

# Checking the Material of Your Water Service Line



Arlington County is conducting an inventory of water service line material in our system following the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) Lead and Copper Rule Revisions. The County's water system does not have lead pipes and we do not know of any lead service lines. In 1991, the County inspected about 25% of the service lines and did not find any lead service lines. The County never used lead pipes for the County-owned part of the service line. We must conduct the inventory to comply with the EPA's revised rule.

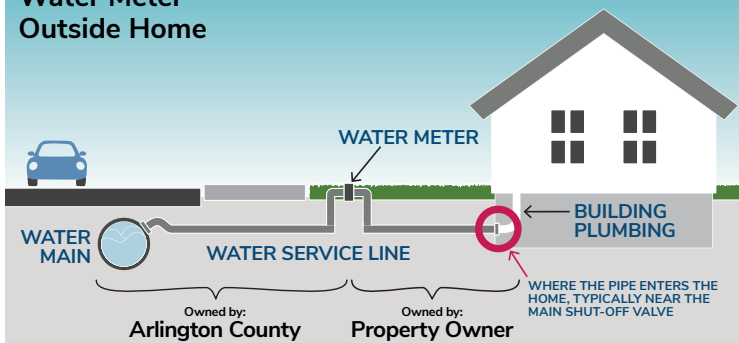
**We need your help to determine the material of your water service line.** The property owner is responsible for the service line between the meter and the home. But, we still need to know what your material is.

If your home was built before 1988, you may have a lead service line on the property side of the meter. Follow the steps in this flyer to check your water service line material.

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If your home was built in or after 1988, you do not have a lead water service line.

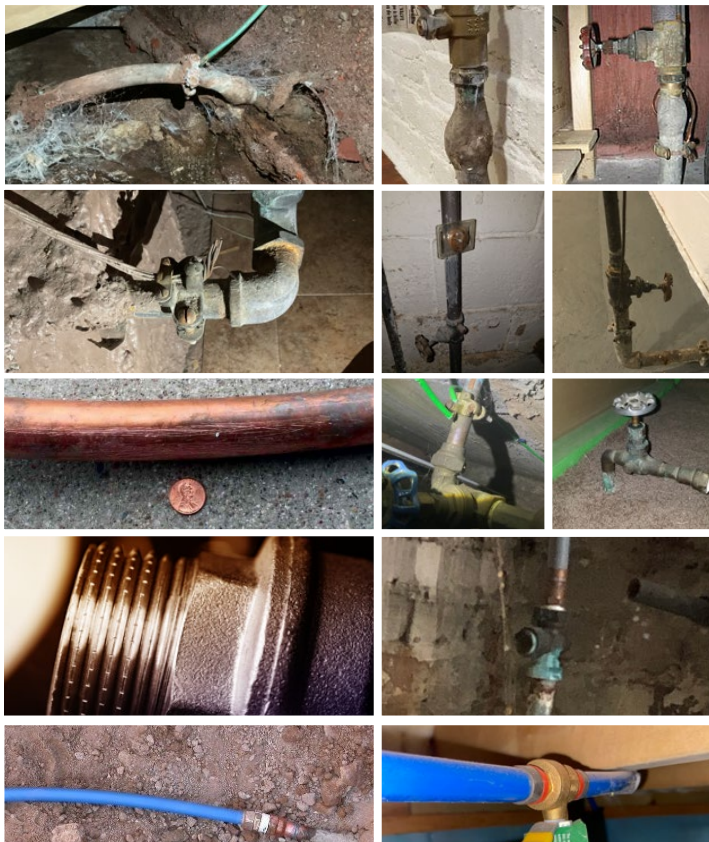
## Water Meter Outside Home



**Step 1:** Get a strong magnet and a key or coin.

**Step 2:** Find where your service line enters your home. There will likely be a main shut-off valve in a basement, crawl space, or utility closet where the pipe comes into the house.

**Step 3:** Test the material of the pipe coming from the street: scratch the pipe with the key or coin, then hold the magnet to the pipe and see if it sticks. Compare your results to the options below. Galvanized steel and lead look similar and the magnet test is the easiest way to tell the difference.



### Lead

- Gray or silver
- Scratch test: Shiny and silver (soft and scratches easily)
- Magnets will not stick
- Widens at base and forms a 'bulb'

### Galvanized Steel

- Gray or silver
- Scratch test: no visible scratch on surface
- Magnets will stick
- Has threads at connections

### Copper

- Dull brown; greenish
- Scratch test: same color as penny
- Magnets will not stick

### Brass

- Brown; can have green corrosion spots
- Scratch test: gold color
- Magnets will not stick
- Has threads at connections

### Plastic

- Smooth and red, blue, black, or white

Continue for **Step 4 »**

**Step 4:** Take a photo at the location where the pipe comes through the exterior wall.

**Step 5:** Upload the photo and results using the steps below.

### Submit your results to the Arlington County Water Service Line Inventory Form:

1. Scan this QR code or type [www.arlingtonva.us/Water-Service-Line-Inventory](http://www.arlingtonva.us/Water-Service-Line-Inventory) into your browser
2. Fill in all the fields on the registration form. You can find your account number on your water bill.
3. Click Submit and you will receive an email confirming your submission.



### What to do if you think your service line might be lead:



1. **Run cold water before using.** The longer the water stays in the plumbing, the more lead it may have. If the water in the faucet has been sitting for more than six hours, run water for 5 minutes before using it. Showering and flushing the toilet also help flush your water line.



2. **Use cold water for cooking and drinking.** Lead dissolves into hot water more easily than cold water. If you need hot water, draw cold water and then heat it. It is still safe to shower, wash dishes, and do laundry with hot water from the tap. Lead does not leach through the skin. Boiling water does NOT reduce lead.



3. **Replace your home's internal plumbing that may have lead.** Potential lead sources include lead pipes, lead-based solder, and brass fixtures and valves (including faucets).



4. **Remove and clean aerators/screens.** Remove and clean aerators/screens at the tip of faucets every three months to remove any build-up.



5. **Test your water for lead.** Since you cannot see, taste, or smell lead in drinking water, test your water for lead using a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-approved lead test kit (<https://www.epa.gov/lead/lead-test-kits>). If the results show lead levels at or greater than 15 parts per billion (ppb), call Arlington County at 703-228-6567, so we can look for a cause.



6. **Use filters.** Consider using a water filter. Be sure the filter is approved to reduce lead (NSF 53-certified): visit <https://tinyurl.com/mr2fmdut> for information on the appropriate water filters.



7. **Test your child's blood for lead.** Your local doctor or pediatrician can perform a blood test for lead and provide you with information about the health effects of lead. Call the Arlington Department of Human Services at 703-228-7400 to learn more, including where you can have your child's blood tested.

### If you have questions, please contact us:

 [dstrachan@arlingtonva.us](mailto:dstrachan@arlingtonva.us)

 703-228-6567