

Private LSL Replacements with the SDW LSL Replacement Program Q&A for Homeowners

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Learn about the Lead Service Line (LSL) Replacement Program at dnr.wi.gov/aid/LSLprogram

1. What are the health effects of lead exposure?

Lead serves no useful purpose in the human body. Its presence in the body can produce toxic effects, regardless of age, gender, or exposure pathway. There is a wide range of neurological effects associated with lead exposure, some of which may be irreversible.

In children, there is no identified threshold or "safe" blood lead level below which no risk of poor developmental or intellectual function is expected. While the immediate health effect of concern in children is typically neurological, it is important to remember that childhood lead poisoning can result in health effects later in life.

The neurological effects in an adult exposed to lead as an adult can be neuropathy and may be different from those of an adult exposed to lead as a child when the brain was developing. Other effects are reduced sperm count and hypertension.¹

Removing lead service lines is one way to minimize the potential for lead to get into your drinking water. The Wisconsin DNR Bureau of Drinking Water and Groundwater provides information regarding the concerns of lead in drinking water at dnr.wi.gov/topic/drinkingwater/lead.html.

2. How does lead get into drinking water?

Lead can enter drinking water when pipes and plumbing fixtures that contain lead corrode, especially where the water has high acidity or low mineral content. There are three main sources of lead:

- Lead pipes – Lead service lines (LSLs), the pipe that connects the water main under the street to a building's plumbing. Lead pipes were also used in indoor plumbing. Congress banned use of lead pipes in 1986.
- Leaded solder – Solder is used to connect copper pipe and fittings. Congress banned the use of leaded solder in 1986.
- Leaded alloys – Brass is frequently used in faucets and other plumbing components. In 1986 Congress limited the amount of lead in brass to 8% (close to the level of lead typical of products at the time) and later in 2014 reduced the limit to a much lower level (0.25%).

While leaded solder and brass can be important sources of lead in drinking water, this program is focused solely on LSLs.²

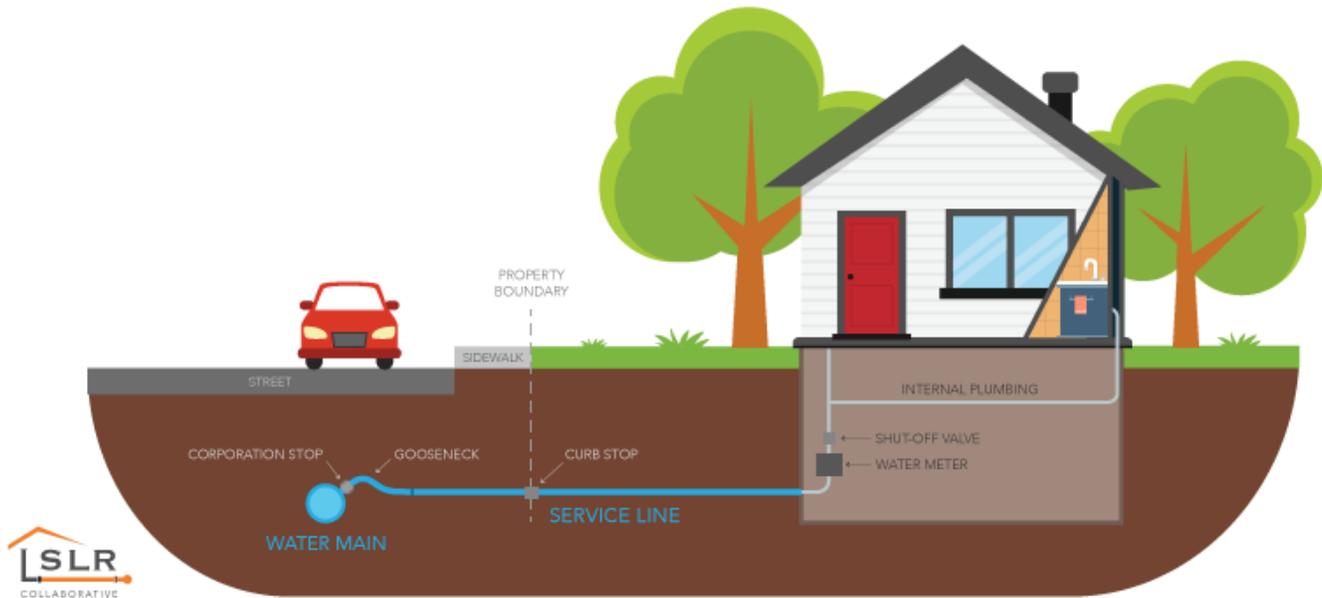
¹ The health information above is from the US Department of Health and Human Services' Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR), wwwn.cdc.gov/TSP/ToxProfiles/ToxProfiles.aspx?id=96&tid=22

² LSLR Collaborative, www.lslr-collaborative.org/intro-to-lsl-replacement.html



3. What is a service line?

The following figure is a simplified illustration of the components of a *typical* service line installation.



Each service line or connection consists of multiple components. For more information on each component go to www.islr-collaborative.org/intro-to-lsl-replacement.html

4. Who is eligible to receive resources from the program?

The DNR Safe Drinking Water Loan Program for lead service line replacement funding is only available to local governmental units, not private homeowners, businesses, or American Indian tribes. Local governmental unit means a city, village, town, county, town sanitary district, public inland lake protection and rehabilitation district, joint local water authority created under s. [66.0823](http://legis.wisconsin.gov/statutes/statutes.cfm?statute=66.0823), Wis. Stats., or municipal water district.

5. My water is supplied by a private well, not a municipal water system. Are there resources available to replace lead lines that connect to private wells?

The DNR's Safe Drinking Water Lead Service Line Replacement Program may only provide funding to municipal water systems, not private homeowners, or businesses. There are other resources available to homeowners, however. For more information, go to dnr.wi.gov/aid/sources.html#individual.

6. I rent an apartment/house. How may I find out if a lead service line is supplying my water?

Contact your property manager or landlord to start. If they are unable to determine whether a lead service line is installed on the property, they should reach out to their local water system for help.

7. Could you give me an overview of the program?

Absolutely. Under authority of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), the DNR has access to a mixture of loan and principal forgiveness dollars to assist municipalities in their efforts to replace as many LSLs as possible within five years. This program builds on the past success of the two-year Private LSL Replacement Funding Program as well as the Water Infrastructure Financing Transfer Act (WIFTA) for private LSL replacements that served as momentum-builders for removing all LSLs in Wisconsin.

8. In what ways will the program build momentum for removing all LSLs in Wisconsin?

The Lead and Copper Rule Improvements, which were enacted on October 8, 2024, requires lead service line replacement plans to be developed by November 1, 2027, and all lead service lines to be removed within ten years after that. By offering principal forgiveness and extremely low interest loans for LSL replacements, Wisconsin is attempting to get municipalities started on developing replacement plans and identified as a priority.

Since all LSLs will eventually have to be removed, DNR is strongly encouraging municipalities to pass an ordinance that requires that all service lines that contain lead be replaced.

Communities looking for additional resources for LSL replacement should go to the Public Service Commission’s LSL Replacement webpage at psc.wi.gov/Pages/ServiceType/Water/LeadServiceLine.aspx.

9. What can I do to help get the lead service lines out of my community?

Speak with your local water system and local elected officials. Ask them to consider passing a mandatory replacement ordinance as described above and for the water system to report any private LSLs to the Public Service Commission on Schedule W-29 of their annual report. Encourage them to apply to the Safe Drinking Water Loan Program (SDWLP) for funding, especially while the BIL LSL principal forgiveness and 0.25% interest rate loan funding is available. Speak with your fellow homeowners about the importance of replacing LSLs.

10. I am interested in filtering my water to prevent lead exposure. Do you have any product recommendations?

Choosing a filter that is approved to reduce lead is one way you may reduce exposure to lead in drinking water. NSF International publishes a consumer guide for [Certified Product Listings for Lead Reduction](#), which explains how filters reduce lead in drinking water. The easy-to-use guide features a comprehensive certification listing organized by drinking water standard and manufacturer.

Consumers are encouraged to call or email the NSF International’s Consumer Information Officer with questions about the NSF certification and certified products.

Email: info@nsf.org

Website: www.nsf.org/consumer-resources

Phone: +1-800-673-8010

Also see the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s [A Consumer Tool for Identifying Point of Use \(POU\) Drinking Water Filters Certified to Reduce Lead](#).

11. How can I identify if the plumbing in my home contains lead?

Please go to dnr.wi.gov/topic/drinkingwater/lead.html to see where lead may be found in your home and to learn about simple tests that you may do yourself to determine if a pipe is made of lead.

12. I would like to test my tap water to see if lead is present. Where would be a good place to start?

Testing is the only way to know whether lead may be present in your drinking water. Contact a certified laboratory for a test kit and sampling instructions or hire a plumbing professional to assist you. The DNR maintains a list of laboratories certified to test for lead in drinking water at dnr.wi.gov/topic/labCert/certified-lab-lists.