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Greater Cincinnati Water Works (GCWW) Lead Service Line Replacement Program (LSLRP) Frequently Asked Questions



To reduce exposure to lead in drinking water, effective July 28, 2017, lead service lines are prohibited in the Greater Cincinnati Water Works (GCWW) system. Enforcement of this prohibition is being phased in over 15 years, and owners will have a grace period before any action will be taken. The requirement to take action will occur when GCWW serves the property owner with a written notice requiring private lead service line replacement with copper piping. This will occur when there is a leak or owner disturbance of a lead service line on the private property. GCWW may also serve notice when the utility-owned section of a lead service line is replaced on a planned or emergency basis.

What is a service line?

A service line provides water from the water main in the street to the property. Figure 1 illustrates a typical service line ownership situation.

The water main is installed down the street and the public (utility-owned) service line connects from the water main to the property line. This is the GCWW portion of the water service and is the responsibility of the utility.

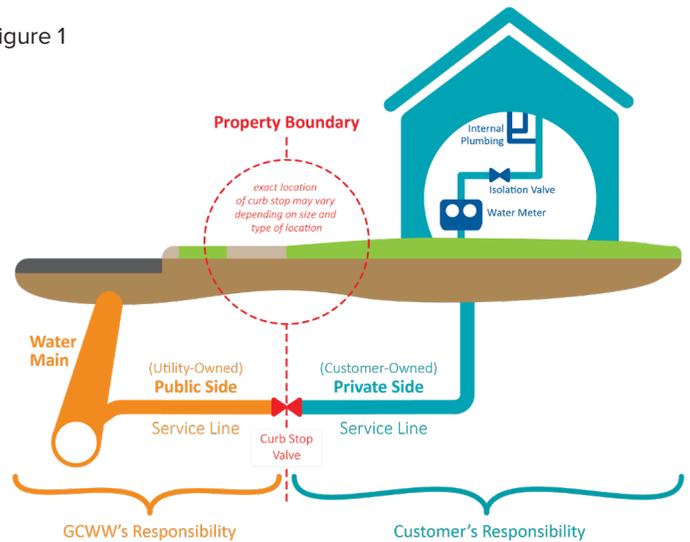
The property owner is responsible for the private (customer-owned) service line section from the property line into the house/building.

How do I find out if my service line is lead?

There are several ways to determine if your service line is made of lead:

1. Use the GCWW interactive [lead map](#) to look up the service line material in your home or business by address. It is located at [LEAD.myGCWW.org](#).
2. Perform a [lead scratch test](#). Watch the video on our Lead Awareness Website, [Lead.myGCWW.org](#) and click on "LINKS and External Resources" to view the video.
3. If you are still not sure, please call our [Lead Hotline](#) at **513-651-LEAD (5323)** to speak with an agent for assistance.

Figure 1



Am I required to replace my section of the service line?

Effective July 28, 2017, lead service lines are prohibited in the GCWW system. However, no enforcement will take place until GCWW provides the property owner with written notice of the requirement to replace the private lead service line. You will be required to replace the lead service line, if you have a leaking private lead service line or if you have caused disturbance to the private lead service line or meter setting, through renovations or other construction work.

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When a water infrastructure project (such as a water main replacement project) is causing disturbance to the lead service line, GCWW strongly advises you to replace your private (customer-owned) portion of the water service line from the property line into the house/building with copper piping to protect the health of the residents. GCWW will provide information prior to the start of the water infrastructure project to explain your options to replace the lead service line. GCWW may require replacement in the future if you do not choose to replace your lead service line with copper piping at the time of the water infrastructure project. Construction costs, GCWW cost sharing, customer assistance and financing are subject to change.

What happens if I don't replace my lead service line?

You will continue to assume the risks of exposure to lead in water from the private lead service line. The CMC Ch. 401 prohibition of lead service lines in the water system is a legal requirement that cannot be waived. GCWW will enforce this legal requirement by requiring removal of the private portion of the lead service line in the future.

What must I do if I replace my lead service line?

You will have two options:

1. Hire a plumber who is certified with GCWW to replace your lead service line. The "Certified Plumbers List" is located at Lead.myGCWW.org, in "Links and Additional Information."

Or

2. Participate in the GCWW Lead Service Line Replacement Program (LSLRP).

If you choose to hire a plumber to replace the service line, all work must be performed and inspected in accordance with GCWW Rules and Regulations.

If you choose to participate in the LSLRP, GCWW will coordinate all work including replacing the lead service line. Before the work can proceed you must sign and return the GCWW "Agreement for Private Lead Service Line Replacement" that will be provided to you prior to replacement work.

The cost estimate included in the "Agreement for Private Lead Service Line Replacement" will expire 45 days from the date of the accompanying letter. Cost and availability of replacement work may vary after that date.

Will GCWW help with the cost of my lead service line replacement?

Yes, currently, if you choose to participate in the LSLRP, cost-sharing will be made available to you. GCWW will contribute to the cost by paying 40% of the total private side replacement, up to a maximum of \$1,500.

Additional cost-sharing amounts may be available to those who qualify. Property owners who qualify for low-income assistance will be eligible for 45% GCWW cost-participation of the total private-side replacement cost up to a maximum of \$1,500. Low-income seniors who qualify will be eligible for 50% GCWW cost-participation up to a maximum of \$1,500. GCWW cost-sharing, low-income, and low-income senior assistance options are subject to change.

What are my options for reimbursing GCWW for the LSLRP work?

Upon receipt of the final bill (after GCWW cost-sharing deduction) you will have 3 options to consider:

1. Pay GCWW for the full amount owed.
2. Apply the full amount owed to your property tax bill as a 0% interest property assessment to be paid back in installments over a specified time period (for example, 10 years). This means that the cost will be added to your property's semi-annual tax billing, plus any county auditor charges.



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3. Make a partial payment. The remaining amount owed will be assessed as a 0% interest property assessment to be paid back in installments over a specified time period (for example, 10 years). This means that the cost will be added to your property's semi-annual tax billing, plus any county auditor charges.

If I hire my own certified plumber, will GCWW offer any assistance?

No, if you choose not to participate in the LSLRP and hire your own certified plumber, no cost-participation, deferred payment through assessment, or additional financial assistance will be available from GCWW.

Will replacement of the full lead service line lower my risk to exposure to lead in drinking water?

Yes, removing the lead service line (LSL) reduces the highest risk for lead in drinking water (based on lead sample results). It is possible that other risks will remain in your house/building, including internal plumbing sources of lead. These items include, but are not limited to: leaded solder pipes, galvanized plumbing, leaded brass plumbing fixtures, and older faucets. You may want to hire a licensed plumber to replace these items.

Hot water heaters also pose a risk of lead exposure in your drinking water as a result of the sediment accumulating at the bottom of the tank over the years. GCWW recommends you review your hot water heater manufacturer's maintenance manual or consult with a licensed plumber on how to clean out any sediment at the bottom of the tank after your lead service line has been replaced.

Will I notice any changes in my water service after the lead service line replacement is complete?

It is possible you may notice more water coming out of your plumbing fixtures as a result of the

new copper piping installed. This is not increased water pressure, but rather more water flowing resulting from the slightly larger copper piping. GCWW recommends you hire a licensed plumber to verify the integrity of your premise plumbing and fixtures and verify they are capable of handling the additional water. Any faulty premise plumbing or fixtures identified by your plumber should be fixed before the lead service line replacement work begins.

Is my water safe to drink?

Providing high-quality water to our community is GCWW's highest priority. GCWW meets all state and federal drinking water regulations. GCWW takes extraordinary efforts to ensure the water produced from our plants and delivered through the distribution system is as safe as possible. However, the presence of lead service lines can present a challenge to maintaining safe water, and construction activities can result in temporary increase in lead levels.

To avoid this risk, GCWW will provide a water filter pitcher which is certified to remove lead from the water after the lead service line replacement activities have been completed. It is important that water used for drinking and cooking is filtered and the proper flushing procedures are followed after the work is complete.

What should I do after the lead service line replacement is completed?

The same day after GCWW or its contractor has completed installing the new copper service line or before the next water use, you should fully open the cold-water side only at every interior premise plumbing fixture and let the water run for 30 minutes to flush out the new service line. This should be done to remove any potential lead particles that may have come loose and become captured in the internal premise plumbing as a result of the replacement work. Hot water should not be used until the cold water has been run for 30 minutes.



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Every morning or after any period of no water use for 6 hours or more, fully open the kitchen faucet or any bathroom faucet and let the water run for 5 minutes before using (such as first thing in the morning or when getting home from work). This can also be done by taking a shower, running dishwasher, or flowing the faucet. This should be done for 6-months or until the monthly water testing results are below 15 parts per billion (ppb). You will receive detailed instruction from GCWW on how to perform this work.

Should I have my water tested after my lead service line is replaced?

Yes, you should obtain a water sample within 3 days after your lead service line is replaced or disturbed. Use the sample bottle provided by GCWW and follow instructions to obtain a water sample. Sample results will be provided to you by GCWW upon completion of testing. You should continue to have your water tested monthly until water sample results show lead levels below 15 ppb, and then quarterly to ensure lead levels continue to decline or are below 15 ppb. Continue to use the water pitcher filter supplied by GCWW, until water test results show lead levels less than 15 ppb.

To have your water tested for free, please contact GCWW at **513-651-LEAD (5323)** or visit GCWW's lead website at **Lead.myGCWW.org** to request your free lead test kit.

What happens during construction when a GCWW contractor replaces my lead service line?

1. A GCWW contractor will need to enter your property to replace the lead service line with copper pipe from the curb stop at the property line up to and including the meter setting in the basement. Complete access to the water service line needs to be available where it enters the home/building, including the meter setting. Providing access will be the responsibility of the property owner.
2. Generally, the replacement of the lead service line will be done by excavating at the curb stop, pulling or boring new copper pipe underground through the route of the existing lead service line, penetrating through the basement wall or floor, installing a new meter setting including inlet and outlet valves, and reconnecting the new meter setting to the home building's internal plumbing. This method is termed "trenchless" and minimizes the amount of excavation and yard disturbance that is needed.
3. If an open trench method is needed for installation, the excavation will be approximately two feet wide from the curb stop at the property line to the foundation wall.
4. A hole will be made in the basement floor or foundation wall to accept the new copper service line.
5. GCWW contractors will restore the exterior work site as follows:
 - a. Restoration is limited to the excavated and disturbed areas.
 - b. Impacted lawn areas will be backfilled to include no less than 12" of topsoil at lawn excavations. Grass seed and straw will be placed during the growing season. Watering the grass seed is the responsibility of the property owner.
 - c. Impacted paved surfaces will be restored with asphalt/cold patch.
 - d. All private walks, trees, shrubs, landscaping, or similar items are the responsibility of the property owner. If the removal of such items is required for installation, they will be relocated by the contractor. Upon completion of the work, the property owner will be responsible for replacing the removed items.
 - e. Extraordinary physical or other obstacles that prevent lead service line replacement by standard trenchless methods may need to be removed by and at the expense of the owner.



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