

Drinking Water Lead Reduction Program Frequently Asked Questions

The City of New Plymouth is committed to reducing the risk of lead exposure from drinking water. We are doing all we can to protect our customers and give you information along with steps you can take to reduce your exposure. This program includes *developing an* inventory of service line materials, replacing lead service lines, providing third-party certified point-of-use or pitcher filters for lead reduction such as ANSI/NSF 53 and particulate removal such as ANSI/NSF 42, and continuing outreach and education to our customers. A date will be set to notify customers when the inventory process will take place. We will have more information after the inventory has been completed.

For more information on our program, please see the section on Additional Questions below.

Lead in Drinking Water Basics

What is lead and why is it a health concern?

Lead is a naturally occurring element found in small amounts in the earth's crust. It is also a toxic, soft metal that can be found in paint, dust, air, soil, food, and water, and can be harmful to human health. There is no safe level of exposure to lead in drinking water. **Lead is persistent, and it can bioaccumulate in the body over time.** 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 does lead get into drinking water?

Lead can enter drinking water when plumbing materials that contain lead corrode. The most common sources of lead in drinking water are lead and galvanized pipes, faucets, and fixtures. In homes served by lead service lines, these pipes are typically the most significant source of lead in the water. Lead can attach to the inner surface of galvanized service lines and be released into drinking water over time. Service lines made of galvanized iron or steel that are (or were previously) downstream of lead service lines are classified as galvanized requiring replacement (GRR). Identifying and ultimately removing lead and GRR service lines is an important way to protect public health.

What is a water service line?

A water service line is the pipe that connects the water main to your home or building inlet. Service lines may be made of copper or other materials such as galvanized iron or steel, plastic, brass, or lead. If any portion of the pipe is made of lead, it is called a lead service line (LSL).

Is water the only source of lead in houses and buildings?

No. While water may be a source of exposure to lead in houses and buildings, lead-based paint, dust, contaminated soil, lead-glazed pottery, and some toys and jewelry may also contain lead. Lead-based paint and lead-containing toys pose a significant risk especially for young children. For more information on protecting your family from lead in your home, please visit: <https://www.epa.gov/lead/protect-your-family-sources-lead>.

Reducing Lead Exposure

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

Below are recommended actions that you may take, separately or in combination, if you are concerned about lead in your drinking water. The list is not intended to be a complete list or to imply that all actions equally reduce lead from drinking water.



Have your water tested at your own cost

The city uses Analytical laboratories in Boise, their phone number is (208)342-5515. Currently, you may contact them to have your water tested and to learn more about the lead levels in your drinking water.



Run your water

The more time water has been sitting in your home's pipes, the more lead it may contain. Before drinking, flush your home's pipes 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. Residents should contact their water utility for recommendations about flushing times in their community.



Learn about construction in your neighborhood

Be aware of any construction or maintenance work that could disturb your lead service line. Construction may cause more lead to be released from a lead service line.



Use cold water

Only use cold water for cooking, drinking, and making baby formula. Hot water dissolves lead more quickly than cold water.



Clean your aerator regularly

Aerators are small attachments to faucet tips which regulate water flow. Your aerator can accumulate lead particles which can contaminate your water so it should be cleaned regularly.

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

- 1) You may visit our website at www.npidaho.com/water-utilities and download the **Customer Guide to Identifying Lead Service Lines**.
- 2) A licensed plumber may be able to assess your faucets, fixtures, and service line for lead.
- 3) EPA has developed an online step-by-step guide, Protect Your Tap, to help people identify lead pipes in their homes. The online tool is located at www.epa.gov/pyt. Once your materials are identified, please visit www.npidaho.com/water-utilities and download and complete the **Drinking Water Service Line Material Reporting Form**.

Can I shower in lead-contaminated water?

Yes. Bathing and showering should be safe for you and your children. Human skin does not absorb lead in water.

Is it safe to wash dishes and do laundry?

Yes, but dry them after. Wash dishes, bottles, and toys with soapy water. Dry before use. Lead in water will not be absorbed by porcelain, metal, or glass. Clothes washed in plain tap water will not contain enough lead to cause harm.

Additional Questions on Our Lead Reduction Program

How is the City of New Plymouth identifying lead service lines?

The city has no lead materials *in our system*. We will be canvassing the town later, to best identify all service lines in town.

How and when are customers being notified about the lead service line replacement program?

Every property owner has received notice of their 'unknown' materials status. Once materials are identified, we will update the inventory. Customers will be notified.

What is the replacement process for my lead service line?

If you have lead in your water service line, the customer will need to replace it at the customer's cost.

Where can I go to ask questions and get more information?

More information about the Drinking Water Lead Reduction Program can be found at www.npidaho.com/water-utilities. For more information on the Lead Pipe and Paint Action Plan initiative to remove lead from our homes and businesses, visit: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/12/16/fact-sheet-the-biden-harris-lead-pipe-and-paint-action-plan/>.