

# Drinking Water Lead Reduction Program Frequently Asked Questions

## What is the Lead and Copper Removal (LCRR) program?

The City of Stratford is committed to reducing the risk of lead exposure from drinking water. We are doing all we can to protect our customers and give you information along with steps you can take to reduce your exposure. This program includes developing an inventory of all city and customer service line material and removing any lead found in the system as well as educating the community on the negative effects of lead in drinking water. For more information on our program, please see the section on Additional Questions below.

## Lead in Drinking Water Basics

### What is lead and why is it a health concern?

Lead is a naturally occurring element found in small amounts in the earth's crust. It is also a toxic, soft metal that can be found in paint, dust, air, soil, food, and water, and can be harmful to human health. There is no safe level of exposure to lead in drinking water. **Lead is persistent, and it can bioaccumulate in the body over time.** 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 exacerbate existing learning and behavior problems. 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 can enter drinking water when plumbing materials that contain lead corrode. The most common sources of lead in drinking water are lead and galvanized pipes, faucets, and fixtures. In homes served by lead service lines, these pipes are typically the most significant source of lead in the water. Lead can attach to the inner surface of galvanized service lines and be released into drinking water over time. 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). Identifying and ultimately removing lead and GRR service lines is an important way to protect public health.

### What is a water service line?

A water service line is the pipe that connects the water main to your home or building inlet. Service lines may be made of copper or other materials such as galvanized iron or steel, plastic, brass, or lead. If any portion of the pipe is made of lead, it is called a lead service line (LSL).

### 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: <https://www.epa.gov/lead/protect-your-family-sources-lead>.

## Reducing Lead Exposure

### What can I do to reduce my exposure to lead from my drinking 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 lead from drinking water.



#### Have your water tested

Contact the Lower Colorado River Authority to have your water tested and to learn more about the lead levels in your drinking water. [Lead and Copper - LCRA - Energy, Water, Community](#)

LCRA

P.O. Box 220

Austin, TX 78767

Phone:

512-578-3200

800-776-5272



#### Run your water

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, taking a shower, doing laundry, or doing a load of dishes. The amount of time to run the water will depend on whether your home has a lead service line or not, and the length of the lead service line.

- Locate the faucet furthest away from the service line on each wing and floor of the building, open the faucets wide, and let the water run for 10 minutes. For best results, calculate the volume of the plumbing and the flow rate at the tap and adjust the flushing time accordingly. This 10-minute time frame is considered adequate for most buildings.



#### 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 regularly

Aerators are small attachments to faucet tips which regulate water flow. Your aerator can accumulate lead particles which can contaminate your water so it should be cleaned regularly.



### Use your filter properly

If you use a filter, make sure that 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.



### Work with your service provider to identify and/or assist in replacing lead or GRR service lines.

More information on how to identify your lines can be found here: [Lead & Copper Info \(stratfordtx.us\)](http://stratfordtx.us/Lead&CopperInfo)



### Get Your Child Tested to Determine Lead Levels in His or Her 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 (µg/dL) or more.

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

- 1) You can call the City of Stratford and we may be able to provide you with information about whether you have a lead or GRR service line. *We are also asking residents to help identify their portion of the service line. Using the following link can show you how:*
- 2) A licensed plumber may be able to assess your faucets, fixtures, and service line for lead.
- 3) 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](http://www.epa.gov/pyt).

## Can I shower in lead-contaminated water?

Yes. Bathing and showering should be safe for you and your children. Human skin does not absorb lead in water.

## Is it safe to wash dishes and do laundry?

Yes, but dry them after. Wash dishes, bottles, and toys with soapy water. Dry before use. Lead in water will not be absorbed by porcelain, metal, or glass. Clothes washed in plain tap water will not contain enough lead to cause harm.

## Additional Questions on Our Lead Reduction Program

### What does the City of Stratford do to protect my household from lead?

Starting in 1999 the City of Stratford made it a standard procedure to remove any lead found in the water system. We are also conducting a full inventory of our water lines to determine what the pipes are made of.



The city also complies with TCEQs requirements to sample and test a percentage of water taps every 3 years in order to check for lead.

### How is the City of Stratford identifying lead service lines?

The City is pursuing a least-invasive approach to conducting the inventory, with the majority of service line material evaluations being conducted through the evaluation of our service records, in person investigations and customers contributing information.

Although the need to physically inspect the water service lines is limited, should it be necessary to do so, you will be contacted in advance to schedule a date and time to conduct the brief inspection. The evaluation of a water service lines is a minimally invasive process that takes approximately 20 to 30 minutes to complete. However, if you would prefer to submit information about the waterlines at your residence, a city inspection could be avoided.

### How and when are customers being notified about the lead service line replacement program?

A note along with a website is being put on the residents water bill, as well as a flyer in the mailbox.

### Where can I go to ask questions and get more information?

More information about the City of Stratford's Lead and Copper Removal Program can be found at [Lead & Copper Info \(stratfordtx.us\)](http://stratfordtx.us/Lead&CopperInfo)

For more information on lead in drinking water, visit:

<https://www.epa.gov/ground-water-and-drinking-water/basic-information-about-lead-drinking-water>.

[Drinking Water Lead and Copper Program - Texas Commission on Environmental Quality - www.tceq.texas.gov](http://www.tceq.texas.gov/DrinkingWaterLeadandCopperProgram)

If you still have questions or need information about your service line you can contact City Hall at:

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