



City of Fostoria, Ohio Frequently Asked Questions & Answers About Lead in Drinking Water



IS THE CITY OF FOSTORIA'S WATER SAFE?

Yes, the water supplied by the City of Fostoria's Water Department is safe. Our water is routinely tested and consistently meets state and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency standards, ensuring optimal quality for our residents. We are committed to providing you with information because you are the customer. For more information about your drinking water, visit the lead sections of these websites: EPA: www.epa.gov/lead and City of Fostoria Water Treatment Plant at www.fostoriaohio.gov. For specific inquiries about your drinking water, please email your questions to water@fostoriaohio.gov.

**All information detailed on this document is based on public informational material from the U.S. and Ohio Environmental Protection Agencies and the Fostoria Water and Sewer Department.*



This FAQ document aims to provide Fostoria residents with essential tools and information about our Water and Sewer Department's ongoing efforts, including the water service line inventory, lead service line notices, and Lead Service Line Replacement Initiative.

Types of Water Pipes

Follow the guidance below or contact the **Fostoria Water Department** at **(419) 435-2486** or a licensed plumber to determine the material of your water pipes. To identify the material of your service pipes on private property, check your household water service connection, typically located in the basement.

Homeowners should identify and replace old household pipes, particularly galvanized plumbing and sources of lead. The type of plumbing can vary throughout your household.



Lead - A dull, silver-grey color that is easily scratched with a coin. Use a magnet - strong magnets will *not* cling to lead pipes.



Galvanized - A dull, silver-grey color. Use a magnet - strong magnets *will* cling to galvanized pipes.



Copper - The color of a copper penny.



Plastic - White, rigid pipe that is joined to water supply piping with a clamp.

WHAT IS LEAD AND WHY IS IT A HEALTH CONCERN?

Lead is a naturally occurring element found in all parts of our environment. It is a toxic, soft metal that can be found in our homes, paint, dust, air, soil, food, and water, and can pose risks to human health. There is no safe level of exposure to lead in drinking water.

Exposure to lead in drinking water can cause serious health effects in all age groups. Infants and children can have decreases in IQ and attention span. Lead exposure can lead to new learning and behavior problems or further affect existing learning and behavior issues. The children of women who are exposed to lead before or during pregnancy can have increased risk of these adverse health effects. Adults can have increased risks of heart disease, high blood pressure, kidney, or nervous system problems.

HOW DOES LEAD GET INTO DRINKING WATER?

Lead is not present in the treated water or source water supplied to your home. However, lead can enter your drinking water from the service line (pipe) that connects your home to the distribution line (water main) or from pipes and faucets in your home. The most common sources of lead in drinking water are lead and galvanized pipes, faucets, and fixtures. Lead service lines are a potential source of lead in homes where they are present. Lead can attach to the inner surface of galvanized service lines and be released into drinking water over time. The City of Fostoria Water Department applies corrosion control treatment to drinking water to reduce this risk. Service lines made of galvanized iron or steel that are (or were previously) downstream of lead service lines are classified as galvanized requiring replacement (GRR).

Lead pipes are more likely to be found in older cities and homes built before 1988 due to the state ban on lead plumbing that year. In homes without

lead service lines, the most common sources of lead getting into water are copper pipes with lead solder (banned in 1998) and brass or chrome-plated faucets, which were not banned until 2014. Identifying and ultimately removing lead and GRR service lines is an important way to protect public health.

IS WATER THE ONLY SOURCE OF LEAD IN HOUSES AND BUILDINGS?

No. While water may be a source of exposure to lead in houses and buildings, lead-based paint, dust, contaminated soil, lead-glazed pottery, and some toys and jewelry may also contain lead. Lead-based paint and lead-containing toys pose a significant risk, especially for young children. For more information on protecting your family from lead in your home, please visit: www.epa.gov/lead/protect-your-family-sources-lead



TALKING POINTS: MINIMIZING LEAD EXPOSURE

WHAT CAN I DO TO REDUCE MY EXPOSURE TO LEAD FROM MY TAP WATER?

Below are recommended actions that you may take, separately or in combination, if you are concerned about lead in your drinking water. The list is not intended to be a complete list or to imply that all actions equally reduce the presence of lead in drinking water.

HAVE YOUR WATER TESTED.

Visit the Ohio Department of Health at odh.ohio.gov/know-our-programs/childhood-lead-poisoning/lead-in-drinking-water to learn about lead and how to have your water tested.

LET YOUR WATER RUN.

The more time water has been sitting in your home's pipes, the more lead it may contain. Before drinking, flush your home's pipes by running the tap for 30 seconds to 3 minutes, taking a shower, doing laundry, or doing a load of dishes.

LEARN ABOUT CONSTRUCTION IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD.

Be aware of any construction or maintenance work that could disturb your lead service line. Construction may cause more lead to be released from a lead service line.

USE COLD WATER.

Only use cold water for cooking, drinking, and making baby formula. Hot water dissolves lead more quickly than cold water.

CLEAN YOUR AERATOR.

The small round piece on the bottom of your faucet is the aerator. Your aerator can accumulate lead particles which can contaminate your water so it should be cleaned regularly and replaced annually or as needed.



USE YOUR FILTER PROPERLY.

If you use a filter, make sure that it is certified by a third-party certifier to remove lead. Check the filter and cartridge packaging for these certifications. Read the directions to learn how to properly install and use your cartridge and when to replace it. Using the cartridge after it has expired can make it less effective at removing lead. Do not run hot water through the filter. For more information visit: https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2018-12/documents/consumer_tool_for_identifying_drinking_water_filters_certified_to_reduce_lead.pdf.

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WORK WITH THE CITY OF FOSTORIA WATER AND SEWER DEPARTMENT TO IDENTIFY AND/OR ASSIST IN THE IDENTIFICATION AND REMOVAL OF LEAD AND GRR (GALVANIZED REQUIRING REPLACEMENT) SERVICE LINES.

Your water department is taking action to reduce potential risk by verifying the material of the water service line inside your home to complete the EPA required water service line inventory.

Visit the Fostoria Water and Sewer Department's website at www.fostoriaohio.gov, or contact our information office for questions or assistance verifying your water service line material.



Scan the QR code to take the survey online, or call our **Water Office at (419) 435-2486** to schedule an appointment for one of our expert staff to identify your water service line material.

GET YOUR CHILD TESTED TO DETERMINE THE LEAD LEVELS IN THEIR BLOOD.

Your healthcare provider and your public health agency can provide information about how you can have your child's blood tested for lead. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that public health actions be initiated when the level of lead in a child's blood is 3.5 micrograms per deciliter ($\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$) or more. For more information on lead in drinking water, contact your local health department or water department for guidance. For more information on reducing lead exposure around your home and the health effects of lead, visit EPA's website at www.epa.gov/lead, or call the National Lead Information Center at **1-800-424-LEAD**.



HOW DO I KNOW IF MY HOME HAS A LEAD SERVICE LINE, GRR SERVICE LINE, OR LEAD PLUMBING?

- You can contact the **City of Fostoria Water and Sewer Department at (419) 435-2643** and we may be able to provide you with information about whether you have a lead or GRR service line.
- A licensed plumber may be able to assess your faucets, fixtures, and service line for lead.
- EPA has developed an online step-by-step guide, Protect Your Tap, to help people identify lead pipes in their homes. The online tool is located at www.epa.gov/pyt.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I AM CONCERNED ABOUT MY FAMILY'S EXPOSURE TO LEAD? SHOULD WE GET TESTED?

A blood test is the only way to find out whether you or a family member already has lead poisoning. Call your doctor or local health department to arrange for a blood test. You can protect your family every day by:

- Regularly cleaning floors, windowsills, and other surfaces.
- Washing children's hands, bottles, pacifiers, and toys often.
- Making sure children eat a healthy, nutritious diet consistent with the USDA's dietary guidelines.
- Wiping off shoes before entering the house.
- Using an EPA-certified firm for renovations, or if you are doing the renovation yourself, using lead-safe work practices. View more information here: www.epa.gov/lead.



DO I HAVE TO GET A FILTER IF I DON'T HAVE ONE?

The need for a home treatment device is a customer decision. If you choose to purchase a home filter, NSF International created a Consumer Guide to NSF Certified Lead Filtration Devices for Reduction of Lead in Drinking Water. For more information, visit www.nsf.org/info/leadfiltrationguide. Always consult the device manufacturer for information on treatment device maintenance and potential impacts to your drinking water or household plumbing. EPA also offers information on identifying drinking water filters here: https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2019-04/documents/pou_communication_tool_poster-bosc.pdf.



WHERE CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE CITY OF FOSTORIA'S SERVICE LINE INVENTORY?

To view the status of the City of Fostoria's water service line inventory, please visit www.fostoriaohio.gov.

WHERE CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION ABOUT LEAD?

You can find out more information about lead by visiting the lead sections of these websites: EPA: <https://www.epa.gov/ground-water-and-drinking-water/basic-information-about-lead-drinking-water> and www.fostoriaohio.gov, or Ohio EPA's Learn About Lead website at: <https://epa.ohio.gov/monitor-pollution/pollution-issues/learn-about-lead>.

LEAD SERVICE LINE NOTICES AND NEXT STEPS

WHY DID I RECEIVE A NOTICE FROM MY WATER SYSTEM SAYING I HAVE A LEAD SERVICE LINE?

You received this notice because Ohio is completing Service Line Inventory Material (SLIM) notifications in accordance with EPA's Lead and Copper Rule Revisions (LCRR). Under this mandate water systems are now required to notify all persons served when their service line is classified as lead, galvanized requiring replacement (GRR), or lead status unknown. Please note that this letter reflects the entire service line, including the city's side and the homeowner's side. These notifications will be repeated annually until the entire service connection is no longer lead, GRR, or lead status unknown.

I DID NOT RECEIVE A LEAD SERVICE LINE NOTICE BUT SOMEONE I KNOW (E.G., YOUR NEIGHBOR) RECEIVED ONE, WHY IS THIS?

No service line material notification is required for residences where the service line is categorized as fully "Non-Lead" on the inventory submission. If you did not receive a notification, no action is needed. If you are aware that your service line material is lead and did not receive a notice, please contact the **City of Fostoria Water and Sewer Department at (419) 435-2643**.

I RECEIVED A LETTER SAYING I HAVE A GALVANIZED SERVICE LINE, WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

Galvanized service lines are steel pipes that have been dipped in a protective zinc coating to prevent corrosion and rust. Galvanized piping was commonly installed in homes built before 1960 and was used as an alternative to lead pipes for water service lines. Over time, the zinc coating weakens, making the pipe more susceptible to corrosion. Galvanized pipe is also more prone to mineral buildup inside the pipe than alternative materials such as copper or plastic. Old galvanized lines are also prone to leaks.

If your galvanized service line is or was at any time downstream of a lead service line, meaning the city's side is lead and your side is galvanized, your line could capture lead particles that are released from the upstream lead service. This would be considered a galvanized requiring replacement (GRR) service line.

If you have a galvanized line coming into your home and did not receive a notification, this means that the upstream (city's side) portion of your service line is non-lead, and no action is needed.

Replacing galvanized lines may conserve water and improve water pressure.

I RECEIVED A LETTER SAYING I HAVE A LEAD STATUS UNKNOWN SERVICE LINE, WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

A lead status unknown service line is one where the service line material has not been identified and there is no documentation of the material that your service line is made of.



If the customer's side is unknown, you can use the QR code to complete our brief water service line self-identification survey. You may also call our **Water Office at (419) 435-2486** to schedule an appointment for one of our expert staff to identify your water service line material.

If the city's side is unknown, our Water & Sewer Maintenance Department will excavate at the curb stop on your property to identify the city side materials.

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, plumbing in their homes, or rarely, lead in groundwater. 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. Owners of homes served by private wells should consider testing their water for lead both at the source, as well as at their tap. Ohio EPA's Private Water System Program offers investigation of contamination for private well users and can assist in locating a certified laboratory for lead analysis in drinking water. Visit <https://odh.ohio.gov/know-our-programs/private-water-systems-program/private-water-systems-program> for more information.

CAN I CONTINUE TO USE MY WATER IF I HAVE A LEAD SERVICE LINE?

Yes. Even though your service line is identified to be of lead material, you can still use water as you normally do. Your water continues to meet water quality standards. We treat our water to prevent corrosion of service lines and household plumbing, and our ongoing lead and copper compliance testing continues to meet state and federal water quality regulations, including those set for lead. You can also use ANSI/NSF 53 certified filters and flush your tap with cold water for 30 seconds to 3 minutes if you have not used water in six or more hours.

NOW THAT I'VE RECEIVED A NOTICE, WHAT IS THE CITY OF FOSTORIA WATER AND SEWER DEPARTMENT DOING? WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE INVENTORY IS DONE?

Upon Water Service Line Inventory completion, in accordance with the Lead and Copper Rule Improvements (LCRI), the Fostoria Water and Sewer Department is implementing a Lead Service Line Replacement Initiative (LSLR Initiative) to further identify unknown service line materials and replace lead identified service lines in our community.

- *The City of Fostoria Water and Sewer Department Initial Steps:* The Fostoria Water and Sewer Department's first step was to collect data on water service line materials serving each home in the City of Fostoria through historical records and visual inspections to complete the federally required inventory. Residents will have access to inventory information once it is complete.
- *Inventory and LSLR Initiative Next Steps:* The LSLR Initiative will create a 1) prioritized schedule to replace lead service lines and 2) funding strategy to pay for service line replacements.

WHAT IS THE TIMELINE FOR PIPE REPLACEMENT?

EPA's 2024 passage of the LCRI mandates water systems replace all lead and galvanized service lines, at a rate of 10% each year, within 10 years of finalizing the LSLR Plan in 2027. The City of Fostoria plans to complete all LSLRs by the end of 2037.

WHY DOES REPLACEMENT TAKE SO LONG?

In essence, while lead service line replacement is crucial for public health, it's a meticulous process that demands careful planning, coordination with stakeholders, compliance with regulations, and adequate resources to ensure safe and effective outcomes. Below are some key factors involved in the lead service line replacement that impact the timeline.

Key Factors

- **Scope of Work:** Replacing lead pipes involves identifying and replacing not only on public property but also on private property.
- **Resource Allocation:** Prioritizing areas with the highest risk and coordinating schedules with property owners.
- **Regulatory Compliance:** Compliance with regulatory requirements and obtaining necessary permits and approvals can impact the timeline.
- **Engineering and Planning:** Water systems are unique in design and require detailed assessment and planning to ensure the replacement is done correctly.
- **Community Engagement:** Engaging with residents through outreach initiatives is essential to the success of the lead service line replacement program.

For questions, concerns or more information regarding your community, contact the Fostoria Water and Sewer Department at (419) 435-2643 or visit www.fostoriaohio.gov.

