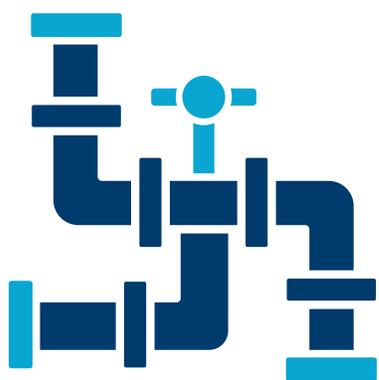


# Best Practices for Lead Water Line Replacement



## TIPS FOR COMMUNITY-LED PROCESS

Water utilities are required by law to replace lead service lines with safer materials. The [Principles for Equitable Lead Service Line Replacement](#) were developed based on learning from communities that have replaced lead drinking water lines or are working to protect their communities from the dangers of lead in drinking water.

You can help ensure that the replacement happens safely and quickly in your area. Below are suggestions on how you can engage your community and use the Principles to get the lead out!

1. **Personalize and Adopt** the Principles for Your Community
2. **Share the Principles** with your Water Utility and Local Government Officials
3. **Get Community Cooperation** for Pipe Replacement
4. **Inform Community Members** about Lead in Drinking Water

## Personalize and Adopt Principles for Your Community

Please make the Principles document your own and make changes that will make it most applicable to your community's situation.

### TIPS:

- It may be helpful to contact your water utility to learn where they are in the process of finding and replacing lead service lines.
- Gather members of your organization and community to review and agree to the Principles.
- Ask other community organizations, such as block clubs, senior or youth centers, or places of worship, to sign on to the Principles.

## Share Principles with Water Utility and Local Government Officials

Speaking up about your concerns and recommendations about the lead line replacement process is the only way to get improvements you want.

### STEPS:

- Present the Principles and signatures to your water utility and elected officials in your community via mail or email.
- Attend a city government meeting to raise your concerns and present the Principles for recommendations on how your community can structure its replacement program beyond minimum legal requirements.
- Request that they vote to follow the Principles.

## Get Community Cooperation for Pipe Replacement

Replacing lead service lines requires residents' consent to access their homes, and this can be challenging to get. Your community organization, along with others like places of worship or trusted leaders, can help:

- Talk to residents to help them understand the importance of replacement
- Assist with gaining access to homes for pipe replacement and lead testing (you may be able to access grant funding for these activities)
- Ensure residents are made aware of opportunities to obtain other resources like assistance with utility bills or access to water filters certified to remove lead.

## Inform Community Members About Lead in Drinking Water

Educating the public on how to reduce exposure to lead during pipe replacements is best done at the community level. This includes:

- How to stay safe before, during and after replacements
- How to install and maintain filters
- Instructions to flush, filter, and use cold water.

### TIP:

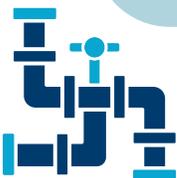
- Use our “No Lead is Safe” Toolkit, which is based on the experiences and questions of our community partners while addressing lead in drinking water. It can serve as a guide for the kind of education that should be provided to communities during the replacement process.
- If you would like us to brand these toolkits with your local organization's logo for distribution in your community - let us know at [info@freshwaterfuture.org](mailto:info@freshwaterfuture.org)!

## Safety of Drinking Water Pipe Materials

While copper is the safest material we know of to use for drinking water piping, other materials may be a better fit for the service of your community. Generally, plastic pipes come with more risk of leaching harmful chemicals and will have a shorter lifespan. Replacement costs at the community level should consider how soon the next round of replacements will be needed. See the Environmental Working Group's [Healthy Living Home Guide](#) for more about plumbing and pipes.

- **Copper:** Safest, highly durable.
- **Polypropylene:** Plastic option. Less likely to leach hazardous chemicals than PEX or PVC
- **Cross-linked Polyethylene (PEX):** Cheap, flexible, and common. Research has shown that they can leach known endocrine disruptors, neurotoxins, and carcinogens into drinking water.
- **Polyvinyl Chloride (PVC):** Unsafe for drinking water. Often used in wastewater plumbing.

Freshwater Future is here to support you! From applying to our project grants program for grassroots water advocacy, branding our No Lead is Safe toolkit, or consulting to set up a local water council - we are ready to help you fight for a lead free future. Contact us today at [info@freshwaterfuture.org](mailto:info@freshwaterfuture.org) or call (231)348-8200.



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