

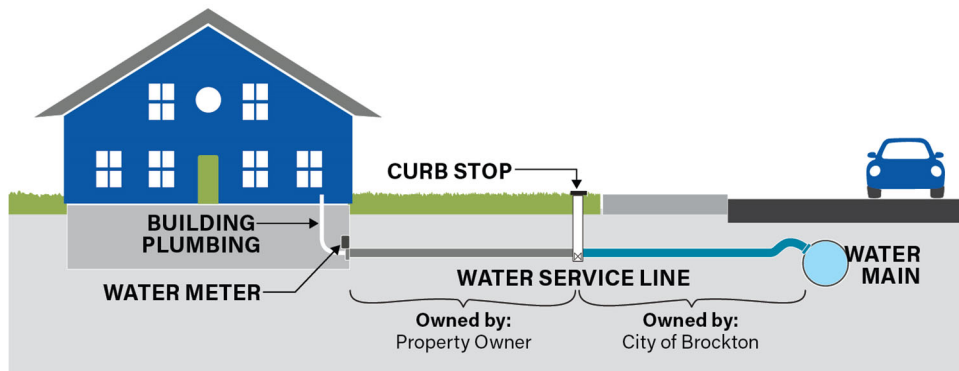
City of Brockton Lead in Drinking Water FAQs

1. What is a water service line?
 - a. A water service line is a small, buried pipe that brings water from water mains in the streets into homes and other buildings.
2. What are the health effects of lead? ([EPA 2023](#))
 - a. Exposure to lead in drinking water can cause serious health effects in all age groups. Infants and children can have decreased 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.
3. Is there a safe level of lead exposure?
 - a. No, there is no safe level of lead exposure. Any amount of lead exposure has risk.
4. What steps can I take to protect myself if I think I have lead in my water?
 - a. Run cold water before using.
 - i. The longer the water stays in the plumbing, the more lead it may have. If the water in the faucet has been sitting for more than six hours, run water for at least five minutes before using it. Showering and flushing the toilet also help clear out your water line.
 - b. Use cold water for cooking, drinking, and making baby formula.
 - i. Lead dissolves into hot water more easily than cold water. If you need hot water, draw cold water and then heat it. It is safe to shower, wash dishes, and do laundry with hot water from the tap. Lead does not affect humans through the skin. Boiling water does NOT reduce lead.
 - c. Replace your home's internal plumbing that may have lead.
 - i. Potential lead sources include lead pipes, lead-based solder, and brass fixtures and valves (including faucets).
 - d. Remove and clean faucet strainers.
 - i. Every three months, remove and clean strainers at the tip of faucets to remove build up.
 - e. Remove the faucet strainers from all taps.
 - i. Rinse the faucet strainers.
 - ii. Run the water without a strainer for 3 to 5 minutes.
 - iii. Replace faucet strainers.
 - f. Test your water for lead.

- i. Send your water to a [Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection](#) approved laboratory or use [EPA-approved test kits](#). If the results show lead levels at or greater than 15 parts per billion (ppb), call the City of Brockton at 508-580-7135 so we can look for a cause.
- g. Use filters.
 - i. Consider using a water filter. Be sure the filter you choose (faucet, refrigerator or pitcher filter), is approved to reduce lead (NSF 53/42-certified). Visit <https://tinyurl.com/NSFleadfilter> to learn more about water filters.
- h. Test your child's blood for lead.
 - i. Your local doctor or pediatrician can perform a blood test for lead and provide you with information about the health effects of lead. Call the [Brockton Department of Public Health](#) at 508-894-1480 or the [MA Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program](#) at 800-532-9571 to learn more, including where you can have your child's blood tested.

5. Who is responsible for the water service line on my property?

- a. In Brockton, the water utility is responsible for the service line from the water main in the street to the curb stop valve (typically located at the property line). The property owner is responsible for the service line from the curb stop valve to the plumbing inside your home.



6. How does lead get into drinking water?

- a. There can be lead in water service lines, plumbing fixtures (faucets, valves, fittings, etc.), and indoor copper plumbing pipes with lead solder. Lead can enter drinking water from plumbing inside your building or the water service line between the street and building. When water sits in the service line or plumbing for hours without use, like overnight, lead may release into the water.

7. Why might the water service line or plumbing fixtures at my home have lead?

- a. Lead used to be common in water service lines and home plumbing. Older homes and buildings, especially those built before 1987, may still have service lines and

internal plumbing and fixtures with lead. The U.S. EPA allowed “Lead free” plumbing fixtures to have up to 8% lead until 2014. A licensed plumber can help figure out if you have lead in your indoor plumbing. You can also use an U.S. EPA-approved lead test kit: [EPA-Approved Lead Test Kit](#).

8. How do I find my water service line?

- a. In Brockton, the property owner is responsible for the service line from the curb stop valve (typically located at the property line) to the plumbing inside your home. The customer part of the service line can be found by looking at your water meter in the basement.

9. How do I know if I have a lead or galvanized service line?

- a. Step 1: Get a strong magnet and a key or coin.
- b. Step 2: Find where your service line enters your building. There will likely be a valve in a basement, crawl space, or utility closet.
- c. Step 3: Scratch the pipe coming from the street with the key or coin, then hold the magnet and see if it sticks. Then compare your results to the options below:
 - i. If the material is orange or copper-colored like a penny and a magnet does not stick, this part of the service line is copper.
 - ii. If the material is dull gray, and a strong magnet sticks to it, the part of the service line is galvanized steel.
 - iii. If the material is soft and easily scraped, gray **but shines brightly, and a magnet does NOT stick to it, the pipe is lead.**
- d. Step 4: Submit a photo of your service line and fill out the form in the [Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection portal](#) (please report results even if your line is not lead)
- e. If you have trouble identifying your line, call 508-580-7135 for help.

10. How can I get my water tested for lead?

- a. Test your water for lead. Send your water to a [state-approved laboratory](#). If the results show lead levels at or greater than 15 parts per billion, call the City of Brockton at 508-580-7135 .

11. What is a test pit?

- a. Test pits are small holes over the water service line. Contractors dig these holes to learn if the service line is lead or galvanized (may contain lead).

12. What is a basement inspection?

- a. Contractors will ask permission to look at the service line in your basement. They will determine the material of your service line.

13. What happens if I have a lead line?

- a. We will work with you to create a replacement plan.

14. What is the Revised Lead and Copper Rule?

- a. The U.S. EPA Lead and Copper rule aims to better protect children and communities at risk for lead exposure. U.S. EPA released Lead and Copper Rule Revisions on October 16, 2021. Water utilities must comply with the rule by October 16, 2024. The Lead and Copper Rule Revisions outline actions including:
 - i. Create a materials inventory of all service lines – public and private
 - ii. Update/expand how many water samples utilities test each year
 - iii. Prepare a sampling plan for schools and licensed daycares
 - iv. Review and/or develop a corrosion control program

15. What is corrosion control?

- a. Corrosion control is chemically treating water to help reduce the amount of lead that releases into water from plumbing and pipes. An example is adding a chemical to the water supply that coats service lines. The coating reduces the amount of lead releasing from the lines into a home's water.