



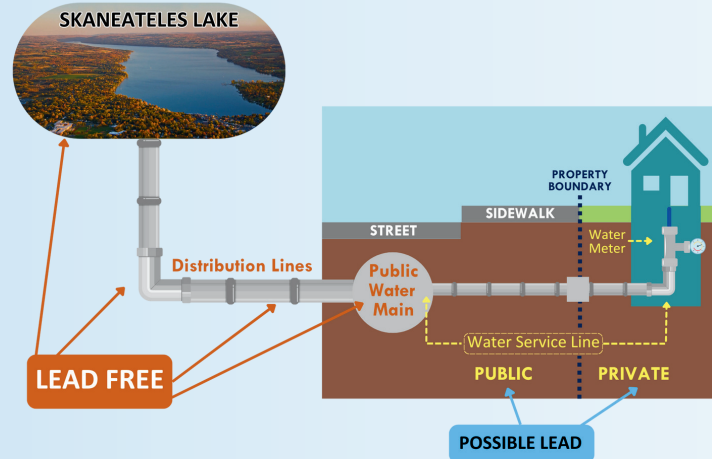
LEAD FREE SYRACUSE

FACTS ABOUT LEAD WATER SERVICE LINES

OVERVIEW

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Lead and Copper Rule Improvements (LCRI) is a set of strengthened regulations designed to ensure safer drinking water, reduce health risks and increase accountability and transparency in water systems across the country. The City of Syracuse (“City”) is responding comprehensively and transparently to the new requirements.

The City’s water supply is sourced from Skaneateles Lake. The water leaves Skaneateles Lake and travels through the city’s water mains and is free of lead. Onondaga County Health Commissioner Dr. Kathryn Anderson confirmed on Oct. 25, 2024 that “the City of Syracuse water supply is not contaminated.”



The lead detected in some samples is introduced when the water leaving the City’s water mains travels through pipes connecting older homes to the City’s water system or, alternatively, when it passes through plumbing fixtures in the home. The Syracuse Department of Water (the “Department”) continues to comply with EPA guidelines regarding lead service lines and is working in conjunction with the New York State and Onondaga County Health Departments to address lead concerns.

SERVICE REPLACEMENTS

The City is moving forward with lead service line replacements on an accelerated basis that exceeds EPA guidelines. In the next year, the City will replace more than 3,000 lines. At approximately 2,700 homes citywide, including areas with the highest concentrations of older homes, the city will replace the private lead services at homes where, prior to the new EPA requirements, only the public infrastructure was changed. These projects will be planned utilizing the City’s equity score model to complete replacement schedule. The Equity Score is based on seven factors, primarily focusing on race and income. Other considerations include the elderly, single-parent households, residents with disabilities, low educational attainment, and rent-burdened households. Hundreds of service lines will also be replaced in homes near major water infrastructure projects on the eastside and in Eastwood.

Future replacements will be prioritized based on the completion of the citywide inventory, with the goal of maintaining or accelerating the current replacement pace. A phased approach will be communicated to residents, providing timelines on when residents can expect their service to be replaced. At the current pace, the City expects to eliminate all of the more than 14,000 lead services in about five years – half the time required by the EPA.

SERVICE INVENTORY

In October 2024, the Department released a citywide water service line inventory in accordance with EPA regulations. The citywide inventory catalogues the materials used and informs the Department of necessary replacement areas. Residents can search their address to find the type of service connected to their home at syr.gov/lead-free-Syracuse.



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PUBLIC EDUCATION

The City issued a public notice to all Syracuse properties in August regarding lead service lines. The notice provided details about the sampling, the sources of lead, what people can do to reduce their exposure and what we're doing as a city to address lead. A dedicated page on the Water Department's website, syr.gov/lead-free-Syracuse, is available with information about lead service lines and answers to frequently asked questions. By the end of 2024, the City will send letters to all homes detailing the material of their service lines based on inventory findings. The letter will also include information on reducing lead exposure and how residents can determine the service line material at their property, if it is unknown.

FILTER DISTRIBUTION

The City and the Onondaga County Health Department will make free water filters available for households with children under six, pregnant women, and other at-risk individuals. With the assistance of the Syracuse City School District, filters will be distributed to all eligible households with children in pre-k programs through first grade. Additional distributions will be made through the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program, child daycares, charter schools and other caregivers who serve young children and infants. Eligible households can request a filter by calling the Water Department at 315-448-8354. Filters are being offered out of an abundance of caution while water sampling data is finalized through the end of 2024.

WATER SAMPLING

The City of Syracuse Department of Water testing demonstrated elevated lead levels in drinking water at some homes during routine sampling for the New York State Department of Health during the first half of 2024. Errors occurred in the sampling program which may explain the elevated levels. In follow up sampling in the second of 2024, results were found to be below the EPA's action level of concern. Under EPA requirements, water sampling will be repeated every six months. Households can call the Water Department at 315-448-8354 to participate in future sampling.

WHAT CAN I DO TO REDUCE EXPOSURE TO LEAD IN DRINKING WATER?

To reduce lead exposure, run your water for at least 30 seconds if it hasn't been used for several hours, until it reaches a steady, cold temperature. Always use cold water for cooking and preparing baby formula, and never boil water to remove lead. If using a water filter, ensure it is certified to remove lead and follow the manufacturer's instructions for proper use and maintenance. For more information, visit the Onondaga County Health Department Lead Poisoning Prevention website at ongov.net/health/lead/ or call 315-435-3271

HELPFUL LINKS AND RESOURCES

City of Syracuse Water Department | syr.gov/lead-free-Syracuse | 315-448-8354 | waterlead@syr.gov
Onondaga County Health Department Lead Poisoning Prevention | ongov.net/health/lead/ | 315-435-3271
County Health Department Safe Drinking Water | ongov.net/health/env/lead.html | 315-435-6600