



Important Information About Lead in Water

What Are the Sources of Lead?

- Lead is a common metal found in the environment. The main sources of lead exposure are lead-based paint and lead-contaminated dust or soil. Drinking water is also a possible source of lead exposure. Most sources of drinking water have no lead or very low levels of lead. Most lead gets into drinking water after the water leaves the local well or treatment plant and comes into contact with plumbing materials containing lead. These include lead pipes, lead solder (commonly used until 1986), as well as faucets, valves, and other components made of brass.

Steps You Can Take to Reduce Exposure to Lead in Drinking Water:

- **Flush the water.** If the water from the cold-water faucet has not been used for several hours, turn the cold water tap on and let it run for 30 seconds to 3 minutes before using for cooking or drinking. The length of time you let the cold-water tap flush will depend on the distance to the water main in the street; the size of the building; and the plumbing configuration of the building. Larger homes that are set back at a distance from the street will generally require a longer flush time to remove standing water from the pipes. If you are concerned about wasting this water, you can collect it and use it to water plants or for another non-consumption purpose. Flushing tap water is a simple and inexpensive measure you can take to protect your health.
- **Don't consume water from the hot water faucet.** Always use fresh water from the cold-water tap for cooking or drinking. Lead from lead-containing plumbing materials and pipes can dissolve into hot water more easily than cold water. Do



not drink, cook, or prepare beverages including baby formula using hot water from the tap. If you need hot water, draw water from the cold tap and then heat it.

- **Do not boil water to remove lead.** Boiling water will not reduce lead; however, it is still safe to wash dishes and do laundry. Lead will not soak into dishware or most clothes.
- **Water filtration systems.** If you purchase a water filtration system, be certain that it is certified for lead removal before making the investment. If you choose to purchase a water filtration pitcher, read the package to be sure the filter is an NSF/ANSI Standard 53 certified lead filter; or contact NSF International at 800-NSF-8010 or www.nsf.org for information on performance standards for water filters.
- **Remove and clean aerators/screens on plumbing fixtures.** Over time, particles and sediment can collect in the aerator screen. Regularly remove and clean aerators screens located at the tip of faucets and remove any particles.
- **Test your water for lead.** Email us at SLInventoryWest@Libertyutilities.com to find out how to get your water tested for lead. Testing is essential because you cannot see, taste, or smell lead in drinking water.
- **Get your child tested.** If you are concerned about lead exposure, contact your local health department or healthcare provider to find out how to get your child tested for lead.
- **Have an electrician check your wiring.** If grounding wires from the electrical system are attached to your pipes, corrosion may be greater. Check with a



licensed electrician or your local electrical code to determine if your wiring can be grounded elsewhere. DO NOT attempt to change the wiring yourself because improper grounding can cause electrical shock and fire hazards.

- **Water softeners and reverse osmosis units** will remove lead from water but can also make the water more corrosive to lead solder and plumbing by removing certain minerals; therefore, the installation of these treatment units at the point of entry into homes with lead plumbing should only be done under supervision of a qualified water treatment professional.

What other resources are available?

USEPA website has resources: <https://www.epa.gov/ground-water-and-drinking-water/revised-lead-and-copper-rule>

Who should I contact to determine my service line material?

- *If the service line material is unknown*, the customer can follow these steps to identify the service line material:
 - One way to verify the material of the service line is using the scratch and magnet test:
 - **Lead Pipe:** Dull silver gray; Soft and easily scratched (appears shiny).; Magnet will not stick.
 - **Galvanized:** Silver gray.; Difficult to scratch.; Magnet will stick.
 - **Copper:** Copper/bronze color.; Magnet will not stick.
 - Another way is to hire a plumber to identify the SL material.

Once the customer has identified the SL material, they can submit the information to SLInventoryWest@Libertyutilities.com. You can also send a picture of your water meter to this email address.