



VILLAGE OF MENANDS | NY
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Lead Service Lines Frequently Asked Questions

What is lead?

Lead is a common naturally occurring metallic element that can be found in air, soil, and water. It is also a powerful toxin that is harmful to human health. Lead was commonly used in gasoline and paint until the 1970s and is still sometimes found in products such as ceramics, batteries, ammunition, and cosmetics. Lead was used for centuries in plumbing because of its pliability and resistance to leaks.

What are the health effects of lead?

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 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 steps should be taken to reduce or eliminate your household's exposure. While risks vary based on individual circumstances and the amount of water consumed, no concentration of lead is considered "safe." Households with pregnant women, infants, or young children are most vulnerable to the harmful effects of lead at low levels.

What are the laws regulating lead in drinking water?

In 1986, U.S. Congress amended the Safe Drinking Water Act to prohibit the use of pipes, solder or flux that were not "lead free." At the time "lead free" was defined as solder and flux with no more than .2% lead and pipes with no more than 8%. In 2014, the maximum allowable lead content was reduced from not more than 8% to not more than a weighted average of 0.25% of the wetted surface of pipes, pipe fittings, plumbing fittings, and fixtures.

In 1991, the Environmental Protection Agency published a regulation to control lead and copper in drinking water. This regulation is known as the Lead and Copper Rule (LCR). Revisions to these rules went into effect October 2024. These regulations require every water system in the country to develop an inventory of water service lines and to develop a lead service line replacement program, among other provisions.

How might lead get into my water?

Lead is a naturally occurring metal abundantly found throughout the Earth. It has been used in a wide variety of products including gasoline, paint, plumbing pipes, ceramics, solders, batteries, and even cosmetics. Water from lakes, rivers, or wells is not a common source of lead. Lead contamination in drinking water usually comes from distribution or plumbing lines that leach lead. Older homes (typically those built before the 1940s) may have lead in their water through two sources:

- **Water Service Lines**, comprising the pipe that connects a building to the water system. Service lines are the sole responsibility of the property owner.
- **Interior Plumbing**, comprising the pipes, fitting, and fixtures inside the building. Interior plumbing is the sole responsibility of the property owner.

If present, lead water service lines, interior plumbing, fittings, or fixtures can dissolve, or particles can break off into water and end up at the tap. Elevated lead levels may be present in these homes.

What is Menands doing about lead service lines?

Water Service Line Inventory: Menands is developing an inventory of all the service lines in the village. Members of DPW will be visiting as many residents as possible to identify service line materials. You may also set up a visit by DPW to check the material of your water service line by emailing lead@menandsny.gov.

Free Water Filters: To help protect your household, the Village will provide an NSF/ANSI 53 certified pitcher filter and replacement cartridges free of charge for each customer with a lead service line for 6 months following replacement of any portion of their service line. Contact us at lead@menandsny.gov for information on how to collect your filter/replacement cartridges.

Lead Tap Sampling: To ensure water safety, the Village will, upon request, collect a tap water sample from homes served by a replaced water main within 3 to 6 months after replacing any portion of their service line. While this service is provided free of charge, the homeowner or tenant must be responsible for ensuring that the proper procedure is followed. Contact us at lead@menandsny.gov to schedule sampling.

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

Menands is combing through its historic records, conducting field investigations, and working with village residents to identify the material of every service line in the village. You may also ask DPW to check your water service line by emailing lead@menandsny.gov.

Interior Plumbing is the responsibility of the property owner, not the village. If you believe you may have lead in your interior plumbing, you can hire a certified plumber to inspect the pipes and joints in your house.

Who owns the water service line?

Property owners have sole ownership of the service line. The village owns and maintains the distribution mains and water meters.

What should I do if I replace, or have replaced, my lead service line?

Before you use any water, a whole-house flush must be performed before. Instructions on how to perform a whole-house flush can be found at health.ny.gov/environmental/water/drinking/lslrp/docs/flushing.pdf.

Whole-house flushing should be repeated monthly, for the next three months.

For the next six months, the following should be conducted:

- **Run the tap before use.** Lead levels are likely at their highest when water has been sitting in the pipe for several hours. Clear this water from your pipes by running the cold water for several minutes. This allows you to draw fresh water from the main. You can use the spent water on house plants or to flush toilets.
- **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. Instructions on how to clean your aerators can be

found at www.menandsny.gov/lead/cleaning-aerators.

If you replace your service line, please inform DPW by submitting the Notification of Service Line Replacement found at www.menandsny.gov/lead/service-line-replacement-notification.

How do I perform a whole-house flush?

See instructions on how to perform a whole-house flush at health.ny.gov/environmental/water/drinking/lslrp/docs/flushing.pdf.

How do I clean my aerators?

See instructions on how to clean your aerators at www.menandsny.gov/lead/cleaning-aerators.

Will the Village of Menands test my drinking water for lead?

YES. Because it is colorless and tasteless, lead is not readily apparent in water. In fact, the only way to know for certain whether your drinking water contains lead is to have your water tested by a certified laboratory. The Village will, upon request, collect a tap water sample from homes served by a replaced water main within 3 to 6 months after replacing any portion of their service line. While this service is provided free of charge, the homeowner or tenant must be responsible for ensuring that the proper procedure is followed. If you wish to take advantage of this free testing, please contact us at lead@menandsny.gov.

What can I do to reduce or eliminate lead from my drinking water?

- **Service Line Replacement:** We encourage all residents with lead or galvanized service lines to consider full replacement. Removing the lead/galvanized service line is a sure way to reduce your chance of exposure to lead in drinking water. We strongly recommend residents with a lead or galvanized service line within the South End project area to replace their service line during construction. Construction can temporarily increase the risk of lead exposure in drinking water at properties with a lead or galvanized service line. Replacement during construction is also cost effective. All service line replacements within the South End construction area **must** be coordinated with the Village. Please contact us at lead@menandsny.gov. If you replace your service line (South End residents and Non-South End residents), please notify us using the Notification of Service Line Replacement found at www.menandsny.gov/lead/service-line-replacement-notification.
- **Use Only Cold Water for Cooking, Drinking, & Making Baby Formula:** Do not cook or drink water from the hot water tap. Do not use water from the hot water tap to make baby formula. Hot water can dissolve more lead more quickly than cold water. If you need hot water, draw water from the cold tap and then heat it.
- **Do Not Boil Water to Remove Lead:** Boiling water will not reduce lead.
- **Flush Your System:** Before drinking, flush your home's pipes for several minutes 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. For more information on how to flush your system see the How to Flush Your System instructions www.menandsny.gov/lead/flushing-instructions.
- **Clean Aerators:** Aerators are small attachments at the tip 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 for cleaning. For more information on how to clean your aerators see the How to Clean Your Aerators instructions at www.menandsny.gov/lead/clean-aerators.
- **Filter the Water:** Many home water filters are effective at removing lead. If you purchase a filter, make sure it is certified for lead removal and that you maintain it properly.

For more information and advice on home water filtration systems, visit:

<https://www.epa.gov/water-research/consumer-tool-identifying-point-use-and-pitcher-filters-certified-reduce-lead>

- **Blood Testing:** New York Public Health Law requires primary health care providers to screen each child for blood lead levels at one and two years of age as part of routine well-childcare. In addition, at each routine well-child visit, or at least annually if a child has not had routine well-child visits, primary health care providers assess each child who is at least six months of age, but under six years of age, for high lead exposure. Each child found to be at risk for high lead exposure is screened or referred for lead screening. If your child has not had routine well-child visits (since the age of one year) and you are concerned about lead exposure to your child, contact your local health department or healthcare provider to find out how you can get your child tested for lead.
- **Use Bottled Water:** The steps described above will reduce the lead concentration in your drinking water. However, if you are still concerned, you may wish to use bottled water for drinking and cooking.