FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ("FAQ")

LEAD AND COPPER RULES

In 1986, the United States Congress amended the Safe Drinking Water Act, prohibiting the use of any lead pipe, flux, or solder in public water systems or indoor plumbing containing greater than 0.25% lead, and restricted the lead content of faucets, pipes, and other plumbing materials to 8.0%. Lead service lines are more likely to be found in older cities and homes built before 1986. Among homes without lead service lines, the most common exposure to lead is with brass or chrome-plated brass faucets and plumbing with lead solder.

In 2014, the maximum allowable lead content was reduced to not more than a weighted average of 0.25% of the wetted surface of pipes, pipe fittings, plumbing fittings, and fixtures, and 0.2% for solder and flux.

Rest assured, the drinking water produced by the City is safe. However, lead from old plumbing materials which are privately owned (located on the property owner's "side" of the plumbing connection), may enter the drinking water system.

The City is in the process of inspecting service lines for properties in our community. A service line is a portion of pipe that connects the water main to the building/home inlet. These inspections are being conducted on the portion of service lines between the water meter and the home. This portion of the service line would have been installed by a plumber when the home was originally constructed.

To date, the City has conducted approximately 8,300 inspections on service lines and is committed to completing the 13,000 inspections that remain. As of November 14, 2024, **zero** lead service lines have been found.

1. WHAT IS THE CITY DOING TO PROTECT ME? The City is working diligently to meet the United Stations Environmental Protection Agency Lead and Copper Rule Revisions that became law on December 16, 2021 that include the City completing and submitting a service line material inventory which can be viewed on the City's website WWW.CITYOFPSL.COM.

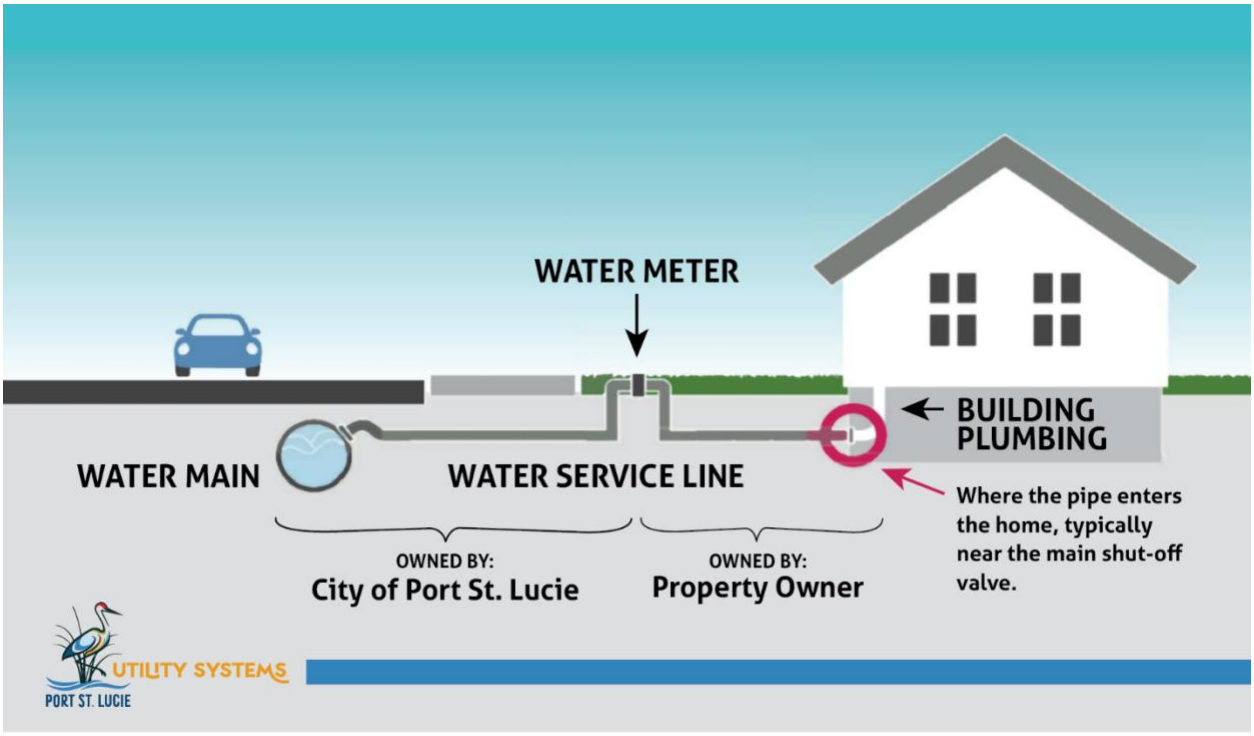
2. WHAT IS LEAD? Lead is a naturally occurring element found in in the earth's crust. Although lead has some beneficial uses, it can be toxic to humans and animals. Exposure to lead comes from past use of leaded gasoline and lead-based paint. Lead and lead compounds have been used in a wide variety of products found in and around our homes, including paint, ceramics, and cosmetics. Lead was also used in plumbing parts and materials prior to 1986 because it's pliable and leak resistant.

   Lead is a toxic metal that can cause immediate health effects at high doses and long-term health effects if it builds up in the body with prolonged exposure over many years. Lead can cause brain and kidney damage and increase the risk for high blood pressure and reduced fertility. Young children are particularly vulnerable because the physical and neurological

effects of lead toxicity occur at lower levels in children than in adults. Pregnant women are also at increased risk, as lead is released from the mother's bones along with calcium and can pass from the mother to the infant. This can increase the risk for miscarriage and result in serious developmental effects for the baby. Find more information about the health effects of lead exposure at www.cdc.gov.

3. HOW COULD LEAD GET INTO DRINKING WATER? The City's Water Treatment Facilities treats raw water from the shallow surficial and deep Floridan aquifers and then distributes treated water through the City's water mains. The water makes its way to the privately owned service lines and plumbing pipes at each property. If the plumbing materials that contain lead corrode, lead could enter the drinking water.

   The most common sources of lead in drinking water are lead pipes, faucets, and fixtures in homes and businesses. Lead water service lines are lead pipes that connect a home to a City water main. Those lines are typically the most significant source in cases where lead is found in water.



4. DOES MY HOUSE HAVE LEAD PLUMBING? To determine if the plumbing materials contain lead, scratch the pipe or fixture with a key or a coin. Lead will have a dull finish that shines brightly when scratched. Using a magnet can also help you identify a lead pipe, because even a strong magnet will not cling to lead.

5. WHAT CAN I DO TO REDUCE LEAD EXPOSURE FROM MY DRINKING WATER? The best way to remove risks of lead in water is to completely replace all sources of lead. But there are also steps you can take right away to reduce lead levels in your water.
    a. Run the Faucet Before Use – Lead levels are likely at their highest when water has been sitting in a lead pipe for several hours. Clear this water from your pipes by running the cold water for 3-5 minutes before using. This allows you to draw fresh water from the City's water main. In efforts to conserve water, you can use this water on house and garden plants or to flush toilets.
    b. Clean Aerators – Aerators are small attachments at the tips of faucets which regulate the flow of water. They can accumulate small particles of lead in their screens. It's a good idea to remove your aerators at least monthly and clean them out.
    c. Use Cold Water for Cooking and Drinking – Always cook and prepare baby formula with cold water, because hot water dissolves lead faster, resulting in higher levels in water.
    d. Filter the Water – Many home water filters are effective at removing lead. If you purchase a filter, make sure it is certified to NSF/ANSI 53 and NSF/ANSI 42 for lead reduction and that you maintain it properly. Find out more on filter certification at www.nsf.org

6. HOW MUCH LEAD IN WATER IS TOO MUCH? Lead can be harmful even at very low levels and can accumulate in our bodies over time, so wherever possible, take steps to reduce or eliminate your household's exposure. No concentration of lead is considered "safe." Households with pregnant women, infants, or young children are especially vulnerable to the harmful effects of lead at low levels. Find more information about the health effects of lead exposure at www.cdc.gov.

7. WHAT CAN I DO TO PROTECT MY YOUNG CHILDREN? Households with pregnant women, infants, or young children should be especially aware of the potential for lead exposure through drinking water. If you suspect there may be lead in your home plumbing, consider having your water tested by a private laboratory. If lead is detected, consider purchasing a filter certified for lead removal or using an alternate source of water until the problem is corrected. Babies and young children are most vulnerable to the harmful effects of lead at low levels. U.S. EPA estimates infants who consume mostly mixed formula can receive 40 percent to 60 percent of their exposure to lead from drinking water.

8. WHO IS RESPONSIBLE TO REPLACE LEAD OR COPPER PIPES? The City owns and maintains the service lines from the water main up to the water meter. The service line from the water meter into the building is owned and maintained by the property owner. Therefore, replacing an entire lead service line is shared by the City and the Property Owner.

9. IS IT MANDATORY TO REPLACE LEAD AND COPPER PIPES? Yes, on October 8, 2024, the Biden-Harris Administration issued a final rule requiring drinking water systems across the country to identify and replace lead pipes within 10 years. Biden-Harris Administration Issues

Final Rule Requiring Replacement of Lead Pipes Within 10 Years, Announces Funding to Provide Clean Water to Schools and Homes | US EPA

10. WHAT IF MY NEIGHBOR HAS LEAD OR COPPER PIPES? If your neighbor has lead or copper pipes, do not connect hoses or plumbing from their home to yours.

11. CAN MY PETS DRINK WATER WITH LEAD? Lead can impact animals the same way it does humans. Domestic animals drink more water relative to their body weight, so pet owners with lead in their home's plumbing may want to take precautions.

12. IS IT SAFE TO SHOWER IN WATER THAT CONTAINS LEAD? Lead is not absorbed through the skin, bathing or showering in water containing lead is not considered a health risk.

13. IS WATER THE ONLY SOURCE OF LEAD IN HOMES AND BUSINESSES? No. In fact, lead in drinking water generally represents only about 20% of total exposure, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The most common exposure to lead is swallowing and breathing in lead paint chips and dust. However, drinking water can account for more than half of lead exposure in children because of their lower body weight. Additionally, because no level of lead is considered safe, completely eliminating potential sources of lead is strongly advised.

14. DOES THE CITY TEST FOR LEAD? Yes. The City is required by the Safe Drinking Water Act to test for lead. The results are posted in the City's annual water quality report. You can also review the City's Annual Water Quality Report on our website www.cityofpsl.com.

    The Florida Department of Environmental Protection and the Florida Department of Health ensure that drinking water from public water systems meets water quality standards for lead (Pb) and copper (Cu). Public water systems are required to perform routine water quality testing to ensure that the water they are providing their customers meets state and federal standards. In Florida, lead is monitored under two separate regulations:

    The Inorganics Monitoring Rule, in 62-550.513, Florida Administrative Code, requires community water systems and non-transient, non-community water systems to monitor for lead at each point of entry to its distribution system (in other words, after the water leaves the treatment plant, but before it reaches the water system's first customer.

    The Lead and Copper Rule (LCR), at Subpart I, Part 141 of title 40 of the federal code of regulations (40 C.F.R. sections 141.80-.91) and section 62-550.800, F.A.C., requires community water systems and non-transient, non-community water systems to collect first-draw samples from water taps in homes/buildings that may be or are at an elevated risk of lead/copper contamination (taking into account the presence of lead/copper pipes and fixtures, and the use of lead in the pipe solder used to connect lead/copper pipes). Selecting these higher-risk sites is a more effective method of targeting sampling locations that may

pose a greater risk to public health, as opposed to the approach of selecting monitoring sites based solely on geographic distribution across a water system's service area.
The purpose of the LCR is to protect public health by minimizing lead (Pb) and copper (Cu) levels in drinking water. Lead and copper are primarily introduced to drinking water through corrosion of plumbing materials that contain lead and copper.
Source - Monitoring Lead and Copper in Florida Drinking Water | Florida Department of Environmental Protection

15. HOW OFTEN DOES THE CITY TEST THE WATER FOR LEAD AND COPPER?
    A public water system must test the drinking water for lead and copper twice a year; however, a public water system that has not recently experienced any of the following situations may qualify to monitor annually or once every three years:

    - Lead or copper action level exceedances.
    - Source water changes.
    - Long-term changes in treatment.
    - Where water quality parameter monitoring is required and the system is subject to a reduced lead and copper tap monitoring frequency, failure to operate at or above the minimum value or within the range of values for the water quality parameters specified by the department for more than nine days in any six-month monitoring period (water quality parameters may include, but are not limited to, pH, conductivity, calcium and alkalinity). These measurements are used for various purposes including verification of the adjustment of corrosion control treatment.

    A public water system that has recently experienced any of the above situations must conduct two consecutive monitoring rounds every six months before it may be eligible to sample just once a year or every three years. Source - Monitoring Lead and Copper in Florida Drinking Water | Florida Department of Environmental Protection

16. WHAT IS THE CITY DOING TO ASSIST RESIDENTS WITH LEAD SERVICE LINE REPLACEMENTS? Under USEPA's Revised Lead and Copper Rule, the City has notified consumers with known or suspected lead service lines. The City will also plan and coordinate the replacement of any City-owned portion of a lead service line it maintains upon identification, as well as notifying customers of any lead service line portions that are owned and maintained by the customer.

17. WHERE CAN I FIND MORE INFORMATION? Information on lead in drinking water, testing methods, and steps you can take to minimize exposure is available by calling the EPA Safe Drinking Water Hotline at 1-800-426-4791 or by visiting www.epa.gov/safewater/lead.
    EPA Lead and Copper Rule | City of Port St. Lucie, FL (City's Website)