

Lead Plumbing Awareness



What is lead?

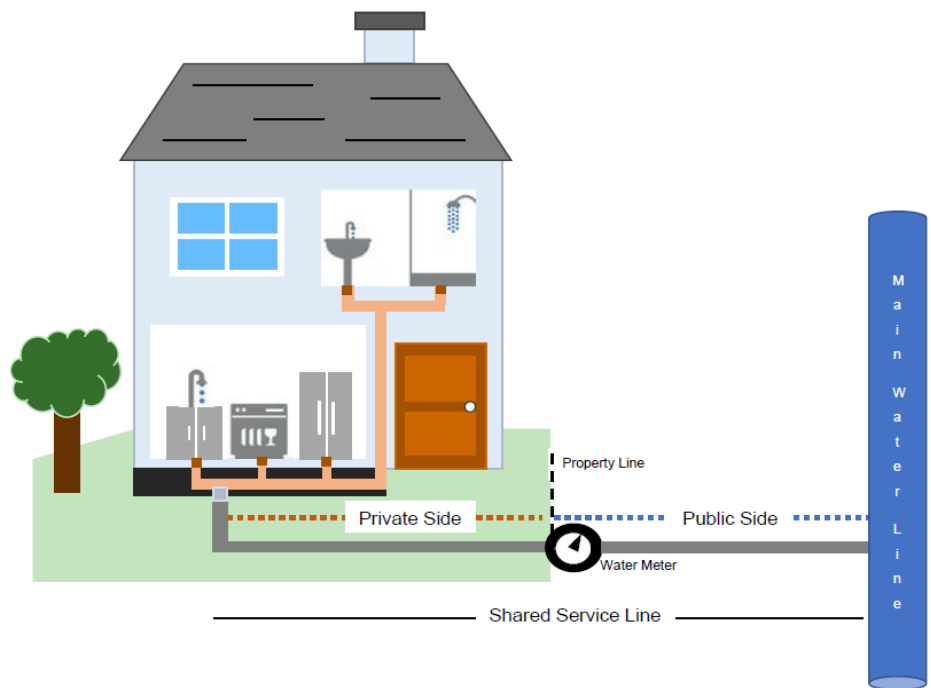
Lead is a naturally occurring element found in air, soil, and water. It is harmful to humans and animals. Lead was used for centuries in plumbing because of its resistance to leakage. Many homes built in the 1930s – 1940s, may have lead pipe materials. In 1986, the United States Congress amended the Safe Drinking Water Act to prohibit the use of lead in pipes, solder, or flux. California also banned lead plumbing materials in 1986.

Why is lead a health risk?

Lead is a toxic metal that causes immediate health effects. It affects every organ and system in your body and can also cause brain and kidney damage. Pregnant women and children six years old and younger are most susceptible to the effects of lead at low levels. The action level for lead in drinking water is 15 part per billion. This is equal to 15 drops of water in an average swimming pool, approximately 13,500 gallons.

Sources of lead

Lead is not present in the water provided to you by the City of Ontario. Most lead exposure comes from products used in the past, such as lead-based paint, soil and air emissions from industrial facilities and automobiles (lead gasoline), ceramics, batteries, ammunition, cosmetics, and pipes and plumbing materials (service lines, brass plumbing fixtures, and solders). Federal and state regulatory standards have helped to reduce the amount of lead in air, drinking water, soil, consumer products, and occupational settings. To learn more about lead in drinking water, visit the U.S Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at https://www.cdc.gov/lead-prevention/prevention/drinking-water.html?CDC_AAref_Val=https://www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/prevention/sources/water.htm or the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency at <https://www.epa.gov/ground-water-and-drinking-water/basic-information-about-lead-drinking-water>.



What is a service line?

Drinking water service lines are a shared responsibility between the City of Ontario (public side) and the homeowner (private side). The City of Ontario ensures all service lines on the public side are made from lead-free materials. However, lead service lines and lead plumbing with solders and brass fixtures may exist on your private plumbing.

How do I know if my home has a lead service line or lead plumbing?

Very few homes constructed in California after 1986 have lead service lines and plumbing. For most of us, finding out if our home has lead plumbing requires the help of a qualified plumber. To find a licensed plumber, call the California Contractors State License Board (CSLB) at (800) 321-2752 or visit their website at <https://www.cslb.ca.gov/onlineservices/checklicensell/checklicense.aspx>. The Ontario Municipal Utilities Company can assist in identifying the service line material. However, the City's Utility Department are not licensed plumbers and cannot assist in identifying lead plumbing within your home.

How can I test my water for lead?

There are many certified laboratories in Southern California that can assist you with lead testing. To find one near you, visit the California Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program at https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/drinking_water/certlic/labs/ or call (916) 323-3431.



What can I do to reduce or eliminate lead from my drinking water?

The best way to reduce or eliminate lead in your home is by removing all sources of lead. Sometimes this can be costly but there are steps you can take to reduce your lead exposure in your water if you suspect your home has a lead service line or lead plumbing.

1. *Run the Tap Before Use* – Lead levels are the highest when water has been sitting in the pipe(s) for several hours. Run the cold water for several minutes before using. This allows fresh water to be drawn from the main into your home's plumbing. You can also capture the running water to use on house plants.
2. *Clean Aerators* – Aerators are small attachments at the tips of faucets and regulate the flow of water. These devices can accumulate small particles of lead over time in their screens.
3. *Use Cold Water for Cooking and Drinking* – Always cook and prepare baby formula with cold water. Hot water dissolves lead quickly and can result in high levels of lead in your water.
4. *Filter Your Water* – Many home water filters are effective in reducing the levels of lead in your water. Always purchase a filter that is certified for lead removal and maintain it properly per the manufacturer. To find more information on certified filters, visit NSF International at <https://www.nsf.org/certified-products-systems>.
5. *Drain Your Water Heater* – Metals, sediment, and bacteria can build up over time. A licensed plumber can help drain it for you.

Let's Get the Lead Out!

The best way to remove lead from your water is to remove all lead pipes and plumbing from your home. There are many programs that can help you get started. Contact the Ontario Municipal Utilities Company to learn more about rebate programs that can assist you. Before you replace your lead service lines and/or plumbing, contact the Ontario Municipal Utilities Company Water Quality Programs Division for assistance to have your water tested.