age groups. Infants and children can have decreases in IQ and attention span. Lead exposure can lead to new learning and behavior problems or exacerbate existing learning and behavior problems. The children of women who are exposed to lead before or during pregnancy can have an increased risk of these adverse health effects. Adults can have increased risks of heart disease, high blood pressure, kidney, or nervous system problems.

➤ Learn more about the health effects of lead: www.epa.gov/lead



Philadelphia's Department of Public Health recommends parents and caregivers of young children (ages one to six) should request a blood lead test from their doctor.



Boiling water does NOT remove lead!

 Learn more: water.phila.gov/lead

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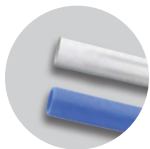
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Service line materials & map

Water service lines are generally made from these four materials

Newer service lines are made of a **non-lead material**, like **copper** or **plastic**.

Some older homes may have **lead** or **galvanized metal** in part of their service line.



NON-LEAD:

Plastic: Typically a less expensive option. It is not associated with increased risk of lead.



NON-LEAD:

Copper: Copper service lines are considered safe because they are not associated with increased health risks.

Today, copper is used in most service line replacements.



Lead: Used in the past because it is soft and can be bent. Lead can dissolve into water.

Lead service line installation decreased after the 1950s as harmful health effects became clear.



Galvanized metal:

Galvanized steel or iron pipes can corrode. Over decades, any lead from a property's plumbing can accumulate on the corroded walls of galvanized pipes.



Incomplete records:

Many service lines are categorized like this if we have partial or incomplete records for the service line.

If your record is incomplete, the service line material is "lead status unknown," but the material may be lead.

Why are there so many properties with incomplete records?

Buried service lines are a challenge. Digging up properties across the city would be costly and disruptive.

We're actively improving our records.

We're also exploring technology that can check the material of the buried lines in less disruptive ways.

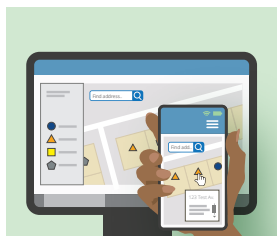
Service Line Material Map

Old lead service lines are a challenge across the country. To meet this challenge, cities need to understand the number and location of these lines. In Philadelphia, based on current data, we estimate about 1 in 20 service lines is made of lead.

Our online map shares current records about the materials in your property's service line.

The map and records are an important step to plan for future lead service line replacement efforts.

Even though these pipes don't belong to the City of Philadelphia, we support finding and replacing them!



You can update your records.

You can report updated information about your service line. Use the form on the map web site, or email us: ServiceLineMap@phila.gov

Please include plumbing records and photos.

The map will be updated regularly, as we receive records from customers and routine operations.

i We need two points of information along the pipe to categorize a service line.

Explore the map: water.phila.gov/service-line-map

! **It's the law:** We're required by Federal and State law to make these records available to the public.

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Flush your pipes every day

Flushing is a proven way to reduce the chances of exposure to lead from plumbing.

“Flushing” means running cold fast water from a tap. It gets rid of older water sitting in pipes and brings in fresh water from the main.

How to flush:

1. Turn on your cold tap at a faucet. Open it all the way.
2. Run cold water from the faucet for **3–5 minutes**.

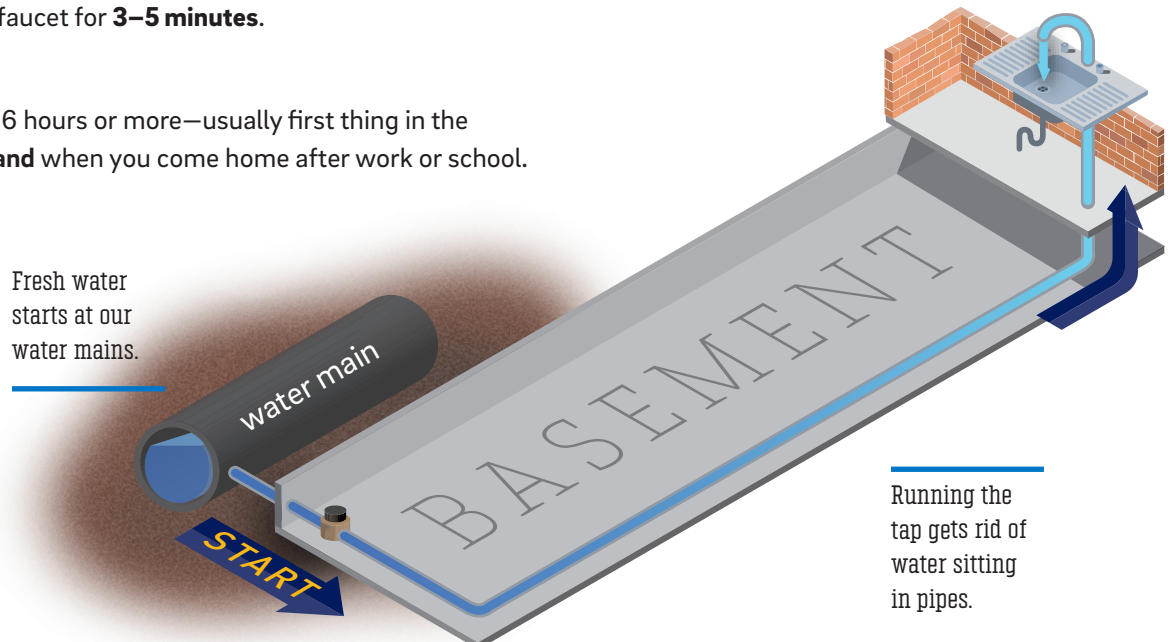
When to flush:

If you haven't used water for 6 hours or more—usually first thing in the morning when you wake up **and** when you come home after work or school.

Flushing is good for everyone.

For properties with service lines made of lead, galvanized metal, or with incomplete records, flushing is extra important.

Fresh water starts at our water mains.



? Common questions

Should I flush for 3 or 5 minutes?

It depends on how far your property is from the water main. We say “3 to 5 minutes” to account for different distances.

If you live in a row home closer to the street, 3 minutes is fine. If you live further back from the street, flush for 5 minutes.

How do you know flushing works to reduce exposure to any lead from plumbing?

We know because we test at customer's homes. We test water after it's been sitting in pipes and again after flushing for 3–5 minutes.

Most homes, even those with lead service lines, do not show any lead in either sample.

Isn't flushing expensive?

Flushing your pipes costs pennies a day. For many people, this is a more affordable way to get safe water than filters or pipe replacement



Is flushing wasteful?


Not necessarily. Flushing your toilet, running a cold load in a washer, or taking a shower will all help bring fresh water into your pipes.

The water you flush from a tap can also be used to water houseplants.

Can I use a pitcher filter?

You can, but you must use a filter labeled “certified to remove lead”; not all filters are. You must follow all instructions and replace the filter regularly. Using expired or old water filters can be harmful to your health.



Scan to see a video on flushing, or  visit water.phila.gov/lead

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Replacing a lead or galvanized service line

Whether or not to replace a service line depends on each property owner's situation. If you aren't able to replace a line, our treatment, plus flushing will still keep your water safe. If you are considering replacement, here is information that can help.

PRIVATE PLUMBER



Hire a private plumber

Some customers hire a private plumber on their own.

A licensed and insured plumber can give you an estimate to replace a lead or galvanized service line and other potential sources of lead in plumbing.

Cost: Estimates can range between about \$6,000–\$12,000.

➤ See a list of licensed contractors: phila.gov/li

Actual prices vary depending on different factors, including how far your home's water meter is from the City's water mains.

ZERO-INTEREST LOAN



You can replace a service line, and we'll help!

The **Homeowner Emergency Loan Program (HELP)** offers zero-interest loans to replace lead or galvanized service lines. Customers have 5 years (60 months) to pay off the loan.

➤ Learn more: water.phila.gov/help

Only customers with confirmed lead (or galvanized metal) service lines are eligible for this program. Properties with incomplete records do not qualify for HELP loans

DURING PLANNED WORK



Free replacement during planned water main replacement

If we discover a lead or galvanized service line during planned water main work, we will remove and replace the service line for free. Property owners must provide permission.

PWD will notify residents by mail before work is scheduled to begin.

➤ See planned water main projects in Philadelphia:

water.phila.gov/projects/mains

This method is limited to approximately 1% of all City water mains each year.



We're piloting other programs.

We're currently planning other ways for customers to replace service lines made of lead or galvanized metal. If PWD offers to replace your line, take advantage and sign the permission form!



Learn more: water.phila.gov/lead

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