

# Replacing Your Lead Service Line



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**LEAD  
FREE  
DC** 



## Replacing Your Lead Service Line

DC Water is working to replace all lead water service lines in the District with copper pipes. DC Water can replace lead service lines at no cost to the property owner if your home is eligible through one of our programs.

**With the homeowner's permission, DC Water will replace all the lead service lines on a single block over a period of 4 months.**

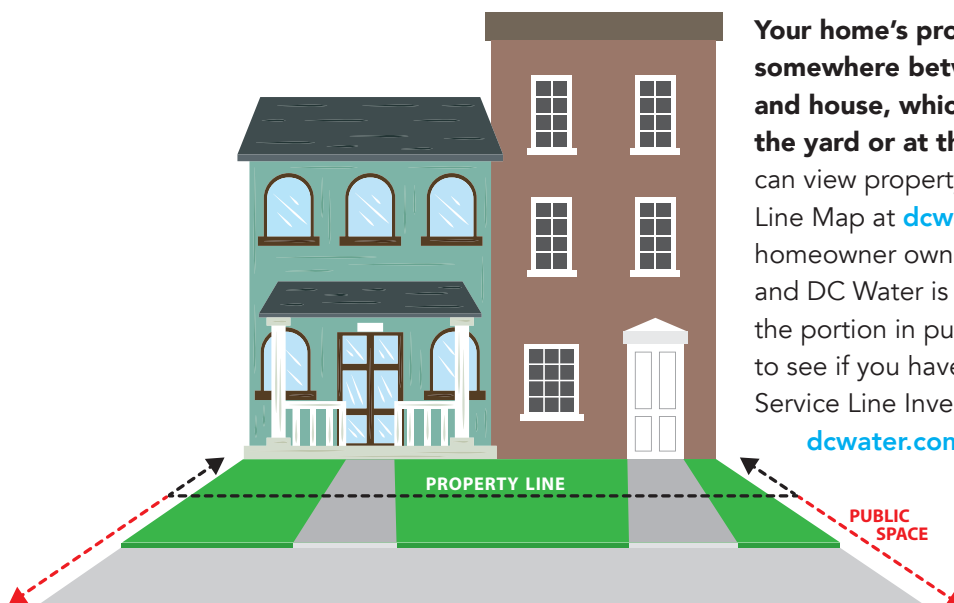


### Health Effects of Lead in Water

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 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.

### What is a water service line?

Your water service line connects your home to the water main in the street. The Lead Free DC Program will replace the lead or galvanized iron pipe in the public space and on the homeowner's property. During Small Diameter Water Main replacement projects, service lines between the water main and the meter will either be replaced or reconnected to the new main depending on the pipe material and location of the new water main in the street. If you authorize the work, the private-side lead service line between the meter and your home will be replaced for FREE. If you do not have a lead service line, no work will be done on your private property.



**Your home's property line is likely somewhere between the sidewalk and house, which may be in the middle of the yard or at the face of the building** (you can view property lines on DC Water's Service Line Map at [dcwater.com/servicemap](https://dcwater.com/servicemap)). The homeowner owns the entire water service line and DC Water is responsible for maintaining the portion in public space. You can check to see if you have a lead service line on the Service Line Inventory Map at [dcwater.com/leadmap](https://dcwater.com/leadmap).



### Scheduling service line replacement on private property

To get a free replacement, the property owner must sign and submit a Right of Entry Authorization Form for DC Water's contractors to complete the work on their private property. Our canvassing team will go door-to-door in your neighborhood. If you are home at the time, you can sign up for your replacement right with them, or fill out your form at [dcwater.com/ROE](https://dcwater.com/ROE).

Stay up to date on the schedule for construction on your block by accessing the Construction Dashboard at [dcwater.com/lead](https://dcwater.com/lead) or by emailing us at [lead@dcwater.com](mailto:lead@dcwater.com).

If you have returned a signed authorization form, the DC Water contractor will contact you to schedule a date for the lead pipe replacement. You must be home for the replacement, as the contractor will need to connect the new service line to your home's plumbing at the point of entry into the house.

When scheduling your appointment, it is very important that you tell DC Water and/or the contractor about any known hidden hazards or recent plumbing work on your private property so that work can be performed safely. We will determine the best approach to do the lead service line replacement.

### Contact

If you have questions about your lead service line replacement, call us at [\(202\) 787-4044](tel:(202)787-4044) or email [lead@dcwater.com](mailto:lead@dcwater.com).

If you are experiencing a water emergency, such as a leak, burst pipe, or flooding, please call [\(202\) 612-3400](tel:(202)612-3400).

If you need this document translated, please contact LFDC at [\(202\) 787-4044](tel:(202)787-4044) or email [lead@dcwater.com](mailto:lead@dcwater.com).



## Replacing Your Lead Service Line

### What you can expect during your lead pipe replacement process

With the homeowner's permission, DC Water will replace all the lead service lines on a single block over a period of 4 months.

#### Before Construction

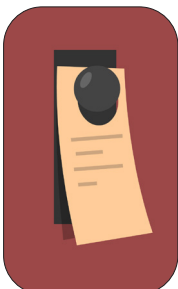
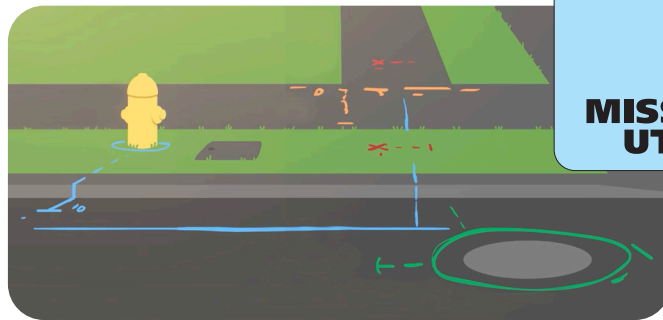
Miss Utility will find and mark the location of the water service line and other underground pipes with temporary paint before construction begins. These temporary markings will be on the sidewalk, curb and possibly in your yard.



An inspector will come by to inspect your point of entry. They will knock on the door and ask to come in to see the area where your service line pipe enters the house and take photos. If nobody is home, they will leave a door hanger and try again. This inspection occurs during test pit inspections (see below).

Before or on the day of your replacement, the contractor will conduct a "test pit" inspection to confirm your pipe material ahead of the replacement. The contractor will dig two holes in front of your house to confirm that you have a lead service line.

**One hole will be near your water meter and the other hole will be near your property line, which may be in the middle of the yard or at the face of the building.** Each hole will be about 4 feet by 4 feet. If no lead is found, the contractor will not do any further work on your property. This is not the replacement; if it occurs before the day of your replacement, the contractor will leave a door hanger with the results, temporarily fill the holes with dirt and dig in the same exact spots on the day of your service line replacement.



"No Parking" signs will be posted on your street 72 hours before construction begins.

A doorhanger notifying you that your water will be shut off for approximately 8 hours the day of the replacement will be placed on your door about 48 hours before the replacement.

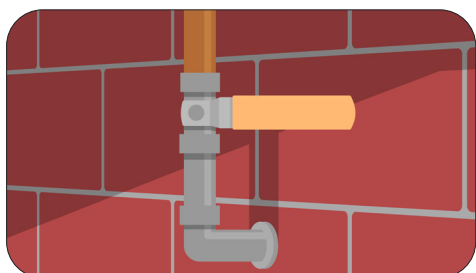
## What do I need to do before Construction?

After Miss Utility has marked your sidewalk or yard, you will see if any special plants, trees or yard features may be affected by the work. Yard items and special plants should be relocated at least 6 feet away from the markings. The contractor may be able to work around or under larger items such as trees, sidewalks, or stone walls. However, the homeowner should call **(202) 787-4044** with any concerns or questions.



Collect a supply of water in advance for drinking and cooking purposes to prepare for the approximately 8 hours your water will be shut off.

### Plan to be home on the date and at the time of lead pipe replacement.



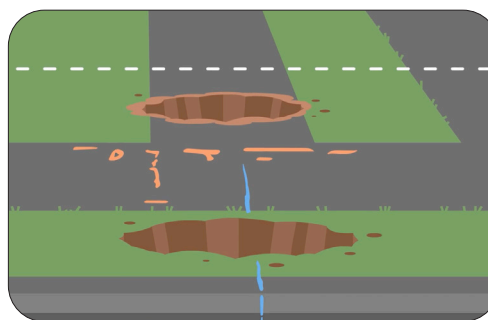
On the day of replacement, the contractor will need access to the basement or crawl space to connect the new pipe to your shutoff valve. Items such as boxes, furniture, washers, and dryers in the way of the shut-off valve must be moved by the property owner to allow workers to access it.



### The Day of Construction

The day that your lead service line is replaced, your street may be closed to traffic.

The replacement will take approximately 8 hours or less. The contractor will first turn off the water service to your home during the replacement. The contractor will dig two holes in front of your house to confirm that you have a lead service line if that has not already occurred in previous months. **One hole will be near your water meter and the other hole will be near your property line.** Each hole will be about 4 feet by 4 feet, which may be in the middle of the yard or at the face of the building.



Your lead service will be replaced using trenchless technologies so that the contractor will not have to dig additional holes to complete the replacement. Typically, fences, retaining walls, sidewalks, porches, and hedges will not be disturbed. Upon completion of the work, the holes in your yard will be temporarily backfilled with dirt, and completely restored after construction is complete on your block.

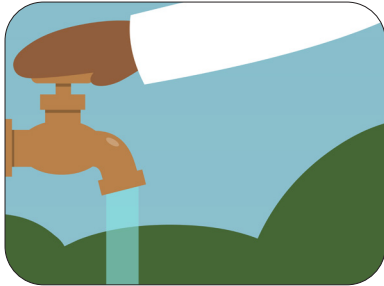


## Replacing Your Lead Service Line

### What should I do during the replacement?

While your water is off, you should not flush your toilet to prevent clogging in your pipes.

**For their safety, keep small children and pets away from the construction areas.**



### After Your Replacement

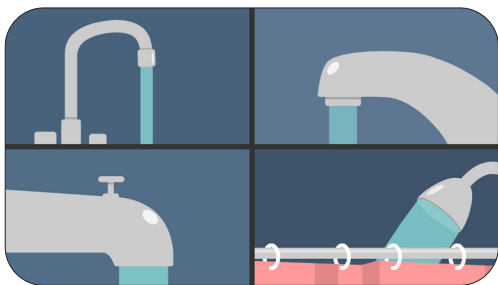
After construction, the contractor will turn on your outside faucet to flush out any lead particles or other sediment that may have gotten inside the service line during construction.

After your replacement, an inspector from the District Department of Buildings will visit to inspect the point of entry and property line connections for your new service line. They will need to enter your home to confirm the new pipe connection is up to code, and then will be on their way.

Construction crews will return to restore the full lawn and sidewalk when construction is completed on your block, including re-seeding the yard and replacing any affected plants. Restoration timelines are dependent on weather conditions. While unlikely, as with any construction project, there is a small risk of water leaks or pipe breaks that can lead to flooding, sinkholes, and delays in permanent restoration. At times, addressing some concerns might fall beyond the DC Water Contractor agreement requirements, and you may need to hire a DC licensed plumber to assist you.



DC Water will send a lead test kit 3-4 months after the replacement to ensure the lead in water has been minimized. You'll receive a letter with your test kit results.



### What should I do after the replacement?

Lead particles remain in your plumbing after the lead pipe replacement. Before you use water in your home, you must flush the faucets inside your home. Instructions to flush your faucets and remove the kitchen faucet aerator will be provided by the contractor with your water filter kit before your replacement, and can also be found under the Useful Documents sidebar at [dcwater.com/lead](https://dcwater.com/lead).



You should filter your water using the provided filter kit for 6 months after your replacement.



## Additional short term impacts homeowners may experience after the replacement of their lead service line:

- Household plumbing noises: Household plumbing noises may be caused by air trapped in the pipes. These noises should go away on their own within a few weeks.
- Water heater drips or leaks: If you do not already have one, homeowners must ensure a thermal expansion device is installed on the household plumbing system after DC Water replaces your water service pipe. The thermal expansion device will resolve any water heater dripping and leaking.
- Discolored water: If discolored water persists for more than 1-2 days, please call Drinking Water Division at [\(202\) 612-3440](tel:2026123440).
- Low water pressure: If low water pressure persists for more than 1-2 days, please call DC Water's 24-Hour Command Center at [\(202\) 612-3400](tel:2026123400).

If you have questions about your lead service line replacement, call us at [\(202\) 787-4044](tel:2027874044) or email [lead@dcwater.com](mailto:lead@dcwater.com).

If you are experiencing a water emergency, such as a leak, burst pipe, or flooding, please call [\(202\) 612-3400](tel:2026123400).

If you have a lead source or do not know if you have a lead source, we recommend regularly using point-of-use (POU) water filters. Point of use water filters are installed at the point where you draw water for drinking and cooking, such as a kitchen faucet. POU filters can be faucet-mounted, pitcher-style, countertop, refrigerator, and water bottle filters. For lead removal, they must be certified under **NSF/ANSI 42 standard** for particulate Class I reduction and **NSF/ANSI 53 standard** for the reduction of lead. The **NSF/ANSI 53 standard certification must specify that the filter is certified to reduce lead**. For more information on point of use filters, visit the EPA's POU Drinking Water Filters Certified to Reduce Lead website at:

[epa.gov/water-research/consumer-tool-identifying-point-use-and-pitcher-filters-certified-reduce-lead](https://epa.gov/water-research/consumer-tool-identifying-point-use-and-pitcher-filters-certified-reduce-lead).

To learn more about potential sources of lead in your drinking water, visit our website at: [dcwater.com/resources/lead/do-you-have-lead-pipes/let-us-help-you-find-out](https://dcwater.com/resources/lead/do-you-have-lead-pipes/let-us-help-you-find-out).

To learn more about steps to minimize potential lead exposure until all sources of lead have been removed, visit our website at:

[dcwater.com/resources/lead/partners-removing-lead/home-owner-tools-0](https://dcwater.com/resources/lead/partners-removing-lead/home-owner-tools-0).



