Lead in Drinking Water FAQs (Continued)

What are the symptoms of lead poisoning?

- Signs of repeated lead exposure may include abdominal pain or cramps, aggressive behavior, constipation, sleep problems, headaches, irritability, loss of appetite, fatigue, high blood pressure, numbness or tingling in the extremities, memory loss, anemia and kidney dysfunction.
- In children, long-term lead exposure can lead to intellectual disability and loss of developmental skills.
- A high dose of lead poisoning may result in severe abdominal pain and cramping, vomiting, muscle weakness, stumbling when walking, seizures, coma and brain disease.
- More information is available at https://www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/prevention/sources/water.htm

Can I get tested for exposure to lead?

- Contact your doctor or local health care provider about a blood test for lead exposure or contact the health department in your municipality.

How can I reduce my exposure to lead?

- Replace your lead service line.
- Always buy plumbing fixtures (faucets, valves, sinks, shower heads, hose bibs, etc.) that have zero-lead content.
- Run your cold water tap to flush out lead. Run the tap until water feels cold. Then fill a pitcher with fresh water and place in the refrigerator for future use.
- Always use fresh, cold, running water for drinking, cooking and preparing baby formula.
- Do not boil water for the purpose of removing lead. Boiling water does not remove lead and can increase lead concentration in water.
- Periodically remove and clean faucet screens and aerators.
- Obtain a home water treatment device such as a filter that is NSF certified to remove lead.
- Identify and replace plumbing fixtures containing lead and any copper piping with lead solder.
- Water service lines are sometimes used to ground electrical lines. The wiring in your home or building may be attached to your water service line or elsewhere in your plumbing. If you have a lead service line, this can accelerate its corrosion. Have a licensed electrician check your wiring.
- Be careful of dust from lead based paint. Even though lead based paint was outlawed in 1978, many older homes have not removed it and may currently be a hazard.
- Be careful of other sources of lead in your home. Some household items such as pottery, makeup, toys, and jewelry may contain lead. Wash your children's hands and toys often.

Water Service Lines FAQs

What is a water service line and who owns it?

- Water service lines are the pipes that carry water from the City water main in the street into homes/buildings.
- The City owns the water service lines from the water main in the street to the parkway valve. Individual property owners own the service line from the parkway valve to the meter inside your home.

How do I know if I have a lead service line at my location?

- If you suspect you have lead in your service line or home plumbing, you can visually inspect the water service line piping entering your home or contact the Racine Water Utility. Even if your service line is not lead, you may still have a lead gooseneck in the street if your pipe is galvanized steel. The Utility will verify if your service line is lead or not.
- You can purchase an EPA-approved lead test kit: https://www.epa.gov/lead/lead-test-kits

Where can I get more information?

Andrew McArthur, Field Inspector:
262-822-8956 or andrew.mcarthur@cityofracine.org

Technician's Office
262-636-9533

para español:
Mayra Arriaga: 262-636-9432

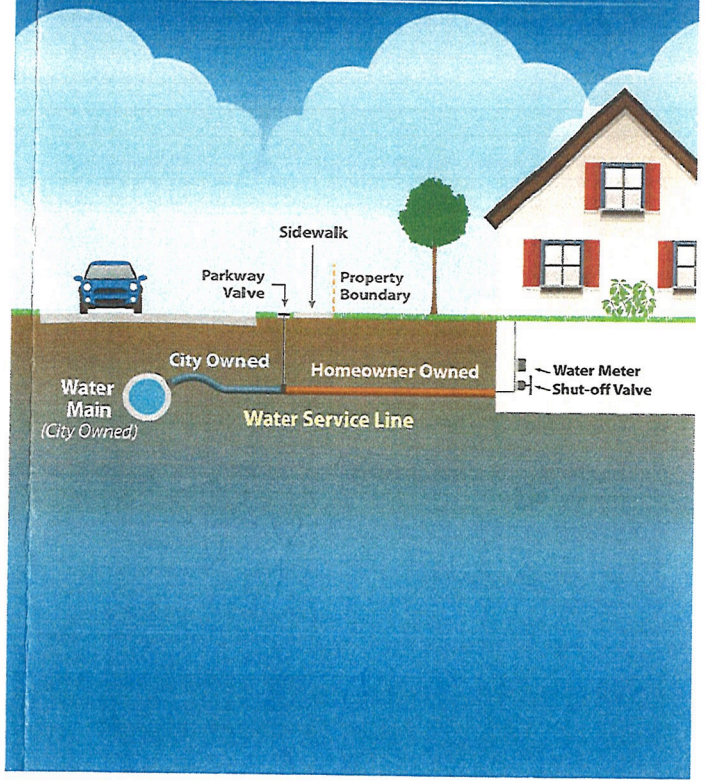
RACINE ON THE LAKE
City of Racine, Wisconsin

730 Washington Ave
Racine, WI 53403

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

RACINE ON THE LAKE
City of Racine, Wisconsin

Lead Service Line Replacement



City of Racine Lead Service Line Replacement (LSLR)

As part of the 2024 lead replacement program, **the City of Racine is offering a full lead service line replacement at no cost to you if you have an existing lead service line and live in a building that is directly impacted by the 2024 Lead Service Replacement Program. The property owner will have the full service line (from the water main in the street all the way to the meter in the home) replaced at no expense to the property owner.**

Construction is anticipated to begin in 2024. The City of Racine views this project as an exciting and unique opportunity of working with the community members.

FAQs

What are the associated costs to the property owner for the replacement of the lead service line?

- This program is at no additional cost to those residential property owners who have an existing lead service line and own a home within the project area.

How long will the replacement take, and how long will my water be shut off?

- The average construction duration for replacing the private side of the lead service line is estimated to take about eight hours. During any water main replacement project, there are one to two water service interruptions, with a maximum duration of 4 hours each. You will be given a 24-hour notice prior to the service interruption(s). There are no additional service interruptions required for participants of the full lead service line replacement.

What can I expect regarding restoration of my property after construction?

- The contractor will be required to take photos prior to any work commencing and will discuss each home's restoration on a case-by-case basis. In most cases, finishes such as carpeting or paneling will not be included. The City recognizes that your home is an asset and as a team will treat you and your property with respect and care. Our goal is to minimize disruption during construction.
- The City of Racine is planning to use trenchless construction methods as much as possible, which are less disruptive to the property owners and minimizes impacts to existing fencing, landscape, etc.
- The contractor will make one small excavation at the parkway valve, and fully restore your property to agreed-upon conditions once the line is operational and tested.
- Each property is different and the construction method necessary for your property will be discussed with you prior to replacement.
- The City will pay for reasonable exterior restoration of landscaped areas.

Will we still have street access and can I park my car in front of my house?

- During the project, street parking is limited during daytime hours. Advanced notification of parking restrictions will be delivered to all properties before work begins. There will be no additional parking restrictions for participants of the full lead service line replacement.

How do I know if I live or own a home within the project area?

If you received this FAQ, you live or own a home within the project area. You can also contact the Utility at 262-636-9533.

What if I have a problem with my service line after the work has been completed?

- The City of Racine will remain available to answer questions and address concerns as it relates to the replacement, even after the project is complete.

How can I sign up for the program and what are the next steps?

- You may sign up by reaching out to our Field Inspector, Andrew McArthur, at: 262-822-8956 or andrew.mcarthur@cityofracine.org.
- Once you sign up for the program with the field inspector, representatives of The Utility will contact you to review and discuss the work to be performed, verify your pipe material, obtain your permission to perform work, arrange a preconstruction survey of the areas where your service line will be replaced, and schedule the replacement work.

What documentation is required to sign up for this program?

- Signing up is quite simple. The program requires that the property owner to complete the Right of Entry Form necessary for the contractor to complete the work. The Outreach Team will assist you with the process to make it as easy as possible.

Will there be additional service disruption to replace lead service?

- For property owners replacing their water service during the annual water main replacement program, private side water service line replacements will not add any additional service interruptions to the home.

Lead in Drinking Water FAQs

What are the risks of lead exposure?

- Lead can cause health problems, such as damage to the brain, red blood cells, and kidneys when people are exposed to it. Pregnant woman, infants, and young children are especially at risk.

What level of lead is safe to consume?

- No level of lead is considered safe for consumption.

How can lead get into my drinking water?

- When water leaves Racine's filtration 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 water main 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. For example, these time periods include when the water is first drawn in the morning or in the afternoon after not being used all day.

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

- No. If you live in a home that was built prior to 1986, it is possible that lead solder was used at the joints of your interior piping. If you suspect that you have lead solder based on the age of your home, flush your cold water for approximately 1 to 3 minutes when the water in your home has not been used for more than 6 hours. A licensed plumber can help evaluate whether or not you have lead material in your indoor plumbing.

Why do water service line and plumbing fixtures contain lead?

- From 1986 to 2014, plumbing fixtures (e.g. faucets, shower heads) could contain up to 8% lead and be categorized as "Lead free." Current standards for "Lead free" fixtures allow no more than 0.25% of lead content.
- Many homes and buildings, especially those built before 1945, may have service lines and/or internal plumbing and fixtures that are made of or contain lead.

What is the City doing to lower lead levels in drinking water?

- The City of Racine is committed to providing you with safe, clean drinking water and lowering lead levels at the tap by:
  - Adding blended phosphate to the water during the treatment process. This harmless chemical creates a light coating on the inside of pipelines to prevent metals, such as lead and copper, from leaching into the water.
  - Performing a corrosion control optimization study at our water treatment plant.
  - Regularly sampling and testing the drinking water to monitor lead levels in accordance with all federal and state drinking water standards.
  - Removing and replacing lead service lines throughout Racine's distribution system.