

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. **What is a water service line?**

Water service lines are small pipes that carry water from the City of New Britain's water mains, located in the streets, into individual homes and buildings.

2. **How do I find my water service line?**

You can find your water service line by first finding the water meter, which measures the amount of water you use, in your basement. The water service line is the pipe that connects the water meter to the water main in the street. You will see it come out of the meter and go in the floor or wall. For help locating the water service line, call 860-826-3532.



This is an example of a water meter.

3. **Who owns the water service line on my property?**

The customer is the owner of the water service line from the main to the home.

4. **What materials can service lines be made of?**

Service lines can be made of lead, galvanized steel, plastic, brass, copper, cast iron, or ductile iron.

5. **What other sources of lead are in my home?**

Other sources of lead can include plumbing fixtures (faucets, valves, fittings, etc.) indoor copper plumbing pipes with lead solder, and lead paint. Lead paint in homes is typically the greatest risk for lead exposure for young children but not typically a source of lead in drinking water.

6. **Why do the water service line or plumbing fixture in some homes have lead?**

Lead was commonly used for water service lines until 1960 and in household plumbing fixtures and solder until 1986, when it was banned. From 1986 to 2014, plumbing fixtures could have up to 8% lead and still be called "lead free". However, current standards for "lead free" fixtures allow no more than 0.25% lead content.

Many homes and buildings, especially those built before 1986, may have service lines and/or internal plumbing fixtures that are made of or have lead.

7. **How does lead get into the drinking water?**

When water leaves the treatment plant, it does not have lead. The water mains in the street that take water from the treatment plant are mostly made of iron and steel. They do not add lead to the drinking water.

Lead can get into drinking water from the plumbing inside your building or the service line between the street and your building. When water sits in the service line or your building's plumbing without being used for several hours,

such as overnight, lead may dissolve into the water. So, the best way to stop lead from getting into your drinking water is replacing the service line and older plumbing and fixtures in your home.

8. What is the City of New Britain's water department is doing to protect-lead from drinking water?

The City of New Britain's water department treats its water and performs periodic testing.

- The water treatment plant adds hydrated lime to its water for the purpose of minimizing pipe corrosion. Lime is used to elevate pH levels and increase the amount of alkalinity in the water, because of this chemical addition the pipes carrying the water are coated with a layer of scale that creates a physical barrier that separates the water from potential sources of lead that may be located within the pipes, additionally by raising the pH of the water any exposed lead is less likely to dissolve into the water.
- The water department is required by state and federal regulations to perform triannual testing of lead and copper levels in at least 30 high-risk homes located within the distribution system.
- The test results for the last round of lead testing were at 2 parts per billion which is far below the maximum level of 15 parts per billion as specified by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Lead and Copper Rule.

9. How do I know if I have lead or galvanized steel service line that needs replacement?

The water department is preparing a lead service line inventory. You can look up your address on this interactive map to learn if we know the material of your service line. If your service line is unknown, you can take simple steps to learn and report your material, as outlined on this site. You can also call 860-826-3540 to schedule a free inspection.

10. I looked at my line, but I cannot tell if I have a lead service line. What should I do?

Schedule a free inspection from the water department by calling 860-826-3540.

11. How can lead affect my health?

Exposure to high levels of lead is a serious health risk. Lead builds up in the body over many years and can cause damage to the brain, red blood cells, and kidneys. The greatest risk is to young children, pregnant women, and unborn babies. Amounts of lead that will not harm adults can slow down the normal mental and physical development of children, particularly those under 6 years old.

12. How can I decrease lead exposure?

You can take several actions to decrease your lead exposure, including:

- Replacing your lead service line.
- Getting a National Sanitation Foundation (NSF) – Certified home water treatment device, faucet, or pitcher filter that removes lead. The device must be both NSF 42 – and NSF 53 – certified to remove lead. Devices and filters installed at the faucet will remove any lead contained in indoor plumbing and plumbing fixtures.
- Buying plumbing fixtures (faucets, valves, sinks, hose bibs, etc.) that have zero – or low-lead content meeting the current “lead-free” requirements. Read the labels of any new plumbing fixtures closely.

- Running tap water for about few minutes before you use it for drinking or cooking, if the water has gone unused for more than 6 hours. In doing so, you are flushing the stagnated water and getting fresh water from the water main pipe.
- Using fresh, cold, running water for drinking, cooking, and preparing baby formula.
- Removing and cleaning faucet screens and aerators every 6 months.

13. Why should I replace my lead service line?

You should replace your lead service line to protect your personal health and your family's health. No amount of lead is safe for humans to consume. Young children (under 6 years old) and the elderly can be more affected by lead exposure. They, along with pregnant women, may be at a higher health risk to lead.

14. Where can I get more information about lead in drinking water?

Visit the EPA's Lead and Copper Rule website [Lead and Copper Rule | US EPA](#)