A Letter from Your Water Utility About Water Pipe Material

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Did you get a letter from your water utility informing you that your water service line contains lead or galvanized material, or if the material of the pipe is unknown? This letter was required to be sent by a federal rule. You will continue to receive one annually, as long as your water pipe contains lead or remains unknown.

We know that this letter can be frightening, unclear, and confusing. But Freshwater Future has the information to help you reduce exposure to lead from drinking water.

You can reduce exposure to lead from drinking water by:

- **Flushing**
- **Filtering**
- **Using Cold Water**

There is no safe level of lead in drinking water–even small amounts are harmful to anyone at any age.

Lead gets in our drinking water from plumbing, water fixtures, pipes, and solder. Lead can cause serious health problems if it enters your body from drinking water or other sources such as peeling old paint, remodeling dust, and soil.

Replacing lead and galvanized pipes with safer materials, such as copper, is the only long-term solution to reducing lead in drinking water. The recently updated federal Lead and Copper Rule requires that communities replace all lead service lines by 2037.

What to Know If Your Lead Service Line Material is Lead, Galvanized or Unknown

Reduce your exposure to lead in drinking water

If you receive a letter, there are some simple things you can do to keep you and your family safe.FLUSH. Anytime the water has not been used for 6 hours or longer, flush your pipes by running the cold-water tap until it becomes cold. This may take up to two minutes.

- **Install a water filter designed to remove lead from water.** Filters are available at big box stores and online. Search for filters to remove lead with a label for NSF/ANSI Standard 53 for lead reduction. Be sure to maintain and replace the filter to ensure you are protected.
- **Use cold water only** (from the filter) for consumption (drinking, cooking, and especially for making baby formula). Hot water is likely to contain higher levels of lead and other contaminants.
- **Learn about your drinking water.** Read your water supply's Annual Water Quality Report (Consumer Confidence Report) that is mailed to you each year or find it at your local water utility's website. You can see test results for lead in drinking water in your community and if these levels are in violation of safe drinking water standards. While the action limit is currently 15 parts per billion (ppb), **NO amount of lead is safe.**

OTHER ACTIONS

Talk to your water utility to find out when your street can anticipate having the water service lines replaced and what material the utility is using.

Advocate for the safest material available for your replacement, which is copper or polypropylene pipes if copper isn't possible. Other forms of plastic like PVC or PEX are more likely to leach hazardous chemicals into your drinking water.

Sign up for lead in drinking water updates HERE

WANT MORE INFORMATION?

Visit freshwaterfuture.org/lead

Learn about:

- Keep Your Household Safe Before, During, and After Pipe Replacement
- Stay Safe from Lead in Drinking Water
- Filter Installation and Maintenance
- Your Family's Health & Lead in Drinking Water
- Healthy Eating to Reduce Lead Poisoning