

Lead



MANITOWOC
PUBLIC UTILITIES

Awareness

& Drinking Water Safety

Lead in Plumbing & Drinking Water Safety



Lead testing completed by Manitowoc Public Utilities (MPU) has found lead levels in some homes above the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) action limit. MPU continuously addresses this health concern and is committed to informing and educating our customers about lead.

MPU began conducting routine monitoring for lead in drinking water in 1992. Historically, the lead levels have been below the EPA action limit of 15 parts per billion (ppb), or 0.015 milligrams per liter (mg/L). MPU's source water, water mains, and finished drinking water do not contain lead. When water is in contact with pipes (or service lines) and plumbing containing lead for several hours, the lead may enter drinking water. Homes built before 1950 are more likely to have lead pipes, and homes built prior to 1984 could have lead solder.

What has MPU done to address lead in drinking water?

- Re-evaluated our existing corrosion control program, put in place in 1994, to reduce lead impacts.
- Developed an improved water distribution flushing program to remove minerals and sediment from water mains, which will help improve and control corrosion of lead piping.
- Developed a program to encourage homeowners to replace their lead service lines and implemented a Lead Service Line Replacement Loan Program, when outside funding is available.

For tips and information on drinking water safety and lead, please visit the following websites:

<https://www.mpu.org/lead>

<http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/tips/water.htm>

<https://www.epa.gov/ground-water-and-drinking-water/basic-information-about-lead-drinking-water>

Is Your Home At Risk?

There are several easy things you can do to reduce your exposure to lead in drinking water.

- **Flush your plumbing.** Before using tap water for drinking or cooking, flush your plumbing by running the kitchen faucet (or any other tap you take drinking or cooking water from) on cold until the water stream is noticeably colder, then another full minute. This is especially important if your water has been sitting in your pipes and service line for more than six hours. Showering, doing laundry and flushing the toilet all help clear water from the pipes that may contain lead. Bathing, showering and doing laundry in water from lead service lines or lead plumbing is safe.
- **Use only cold water for cooking and drinking.** Water from the hot water tap can dissolve lead more easily than cold water. Boiling water will not reduce the amount of lead in your drinking or cooking water. In fact, boiling can concentrate the lead in water.
- **Purchase a faucet-mount or pour-through pitcher/carafe filter.** Home drinking water filters can reduce or eliminate lead. Be sure to look for products certified by NSF/ANSI under Standard 53 for removal of lead and follow any manufacturer's guidelines on installation and maintenance of the product.
- **Replace your lead service line and any interior plumbing containing lead.** In the City of Manitowoc, the entire water service line (from the water main to the home) is owned by the property owner. When a water service needs to be replaced, it is the responsibility of the property owner. A lead pipe is shiny when scraped with a screwdriver, and a magnet will not stick to it. (Galvanized steel pipe is dull when scraped and a magnet will stick to it.) Replacement must be done by a licensed plumber under contract from the homeowner.



Lead & Your Health

Lead can cause serious health problems if too much enters the body from drinking water and other sources. The most common source is dust and chips from lead based paint used in toys, furniture, and older homes. Lead used in water service lines and interior plumbing is also a health concern. MPU takes measures to prevent leaching from lead plumbing materials into your water. MPU recommends you have your water service line and interior plumbing inspected by a licensed plumber or home inspector for lead pipes, lead solder, or lead fixtures.

The following conditions will help determine if your drinking water is exposed to lead plumbing:

About 5,600 homes in Manitowoc were built before 1950 and may have lead pipes in part of the water service. The lead pipe may appear in the basement where the service enters the building, but could be hidden in the yard between the house and the street. Water service lines and household plumbing that are dull gray in color and are soft enough to be scratched with a house key are lead. Homes with copper pipes built before September 1984 may have lead in the solder used to connect pipes. Lead solder was banned after this time. Plumbing and fixtures installed before January 1, 2014, or purchased from sources outside of the US may contain lead. Since that date, only lead-free fixtures and fittings are allowed to be installed or used to repair drinking water plumbing. Research shows that disturbances to the ground near lead service lines can temporarily increase the lead levels in drinking water by dislodging lead-containing particles. This is why MPU requires the full lead service line to be replaced when water mains are replaced or other construction is nearby.

The Center for Disease Control recommends all children under the age of six be tested at least once for lead poisoning. The Manitowoc County Health Department recommends that children who are at risk for lead poisoning should be tested at age one and age two. Pregnant or breastfeeding women who were exposed to lead at an early age or are at risk of lead exposure due to their environment, occupation, or hobbies should also get tested. Testing is available at your doctor's office or at the Manitowoc County Health Department.



Online

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Customer Service
920-683-4600
mpucustomerservice@mpu.org
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Report an Outage

Electric: 920-683-4622
Water: 920-683-4633
Diggers Hotline Quick Dial: 8-1-1
Toll Free: 1-800-242-8511



Physical & Mailing Address

Main Office
1303 South 8th Street
Manitowoc, WI 54220