



Public Water System (PWS) ID#: **NJ1424001**

Frequently Asked Questions

Regarding

NEW JERSEY Bill A5343/S3398, P.L.2021, Ch. 183

What is P.L.2021, Ch. 183?

P.L. 2021, Chapter 183 is part of NJ Bill #5343/S3398 enacted by the New Jersey Senate and General Assembly on July 22, 2021. P.L. 2021, Chapter 183 calls all Public Water Systems (PWS) to inventory and replace known lead/galvanized service lines in their service area within 10 years. A service line includes the PWS side of service pipe and property-owner’s side of service pipe.

What is a service line?

A service line consists of pipe and components connecting the water main (in the street) to the building inlet (connection to your home.) Service lines are made of plastic, copper, lead, lead coated galvanized or galvanized pipe. Components such as a pigtail, gooseneck, and/or other fitting, are used to connect rigid sections of service pipe.

What is a lead service line?

A lead service line is any lead, lead coated galvanized or galvanized pipe and components with lead, i.e., lead pigtail, lead gooseneck or other lead fitting.

Why is this Law important to me?

This law is important because lead can cause serious health problems if too much enters your body from drinking water or other sources. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) estimates that “20% or more of human exposure to lead may come from lead in drinking water.”¹

A homeowner may unknowingly be exposed to lead through service lines or through home plumbing. Prior to the 1986 enactment of Safe Drinking Water Lead Ban, lead had been the industry standard for piping in service lines and plumbing. Lead was favored due to its ability to resist pinhole leaks while being soft enough to form shapes and deliver water efficiently. Therefore, if your home was built before 1986, you may be at a greater risk for lead exposure.

What milestones has the SMCMUA achieved?

The law requires the PWS to set milestones for documentation submitted annually to the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP), as follows:

- Initial Lead Service Line (LSL) Inventory 01/22/2022
- LSL Inventory Update 07/22/2022
- Lead Service Line Replacement (LSLR) Progress Report..... 07/22/2022
- LSL Identification and Replacement Plan 07/22/2022
- Initial LSL Notification Form..... 09/01/2022

2023 and annually thereafter:

- Annual LSL Inventory July 10th
- Lead Service Line Replacement (LSLR) Progress Report..... July 10th
- LSL Identification and Replacement Plan July 31st
- LSL Notification Form.....August 20th

¹ NJDEP, Drinking Water Facts: Lead in Drinking Water – Page 1. https://www.nj.gov/health/ceohs/documents/dw_lead_factsheet.pdf

Who owns the service line from the water main to my home?

The service line ownership is shared by the SMCMUA and the Property Owner,

- Service Line – SMCMUA Side
- Service Line – Private Side

The Service Line – SMCMUA Side consists of the pipe from water main up to and including the curb stop (*when the water meter is installed inside the property owner's building/home*) – **Figure 1** or running from the water main up to and including the alternate location of the meter chamber (*when the water meter is installed in the meter chamber*) – **Figure 2**.

The Service Line – Private Side consists of the pipe following the curb stop the building/home's internal plumbing – **Figure 1** or after the alternate location of the meter chamber to the building/home's internal plumbing – **Figure 2**.

Figure #1: Internal Water Meter



Figure #2: Alternate Water Meter Chamber



How do I know if I have a lead service line?

Under the law, a PWS must send a notification letter, via certified mail, to customers, non-paying consumers, and any off-site owner of a property (e.g., landlord) within 30 days when it is known they are served by a lead service line. You will receive this notification if the SMCMUA service line and/or the property owner service line is found to have lead or galvanized steel materials.

What does it mean if I do not receive a notification?

If you do not receive a certified letter, it may be due to the following:

- The SMCMUA has inventoried the SMCMUA service line and the property owner service line finding both sides of the service line constructed of copper.

Who incurs the cost for service line replacement?

The service line ownership is shared by the SMCMUA and the Property Owner. The costs incurred will fall to the SMCMUA for its portion of service line and to the Property Owner for their portion of service line.

Will SMCMUA provide an option for financial assistance?

The SMCMUA is developing a Financial Payment Plan for property owners. Details will be provided once a working draft has been approved for finalization.

If I have a private well, do I need to worry about lead in my drinking water?

While lead is often recognized as an issue in public water system infrastructure, residents served by private wells may still have exposure to lead in drinking water via lead service lines and household plumbing. "Residences which

were built prior to 1988 may be at higher risk, as lead solder, or other components using lead, may have been used during construction.”²

How does lead get into my drinking water?

The water distribution system lead service lines *and* lead based household plumbing materials can corrode or wear overtime and enter the tap water. Household plumbing materials include lead-based solder (used to join copper pipes,) brass and chrome-brass faucets. When water stands in lead service lines or lead based plumbing systems for several hours, the lead may dissolve into your drinking water. This means the first tap water drawn in the morning or later in the afternoon (if the water has not been used all day) can have fairly high levels of lead.

How could my household plumbing cause exposure to lead?

Household plumbing materials such as new brass faucets, fittings, and valves, including those advertised as “lead-free,” may still have a small percentage of lead, and contribute lead to drinking water. The law currently allows end-use brass fixtures, such as faucets, with up to 0.25% lead to be labeled as “lead free.” However, prior to January 4, 2014, “lead free” allowed for up to 8.0% lead content of the wetted surfaces of plumbing products including those labeled National Sanitation Foundation (NSF) certified. Visit the NSF website to learn more about lead-containing plumbing fixtures.³ Consumers should be aware of this when choosing fixtures and take proper precautions.

What are the health concerns related to lead exposure?

Exposure to lead can cause damage to the brain and kidneys. Lead exposure can also interfere with the production of red blood cells carrying oxygen to all parts of your body. Adults with kidney problems and high blood pressure can be affected by low levels of lead.

The greatest risk of lead exposure is to infants, young children, and pregnant women. Lead is stored in the bones, and it can be released later in life. During pregnancy, the child receives lead from the mother’s bones, which may affect brain development. Scientists have linked the effects of lead on the brain with lowered IQ in children. If you are concerned about your child’s lead exposure, contact your local health department or healthcare provider to find out how you can get your child tested. The State Health website below has resources for how to get your child tested and how to pay for it.⁴

What steps can I take to reduce exposure to lead in drinking water?

Exposure to lead at any level can be associated with adverse health effects. Therefore, consider taking the following steps to reduce your exposure to lead in drinking water.⁵

- 1. Run the cold water to flush out lead.** Let the water run from the tap before using it for drinking or cooking any time the water in the faucet has gone unused for more than six hours. The longer the water resides in plumbing, the more lead it may contain. Flushing the tap means running the cold-water faucet. Let the water run from the cold-water tap based on the length of the lead service line and the plumbing configuration in your home. In other words, the larger the home or building and the greater the distance to the water main (in the street), the more water it will take to flush properly. Although toilet flushing or showering flushes water through a part of the plumbing system, you still need to flush the water in each faucet before using it for drinking or cooking. Flushing tap water is a simple and inexpensive measure you can take to protect your health. It usually uses less than one gallon of water.
- 2. Use cold, flushed water for cooking and preparing baby formula.** Because lead from lead-containing plumbing materials and pipes can dissolve into hot water more easily than cold water, never drink, cook, or prepare beverages including baby formula using hot water from the tap. If you have not had your water sampled or if you know, it is recommended that bottled or filtered water be used for drinking and preparing baby formula. If you need hot water, draw water from the cold tap and then heat it.

² NJDEP, Lead Service line FAQ for Consumers, Page 3. www.nj.gov/dep/lead

³ NSF, (800) NSF-8010, <https://www.nsf.org>

⁴ NJ State Health Lead Testing Information for Children, <https://www.state.nj.us/health/childhoodlead/testing.shtml>

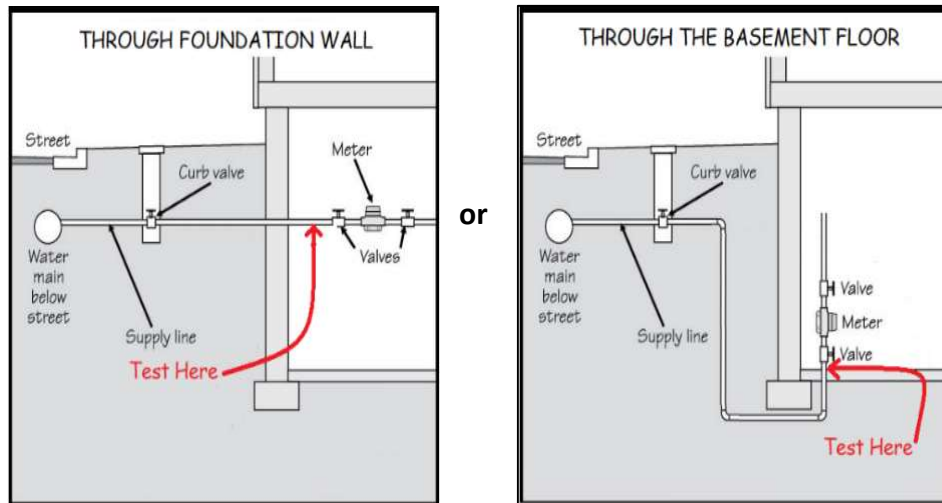
⁵ NJDEP, List of Steps to Reduce Lead Exposure, <https://www.state.nj.us/dep/watersupply/dwc-lead-consumer.html>

3. **Do not boil water to remove lead.** Boiling water will not reduce lead; however, it is still safe to wash dishes and do laundry.
4. **Use alternative sources or treatment of water.** You may want to consider buying bottled water or a water filter. Read the package to be sure the filter is approved to reduce lead or contact NSF International for information on water filter performance standards.
5. **Determine if you have interior lead plumbing or lead solder.** If your home/building was constructed prior to 1986, it is important to determine if interior lead solder or lead pipes are present. You can check yourself (visit the Lead Service Collaborative site below for instructions), hire a licensed plumber, or check with your landlord.
6. **Replace plumbing fixtures and service lines containing lead.** Replace brass faucets, fittings, and valves that do not meet the current definition of “lead free” from 2014. Visit the NSF website to learn more about lead-containing plumbing fixtures. If you are planning to replace your lead service line, contact SMCMUA Customer Service to help in coordination efforts.
7. **Remove and clean aerators/screens on plumbing fixtures.** Over time, particles and sediment can collect in the aerator screen. Regularly remove and clean aerator screens found at the tip of faucets and remove any particles.
8. **Test your water for lead.** Call the SMCMUA 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. There is a nominal fee for the test kit if you wish to have your water tested prior to replacing your service line. After your service line has been replaced, SMCMUA will supply sample kits to test the water within your home, free of charge.
9. **Get your child tested.** Contact your local health department or healthcare provider to find out how you can get your child tested for lead if you are concerned about lead exposure. New Jersey law requires children be tested for lead in their blood at both 1 and 2 years of age and before they are 6 years old if they have never been tested before or if they have been exposed to a known source of lead.
10. **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.

How can I help? Follow these steps to check your service line and complete the survey:

1. Locate the incoming water service line.

The incoming water service line is typically found in the basement, main floor, or crawlspace of your house or business. The pipe can come out through the foundation wall or come up through the basement floor, as shown in the image below. Your shut-off valve and water meter are typically installed on this line, after the point of entry.



- 2. Conduct an inspection of your incoming water service pipe material by using a scratch test and magnetic test.** At the incoming water service line, use your wire brush or fine grit sandpaper to make the surface clean and visible for inspection. Service lines are made of plastic, copper, lead, lead coated galvanized or galvanized pipe. Commercial or industrial buildings may have large diameter pipe constructed of cast iron or ductile iron. Once you have visually inspected your service line, try taking the magnet test. Apply the magnet to the cleaned surface of your water service pipe. If the magnet sticks, then your pipe is likely made of galvanized steel. NOTE: Large diameter ‘lead free’ cast iron or ‘lead free’ ductile iron will also have magnetic properties.



PLASTIC PIPE

A plastic pipe will change color and will not pass the magnet test.



COPPER PIPE

A copper pipe will look dull brown on the outside. If the cleaned surface of your service pipe matches the shiny penny and does not pass the magnet test, then your pipe is a copper material.



LEAD PIPE

A lead pipe will look dull and will be soft. If the cleaned surface of your pipe is a shiny silver and does not pass the magnet test, then it is likely a lead pipe. Under the law, lead pipe must be replaced.



GALVANIZED STEEL PIPE

A galvanized steel pipe will have a dull grey appearance. If the cleaned surface still appears dull grey and passes the magnet test, then it is likely a galvanized steel pipe. Under the law, galvanized pipe must be replaced.

3. Complete the online survey using the QR Code or website URL below.



<https://survey123.arcgis.com/share/33b36d0a953b4d4f8528c5edccf399fa?portalUrl=https://gis.smcmua.org/portal>

SMCMUA Contact Information
customerservice@smcmua.org | 973-326-6880

August 2023
Rev. December 2023, June 2024