



Lead Service Replacement-FAQs

Q. Why is DC WASA replacing the lead service lines?

A. DC WASA's mission is to provide quality water service to each of its customers. DC WASA replaces lead service lines in conjunction with scheduled DC WASA Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) such as water infrastructure repairs. Water service line replacements are also done in coordination with the District of Columbia Department of Transportation (DDOT) repaving schedule.

Q. Why should I replace the lead service line pipe on my private property?

A. Even when DC WASA replaces the pipe in public space, lead pipe may remain on your private property. There are several sources of lead which can be found in your home such as lead paint, lead in toys, lead deposited in soil, as well as lead in your drinking water from plumbing, fixtures and lead service lines, all of which can contribute to daily exposure. For information on reducing lead exposure around your home and the health effects of lead, visit EPA's website at www.epa.gov/lead.

According to the EPA, "Lead can cause serious health problems if too much enters the body from drinking water or other sources. It can cause damage to the brain and kidneys, and can interfere with the production of red blood cells that carry oxygen to all parts of the body. The greatest risk of lead exposure is to infants, young children and pregnant women. Scientists have linked the effects of lead on the brain with lowered IQ in children. Adults with kidney problems and high blood pressure can be affected by low levels of lead more than healthy adults. 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." See 40 CFR §141.85 (a)(1)(ii).

We take exposure to lead very seriously. If you are pregnant and/or have children under the age of six, for 30 days following construction you should 1) drink filtered tap water and 2) use filtered tap water to prepare infant formula or concentrated juices. You should continue to use filtered tap water until the lead pipe is removed from your private property.

Q. Is there anything I can do to further reduce lead levels in my water?

A. Yes, DC WASA recommends having your private side service pipe replaced if it is lead as well as having your internal plumbing and fixtures checked for material containing lead. Additionally;

- If water has been stagnant in the line for more than six hours, flush water lines by running the cold water for two minutes prior to using the water before cooking or drinking.
- If water has been stagnant for several days, flush water lines by running the cold water for five to 10 minutes prior to using the water from drinking or cooking.
- Periodically remove and clean the strainer/aerator device on your faucet to remove debris.
- If you choose to use a water filter, DC WASA recommends replacing the cartridge as recommended by the manufacturer. (Please see below for more information on filters).

Q. How does lead get in drinking water?

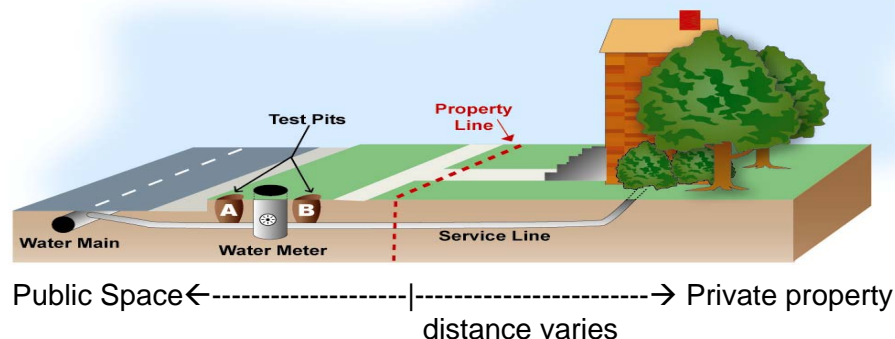
A. The treatment process used by the Washington Aqueduct, a division of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers that provides drinking water for the District of Columbia, controls the corrosion rate of pipes. Even so, lead pipes (service lines) that connect your house to the water main, as well as the lead-based solder used to join copper pipe and brass and chrome plated brass faucets in your home wear away over time and release lead. When water stands in lead pipes or plumbing systems containing lead for several hours or more, some lead may dissolve into your drinking water. This means the first water drawn from the tap in the morning, or later in the afternoon after returning from work or school, may contain higher than normal levels of lead. Therefore, it is important that you flush your water before using for cooking or drinking.

Q. Are there filters available that can eliminate lead from drinking water?

A. Yes, there are filters available; however, like all products, some are better than others. We recommend that you check with the **NSF International Consumer website** at: www.nsf.org/certified/dwtu for a list of certified filters.

Q. Where is the public space?

A. DC WASA is replacing lead service pipes located in **public space**, which includes the street, tree space, sidewalk, and **may include what you think of as your front yard**. In some cases, there may be a DC WASA “curb stop” (shut-off valve) located at the property line. In some areas of Washington D.C., the public space extends up to the foundation of the building or beyond. DC WASA and its contractors obtain information on the location of private property lines from DDOT’s Office of Permits and Public Space.



Q. How is the price of replacing the lead water service line pipe on my private property determined?

A. If your private lead pipe is replaced at the same time as the public part by the contractor under its contract with DC WASA, you get a special rate of \$100 per foot plus a \$500 fee to take the pipe into the home. For example, if you have 20 feet of private property in front of your house, the total cost would be **\$2,500** (20 feet x \$100 = \$2,000 + \$500 = \$2,500).

Q. Who pays for private property replacement?

A. DC WASA can only pay for replacement of service pipes in the public space. **Replacement of service pipes on private property is the homeowner’s responsibility.**

Q. Are there loans or grants available to pay for the private lead service replacement?

A. Yes. There are several options available for homeowners to pay for the private lead service replacement including: payment in four monthly installments to DC WASA; payment in full; or if you are income-eligible, you may seek a grant up to \$5,000 from the DC Department of Housing and Community Development or a low interest loan from Wachovia Bank.

Q. I would like an independent lab to test my water. Who can I contact?

A. There are a number of state-certified independent labs in the Washington metropolitan area if you wish to have your water tested. Following is a list of a few:

AMA Analytical Services, Inc.
Lanham, MD
301-459-2640

Chesapeake Analytical Laboratory, Inc.
Waldorf, MD
301-932-4775

Anabell Environmental, Inc.
Gaithersburg, MD
301-548-9425

WSSC, LSG
Silver Spring, MD
301-206-7580

Q. How can I find out if my home's water service pipes are lead?

A. Contact DC WASA's Customer Service Line at (202) 354-3600 or email waterquality@dcwasa.com. We will check our database that shows the known pipe material for District addresses.

Q. How is DC WASA telling residents about lead service replacements in their communities?

A. DC WASA coordinates with ANCs representing communities where replacements are scheduled. DC WASA also sends notices to individual addresses before construction, including:

- Information Package - at least 45 days before (info and contract for private replacement)
- Private side replacement post card reminders and phone calls
- "What to Expect" booklet - approximately two weeks before
- "No Parking" signs - posted on your street 72 hours before construction.
- Notice - prior to water shut-off at your home

Q. Will there be digging in my yard?

A. If you have signed and returned an Agreement, we will dig test pits in order to determine pipe material. If the test pit shows that you have a lead pipe on your property, it will be replaced. If the pipe is found to be copper, no further digging is necessary. However, to replace a lead service pipe in public space, the contractor has to dig **up to** the private property line (*see above for property line discussion*), which may be in your yard. To minimize digging, the contractor puts the new pipe in place using trenchless technology wherever possible that pulls the pipe between a few holes.

Q. What are those colored paint markings in my yard or on the street?

A. To prevent accidents, **all** contractors or property owners are required by law to call "Miss Utility" to locate and mark out existing utility lines before digging. The paint used is temporary and fades away over time. To check if these lines are for DC WASA lead service work, you may contact DC WASA's Customer Service Line at (202) 354-3600.

Q. Will my fences/retaining wall/porch/hedges be disturbed or damaged?

A. In most cases, retaining walls, fences, porches and hedges will not be disturbed. The contractor tries to dig as few holes as possible. However, if an older retaining wall near the work area is disturbed as a result of negligent work, the contractor will repair any damage caused by their crews. DC WASA contractors take photographs of the repair area prior to replacement in order to restore the area properly. You should move any special plantings when you see the "Miss Utility" markings. You should also locate, mark and **MAKE SURE YOU TELL THE CONTRACTOR** about underground items such as electronic dog fences or irrigation systems which may interfere with the lead service replacement.

Q. How long will my water be turned off during construction?

A. The water is generally turned off for less than two hours.

Q. What steps should I take after lead pipe replacement?

A. Removing lead pipes will eliminate a possible source of lead contamination of the water in the service lines. However, immediately after construction, lead particles that remain in the pipes can cause a temporary, but significant increase in lead levels in your water.

What you need to do immediately following construction:

- If you have a working outside faucet, DC WASA's Contractor will flush from this outlet immediately following construction for 60 minutes. You must immediately flush your inside plumbing for 15 minutes before using water for any purpose.
- Flush using only cold water by opening one or more faucets in the lowest part of the house, preferably your basement, if available. Do not open a hot water faucet until the system is flushed or you may introduce sediment into your hot water heater.

For 30 days following construction:

- Each day before using water for cooking or drinking, you should flush water from your faucets for 10 minutes, and remove and clean the aerator screens on those faucets as sediment can get trapped in the screen.
- If you are pregnant and/or have children under the age of six, for 30 days, you should: 1) drink filtered tap water and 2) use filtered tap water to prepare infant formula or concentrated juices.

After 30 days for overall water quality:

- If water has been stagnant in the line for more than six hours, flush water lines by running the cold water for two minutes prior to using the water for drinking or cooking, or for five to 10 minutes after several days of non-use.
- Periodically remove and clean the strainer/aerator device on your faucet to remove sediment.
- If you are pregnant and/or have children under the age of six, and still have a lead service line on your property, you should: 1) drink filtered tap water and 2) use filtered tap water to prepare infant formula or concentrated juices. You should continue to use filtered tap water until the lead pipe is removed from your private property.
- If you choose to use a water filter, please visit the NSF International Consumer website at: www.nsf.org/certified/dwtu to learn more about water filters specifically designed to remove lead.

- Q. What are potential causes for pressure surges and/or leaks around my hot water heater immediately after having my service line replaced?**
- A. You may experience pressure surges (or higher water pressures) following a water service replacement. This may cause leaks around your hot water heater. You may need to install a thermal expansion tank or similar device on your internal plumbing system to prevent the leaks. You should contact a licensed plumber for more details.
- Q. Can DC WASA assure me that I won't have lead in my water after lead service replacement?**
- A. Replacing lead pipes in the public **and** private space greatly reduces the chances of elevated levels of lead in your water in the future. If you choose not to replace your private side pipe, lead can dissolve from this section of pipe into the water. In addition, lead can dissolve into your water from older lead soldered pipes and brass fixtures in your home. If you have any concerns, you should have your water tested by a state-certified independent lab.
- Q. Who is responsible for repairing or replacing plumbing in my home?**
- A. The upkeep, repair and replacement of private plumbing is the responsibility of the homeowner.
- Q. How does DC WASA treat older and historic trees and their roots when digging?**
- A. To help avoid damage, the crews put the new pipe in place with a special tool called a "mole" that pulls the pipe between just a few holes. This process has little impact on trees and roots. On a case-by-case basis, DC WASA works with the DDOT tree expert/arborist to develop a plan and work around major roots.
- Q. When will the roadway, sidewalk and my yard be restored?**
- A. To replace the lead service line, lawns, tree spaces, sidewalks and streets may be dug up. DC WASA contractors will restore areas behind the curb within two weeks after replacement (assuming no delays due to weather). Every effort will be made to save trees, shrubs and other plants. The contractor will notify you approximately two weeks before construction starts so you can move any shrubs or plantings. For roadway repairs, the contractor will install permanent repairs of excavations made in the street within 60 days of making the excavation (weather dependent). The time to repave the street depends on whether DDOT or DC WASA will be doing the work. Some streets may take greater than 60 days if additional work is to be done, or due to inclement weather conditions. If the block is a street that is on DDOT's Paving Plan, up to one year may lapse before the street is repaved in accordance with DDOT's schedule.
- Q. Will DC WASA's contractors replace grass with sod or seed?**
- A. DC WASA contractors restore lawns and tree boxes with grass seed.
- Q. Is the historic brick sidewalk going to be replaced when it is taken up? Will the colors be matched and what does DC WASA do to ensure that its contractors replace antique brick with antique brick?**
- A. DC WASA requires that, when necessary, the contractor temporarily remove all brick and keep it stored for reuse. Every attempt is made to use the same bricks. However, even when the same bricks are replaced after construction, the color may slightly vary. Occasionally, new brick may have to be used and will not match exactly.

Q. How does DC WASA handle automobile traffic during construction?

A. DC WASA works with DDOT to make sure cars can move on the streets where contractors are working. Generally, the contractor does not need to close a street to traffic. In certain unusual situations, DDOT may require that the street be temporarily closed to accommodate the work, with appropriate signage in place to detour traffic to other streets. In most cases there will be some restrictions on parking spaces so that the contractor may work efficiently and avoid potential damage to cars parked in the area. Depending upon the particular circumstances, the areas marked for "No Parking" may be adjusted to accommodate special requirements.

Q. Does DC WASA coordinate the lead service replacements and the fire hydrant replacements so they can be accomplished at the same time?

A. There is extensive coordination to facilitate the completion of all required work on a block at the same time. Every effort is made to minimize the impact to affected residents.

Q. Who can I contact with questions concerning the Lead Service Replacement Program?

A. Questions may be directed to the Lead Liaison Line at (202) 393-2005. Or you may contact DC WASA's Customer Service Line at (202) 354-3600.