AURORA ILLINOIS

FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions and Answers about Lead Service Lines

Lead Service Lines

What is lead? How does lead get into my water?

- Lead is a natural element found in small amounts in the earth's crust. Lead can enter drinking water when the water touches materials that have lead. These materials can include lead service lines that connect your house to the water main. They can also include lead pipes in your home and parts of your plumbing, including brass faucets and lead solder.

What is a service line?

- A water service line is a small, buried pipe that brings water from water mains in the streets into homes and other buildings. If any part of the pipe is lead it can release lead into the building's water.

Who owns the service line?

- The water service pipe from water main to the meter, including both house-side and street-side portions, is owned solely by the property owner. However, under certain conditions, the City is authorized to repair portions of the service pipe. Maintenance of interior household plumbing is the exclusive responsibility of the property owner.

What are service lines made of?

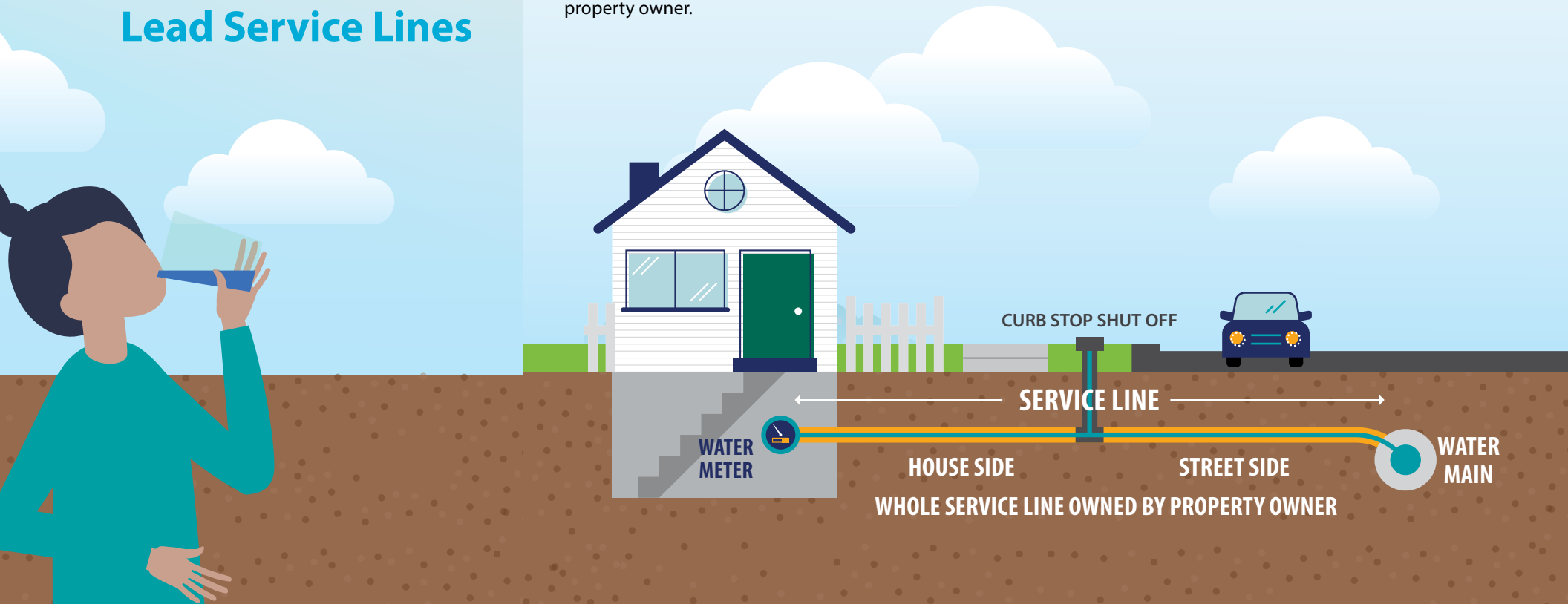
- Service lines can be made of lead, galvanized steel (which may contain lead), plastic, or copper.

Are lead service lines banned?

- Federal law banned lead service lines in the late 1980s. Homes built after 1987 in Illinois should not have lead service lines.

What is the City doing to reduce my exposure to lead?

- The City has been in compliance with the Lead and Copper Rule through 2024. The City uses corrosion control to prevent lead in pipes from dissolving into drinking water. As requested by Illinois EPA, the City began a corrosion control study in March 2023 to check and optimize its corrosion control methods. This study will go through August 2025.



Lead Service Line Replacement

Do I qualify for replacement?

- The City is subject to Illinois' Lead Service Line Replacement and Notification Act (Public Act 102-0613). This act mandates that Aurora must replace all privately owned water service lines throughout the city that are fully or partially composed of lead, or galvanized steel. The City is currently doing replacements at a rate of approximately 3% per year to eliminate these service lines.

If my service line is a lead line, when will it replaced?

- If your service line is fully or partially made of lead, it will eventually be replaced by the City at no cost to you. However, we cannot guarantee that your line will be replaced in the next several years.

What does it cost to replace my service line?

- The City currently conducts lead service line replacements as part of its Capital Improvement Plan which includes water main and/or sewer main installation and repair. Through this program, your lead service line will eventually be replaced by the City at no cost to you. Should you wish to replace your service line yourself now, it typically costs $4,000-6,000 to replace the house-side portion. If a homeowner chooses to replace house-side portion on their own, the City will replace the section of the service line from the water shut-off valve to the water main within 30 days.

If my lead service line is replaced, will all the lead in my drinking water be removed?

- Not necessarily. If you live in a building that was built prior to 1987, it is possible that your plumbing fixtures can contain lead or lead solder that was used at the joints of your interior piping. A licensed plumber can help figure out if you have lead material in your indoor plumbing, or you can use an EPA-approved Lead Test Kit. More information on the kits can be found by visiting https://www.epa.gov/lead/lead-test-kits.

Why should I replace my lead service line?

- You should replace your lead service line to protect your personal health and your family's health. No amount of lead is safe for humans to consume. Young children (under 6 years old) and the elderly can be more affected by lead exposure. They, along with pregnant women, may be at a higher public health risk to lead. Replacement through the City of Aurora's Program is free to the property owner. https://www.aurora.il.us/City-Services/Water-and-Sewer/Water/Lead-in-Drinking-Water.

What will replacement construction look like in my front yard/sidewalk area?

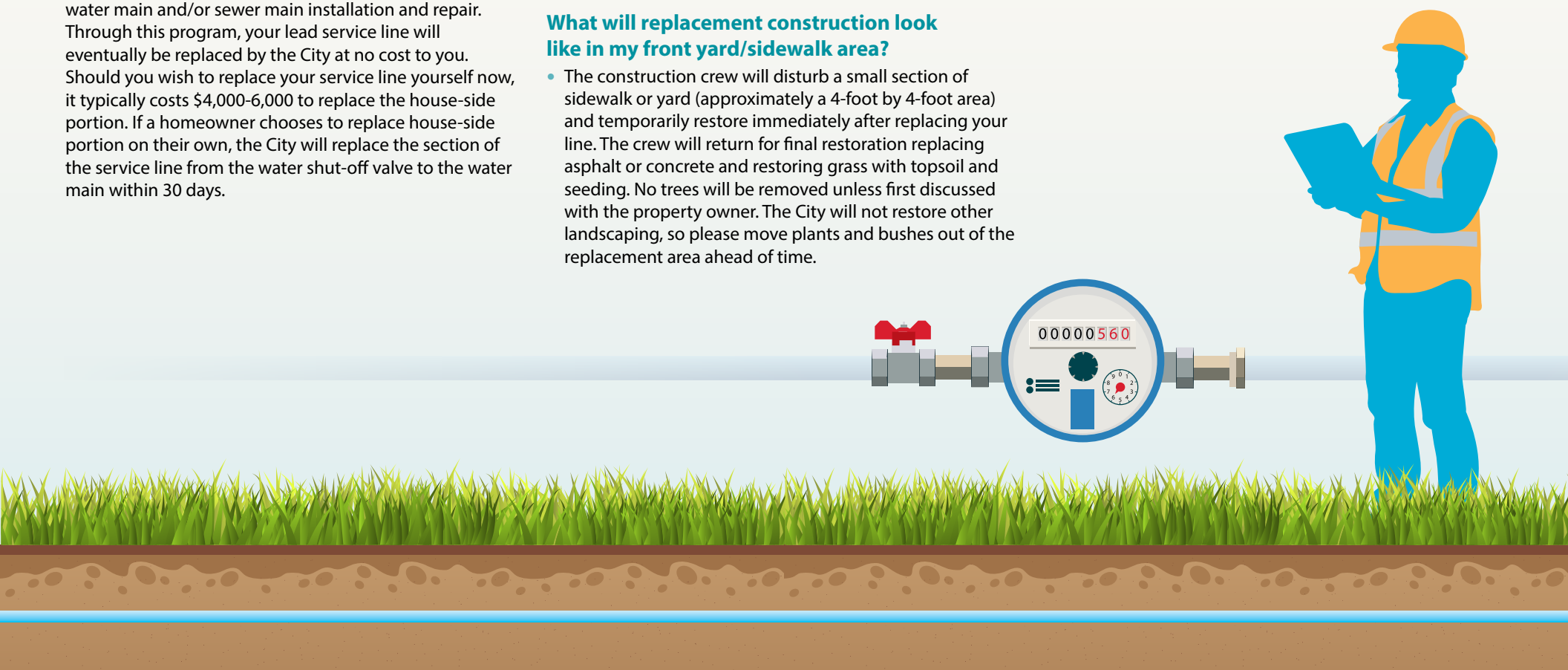
- The construction crew will disturb a small section of sidewalk or yard (approximately a 4-foot by 4-foot area) and temporarily restore immediately after replacing your line. The crew will return for final restoration replacing asphalt or concrete and restoring grass with topsoil and seeding. No trees will be removed unless first discussed with the property owner. The City will not restore other landscaping, so please move plants and bushes out of the replacement area ahead of time.

What if I do NOT replace my lead service line?

- Lead is a public health risk. According to the U.S. EPA, there is no safe level of lead that can be consumed or ingested. The City strongly recommends replacing your lead service line. If you don't, you risk:
  - The City currently uses corrosion control methods to lower the risk of lead from pipes dissolving in water. However, even with corrosion control, if you are away from your home or building for more than 6 hours, lead could enter your drinking water.
  - Higher replacement costs at a later date. Lead service lines are typically over 70 years old and will eventually fail. Homeowners who wait until their service line fails to replace it will most likely pay a higher cost since it will be a single replacement during an emergency situation.

How can we check if our home has lead pipes?

- The City has an online web portal where you can check, visit https://lead-service-cityofaurora.hub.arcgis.com/.



Protect Yourself From Lead in Drinking Water

What are the risks of lead exposure?

- Lead is most dangerous to children younger than six years old and people who are pregnant. Lead can hurt a child's brain and nervous system and slow down growth and development. People exposed to lead as children can have lifelong difficulties with learning and behavior and may have trouble paying attention. Drinking water is only one source of lead. A person can also be exposed to lead from paint, dust, and contaminated soil. Imported candies, cosmetics, toys, and other products may also contain lead. For more information about health effects of lead visit the EPA's Basic Information about Lead in Drinking Water page.

What level of lead is safe to consume?

- No level of lead is considered safe to consume.

How can lead get into my drinking water?

- When water leaves the City's water treatment plant, it is lead free. The water mains in the street that transport water from the treatment plant are made mostly of iron and steel, and do not add lead to the drinking water. Lead can get into drinking water from the plumbing inside your home or the service line between the street and your home. When water sits in the service line or your home plumbing without being used for several hours, the lead may dissolve into the water. That is why you should flush your lines every morning.

Can I get tested for exposure to lead?

- Your local doctor or health care provider can perform a blood test for lead and give you information about the health effects of lead. You can find out more about how to get your child tested and how to pay for it at the Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services Lead Screening website.

Why do water service lines and plumbing fixtures contain lead?

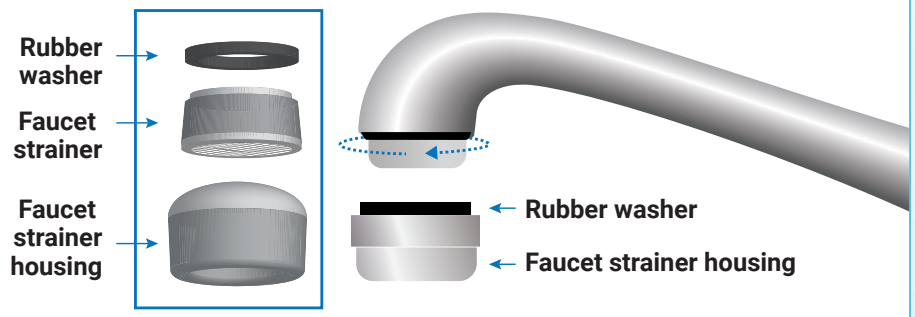
- Lead was commonly used for water service lines until the mid 1970's and commonly used in household plumbing fixtures (faucets, valves, sinks, shower heads, hose bibs, etc.) and solder until 1987, when it was banned by the US EPA. From 1987 to 2014, plumbing fixtures could contain up to 8% lead to be categorized as, "Lead free". After 2014, standards for "Lead free" fixtures allow no more than 0.25% of lead content. Many homes and buildings, especially those built before 1987, may have service lines and/or internal plumbing and fixtures that are made of or contain lead.

How Can I Reduce Lead in My Drinking Water?

Take the following steps to protect yourself from lead in your water:

1. **Flush your service line by running cold water before using it in cooking or drinking.** The longer the water sits in the plumbing, the more lead it may have. If the water in the faucet has been sitting for more than 6 hours, run cold water for 2 to 4 minutes before using it. Showering and flushing the toilet also help flush your water line.
2. **Use cold water.** Do not use hot water from the tap for drinking, cooking or making baby formula as lead dissolves into hot water more easily than cold water. Boiling water does not remove lead from water. It is safe to shower, wash dishes, and do laundry with hot water from the tap. Lead does not affect humans through the skin.
3. **Remove and clean faucet strainers.** Every 3 months, remove and clean strainers at the tip of faucets to remove build up.
4. **Remove the faucet strainers from all taps.**
5. **Rinse the faucet strainers.**
6. **Run the water without the strainer for 2 to 4 minutes.**
7. **Replace faucet strainers.**
8. **Use filters.** Consider using a faucet or pitcher filter. Be sure the filter is approved to reduce lead (NSF 53/42-certified): visit https://tinyurl.com/nsf-filter to learn more about water filters.
9. **Replace building plumbing that may have lead.** Potential lead sources include lead pipes, lead-based solder, and brass fixtures and valves (including faucets).

According to the US EPA, there is no safe level of lead to eat, breathe, or drink.



About Lead Action Levels

What is an action level?

- Action level is a term used by water utilities to describe the effectiveness of a system's corrosion control treatment to reduce lead in drinking water. Utilities routinely collect and analyze samples from their system to check if corrosion control is working. Utilities compare the sample results to the EPA standard of 0.015 mg/L (15 ppb).
- When 10% of samples exceed the EPA action level, water utilities must complete actions which include adjusting water treatments, public education, and service line replacement.

Did the City sample water in my home or building for lead?

- The City collected 100 samples between January and June 2025. If the City sampled your home or building during this time, you will receive sample results.

Does an action level exceedance (ALE) mean my drinking water contains lead?

- No. The ALE does not mean that all drinking water in our system contains lead. However, it requires that the entire community be notified.

What is the City doing to reduce lead exposure?

- The City is completing the following actions in response to the ALE:
  - On-going sampling to monitor lead occurrence and levels throughout the water distribution system.
  - Public education to assist homeowners with actions they can take individually to reduce exposure to lead.
  - On-going removal of lead service lines throughout the City.
  - Evaluation of corrosion control methods. The City is studying ways to reduce the amount of lead that pipes and plumbing fixtures release in the drinking water.