

Communicating about Lead and Lead Service Lines



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The Challenge



The Solution



Utilities and public health agencies take a more deliberate approach to communicating about lead to increase awareness and encourage lead service line replacement.



Getting to Full Lead Service Line Replacement

- Who owns the lead service line?
- Financial incentives or investments may be necessary for the customer portion of the line
- Funding triggers debates for efficacy and equity
- Coordination is key as is giving the property owner lots of advance warning
- Ultimately this is a conversation where finances, regulations, science and empathy all play a role.

Issues to Consider

Trends in occurrence

Periods of development when lead used

Portions of the community built with lead lines

Clear time points after which lead was not used

Who to contact for utility records

How Are Water Systems Communicating?

Current Activity

- ✓ Consumer confidence report
- ✓ Utility web page
- ✓ Door hangers when construction affects homes
- ✓ Bill inserts on lead

Opportunities

- ✓ Advanced notice of construction activities
- ✓ Active outreach to households likely to have lead service lines
- ✓ Partner with local health agency on lead awareness

Partnering Improves Awareness

- Organizations established to handle lead exposure from sources other than water can benefit water systems
- Recognized expertise and connections to the most impacted audiences
- Partnering lends credibility to the water system's lead service line communication efforts

Guidelines for Effective Risk Communication

- Take initiative, be proactive
- Listen and acknowledge concerns
- Be a reliable source of information
- Be accurate and transparent
- Partner with trusted sources
- Provide consistent messages
- Ensure materials are easy to read and understandable for people with differing education levels, and language needs



Plan Communications

Audiences, Available Vehicles

- How does that impact messaging (do you need material translated?)
- How does it influence channel used to deliver message (access, context, etc.)
- How often, what opportunities exist for you to reach them?



Plan Communications

Thinking Beyond Their Homes

- Daycares, schools
- Business
- Gym/Health Club
- Relative's homes
- Retirement/Nursing home



**Communicating About
Lead Service Lines:
*A Guide for Water Systems
Addressing Service Line
Repair and Replacement***

www.awwa.org/resources-tools/water-knowledge/lead.aspx

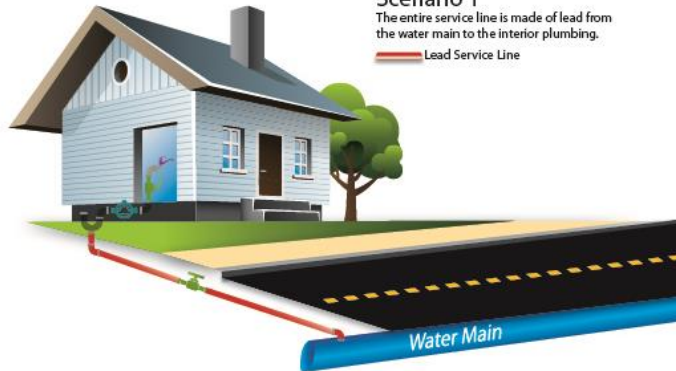
Sample Materials

Where to Locate A Lead Service Line

Scenario 1

The entire service line is made of lead from the water main to the interior plumbing.

— Lead Service Line

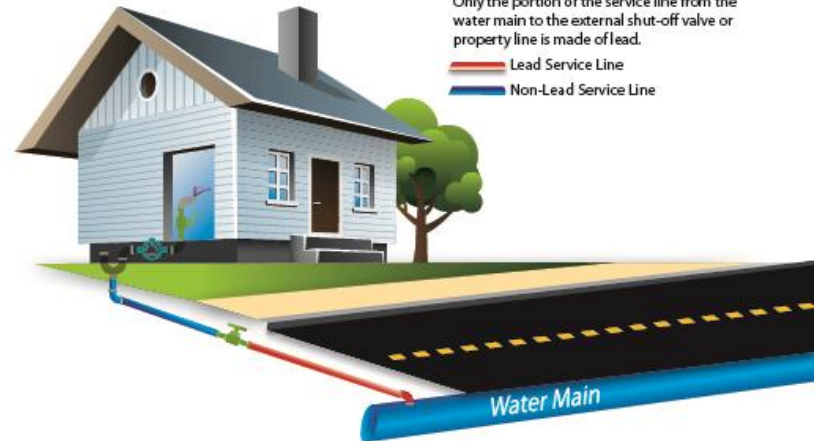


Scenario 3

Only the portion of the service line from the water main to the external shut-off valve or property line is made of lead.

— Lead Service Line

— Non-Lead Service Line

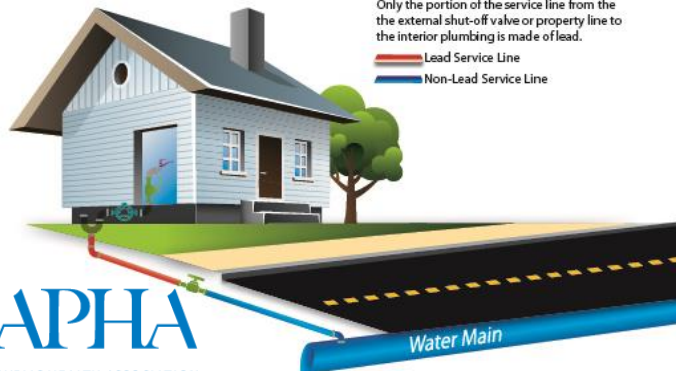


Scenario 2

Only the portion of the service line from the external shut-off valve or property line to the interior plumbing is made of lead.

— Lead Service Line

— Non-Lead Service Line



Key Messages

Utility Disturbance of Lead Service Lines

We care about you and your family's health

- Our first commitment is to protect public health
- Lead in drinking water can be harmful. It can impact normal physical and mental development in babies and young children, cause deficits in the attention span, hearing, and learning abilities of children, and increase blood pressure in adults.
- We will take steps to protect you and your family if we expect to disturb lead service lines during the course of utility repair or maintenance.

If we are doing work that may disturb lead service lines, we will notify our customers to minimize any increased risk of exposure to lead at the tap.

- When construction will affect a large group of customers, we will notify the impacted customers through INSERT MEANS.
- If emergency repair work impacts a lead service line, we will INDICATE HOW YOU WILL PROVIDE relevant information.
 - After a service line has been replaced, INDICATE HOW YOU WILL PROVIDE flushing instructions and additional steps customers can take to reduce lead in their drinking water.

Key Messages

Steps Homeowners Can Take

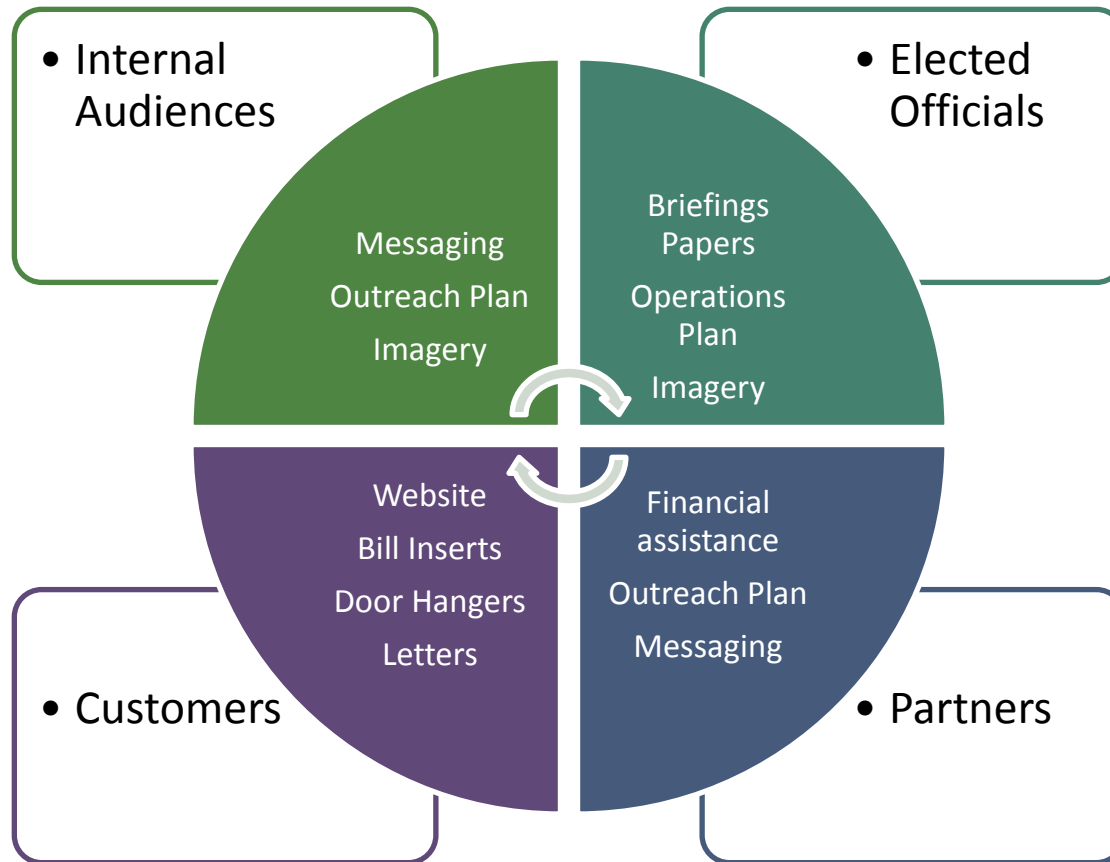
There are steps you can take to protect yourself and your family from lead in tap water, regardless of whether you have a lead service line.

- You can draw fresh water into the home by running cold water from the faucets you use for drinking, particularly after long periods of time when water has not been used.
- You can make sure plumbing products contain the lowest possible levels of lead by purchasing replacement plumbing products that have been tested and certified to “lead-free” standards.

You can reduce the risk of lead in tap water by flushing your home plumbing before consuming water.

- The more time water has been sitting in your home's pipes, the more lead it may contain.
- Even if you do not have a lead service line, plumbing fixtures like faucets, valves, and lead solder can contain small amounts of lead, so flushing can still help reduce lead exposure.

Develop Materials



Takeaways

- The issues of lead in water are difficult to communicate
- Partnerships between public health agencies and water systems are a critical component in moving toward awareness of lead in water
- There are challenges associated with full lead service line replacement that will require water systems, governments, public health agencies and consumers to all do their part