



IDENTIFYING LEAD SERVICE LINES AND PLUMBING

NORTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
DIVISION OF MUNICIPAL FACILITIES
(5-2019)

Lead Service Lines and Plumbing Identification

The public water system which supplies water to your facility may have records about the material used in the service lines. If records are unavailable, a physical inspection can help determine if lead is present. Contact a licensed plumber for assistance to determine if your service line or plumbing is lead. Service line pipes may be exposed and accessible where the pipe enters the building through a basement wall or floor. An inlet valve and the water meter are generally installed on the pipe after the point of entry.

Lead Service Lines



Source: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.



Source: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Lead service lines can be connected to facility plumbing using solder and have a characteristic solder “bulb” at the end.

Lead service lines often end just inside the front or side wall of the facility, but they may extend further into the building as shown. The service line here comes out of the basement floor to the water meter and then back into the floor, continuing further into the building.

Once you have located the line entering the building, it is possible to use a flat edge screwdriver or other non-sharp tool and a strong magnet to determine if the line is lead. Clean an area on the surface and scratch with the non-sharp tool, being careful not to puncture the pipe.

Lead Pipes

Lead pipes are generally a dull silver-gray color and are soft and easily scratched. If the pipe is made of lead, the area you've scratched will turn a bright silver color, and even a very strong magnet will not cling to a lead pipe.



Source: Madison Water Utility. City of Madison, WI. Web. 6 June 2017.



Source: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Copper Pipes

Copper pipes will appear copper or bronze like a penny when scratched, and magnets will not cling to the pipe.



Source: Madison Water Utility. City of Madison, WI. Web. 6 June 2017.

Galvanized Steel Pipes

Galvanized steel pipes are a silver-gray color but will be difficult to scratch. Once scratched, the surface will remain a dull silver-gray color, and a magnet will cling to the pipe.



Source: Madison Water Utility. City of Madison, WI. Web. 6 June 2017.