

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?

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

- **Use filters properly.** Using a filter can reduce lead in drinking water. If you use a filter, it should be certified to remove lead. Read any directions provided with the filter to learn how to properly install, maintain, and use your cartridge and when to replace it. Using the cartridge after it has expired can make it less effective at removing lead. Do not run hot water through the filter. For more information on facts and advice on home water filtration systems, visit EPA's website at <https://www.epa.gov/water-research/consumer-tool-identifying-point-use-and-pitcher-filters-certified-reduce-lead>.
- **Clean your aerator.** Regularly remove and clean your faucet's screen (also known as an aerator). Sediment, debris, and lead particles can collect in your aerator. If lead particles are caught in the aerator, lead can get into your water.
- **Use cold water.** Do not use hot water from the tap for drinking, cooking, or making baby formula as lead dissolves more easily into hot water. Boiling water does not remove lead from water.
- **Run your water.** The more time water has been sitting in pipes providing water to your home, 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, as well as the length and diameter of the service line and the amount of plumbing in your home. Residents may contact us at 920-683-4600 for recommendations about flushing times in their community.
- **Learn about construction in your neighborhood.** Contact us at 920-683-4600 to find out about any construction or maintenance work that could disturb your service line. Construction may cause more lead to be released from a lead service line or galvanized service line if present.
- **Have your water tested.** For general information, and to learn more about the lead levels in your drinking water, please contact MPU at 920-683-4600. If you have questions about lead testing or the health effects related to lead in drinking water, contact the Manitowoc County Health Department at (920) 683-4155. You may also contact a certified laboratory to have your water tested for lead. A list of certified laboratories is available at <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/DrinkingWater/laboratories.html>. The costs associated with testing for lead would be the responsibility of the customer. Note, a water sample may not adequately capture or represent all sources of lead that may be present. For information on sources of lead that include service lines and interior plumbing, please visit <https://www.epa.gov/ground-water-and-drinking-water/basic-information-about-lead-drinking-water#getinto>.
- **Get your child tested to determine lead levels in their blood.** A family doctor or pediatrician can perform a blood test for lead and provide information about the health effects of lead. State, city, or county departments of health can also provide information about how you can have your child's blood tested for lead. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends public health actions when the level of lead in a child's blood is 3.5 micrograms per deciliter (ug/dL) or more. For more information and links to CDC's website, please visit <https://www.epa.gov/ground-water-and-drinking-water/basic-information-about-lead-drinking-water>. For more information and links to CDC's website, please visit <https://www.epa.gov/ground-water-and-drinking-water/basic-information-about-lead-drinking-water>.



Lead & Your Health

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 worsen existing learning and behavior problems. The children of women who are exposed to lead before or during pregnancy can have increased risk of these negative health effects. Adults can have increased risks of heart disease, high blood pressure, and kidney, or nervous system problems.

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.



Online

www.mpu.org
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



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