

Drinking Water Consumer Notice

PWS #ID 1615610

East Providence Water Utilities Division

60 Commercial Way, East Providence, RI 02914

Lead Status Unknown Service Line Found in East Providence Water Utilities Division Service Area

This is a notification that the East Providence Water Utilities Division discovered a **Lead Status Unknown** service line connecting your property to our system. This service line **may contain** lead. Please read this notice to understand what actions you can take to prevent exposure to lead and what the East Providence Water Utilities Division is doing.

Lead from service lines can get into drinking water as the metal in old pipes wears away. Exposure to lead – by drinking contaminated water or eating food prepared with contaminated water – can cause long-term health problems, especially for children younger than six years old and people who are pregnant.

The East Providence Water Utilities Division identified the service line material within the last 30 days, on October 16, 2024. The East Providence Water Utilities Division is working to identify the material of all service lines to complete a Service Line Inventory and meet the requirements of recent amendments to the *Rhode Island Lead Poisoning Prevention Act*.

We want to reassure you that the East Providence Water Utilities Division will be replacing all lead service lines and lead status unknown service lines over the coming years to protect public health and comply with federal and state laws and regulations.

You are receiving this notice because your service line either may contain lead, or at this time the pipe material is unknown. There are two options to verify the material:

1. Self-report on your service line material through an online reporting system. Visit Eastprovidenceri.gov/leadawareness or scan the QR code to the right for a step-by-step guide on how to report on your service line material.
2. Contact the East Providence Water Utilities Division office at (401)435-7741 or waterdept@eastprovidenceri.gov to schedule a public works staff to visit your property to inspect your service line and verify the pipe material.



If, after you take the above verification steps, and your line is confirmed to contain lead, you have the option to contact The East Providence Water Utilities Division and request a filter pitcher or point-of-use device and six months of filter replacements. The filter in the pitcher or point-of-use device will significantly reduce lead levels in water. To request a water filter, please contact (401)435-7741 or waterdept@eastprovidenceri.gov

What Are the Health Effects of Lead?

Anyone can suffer health effects from exposure to lead, but lead is most dangerous to children younger than six years old and people who are pregnant. Lead can hurt a child's brain and nervous system and slow down growth and development. People exposed to lead as children can have lifelong difficulties with learning and behavior and may have trouble paying attention. Even small amounts of lead can harm a child. Adults can have increased risks of heart disease, high blood pressure, kidney or nervous system problems. Lead poisoning is preventable.

What Are the Sources of Lead?

Lead can be found in many places in and around the home. Children in Rhode Island are most often exposed to lead through lead-based paint and paint dust found in homes built before 1978. Over time, lead-based paint can peel or crack. Children may accidentally breathe or swallow lead dust or lead paint chips. Lead can also be found in soil around the home, some spices, and some pottery, crystal, or ceramic dishes.

While it is rarely the primary cause of lead poisoning in Rhode Island, drinking water can also be a source of lead. Lead and galvanized steel pipes were used in water infrastructure for much of the 1900s and were banned from use in Rhode Island in 1978. Lead solder was used to fuse pipe segments together until 1987. If a building was built or plumbed before 1987, it could have plumbing materials containing lead.

How Does Lead Get into Drinking Water?

As plumbing materials age, they begin to wear away (called corrosion). If they are made with lead, it can get into the drinking water. When water sits still and remains in contact with plumbing materials containing lead for a period of time, the lead may dissolve into the water. **If water has not been used for several hours – for example first thing in the morning or when you get home from school or work – it may have elevated levels of lead.**

What is a Service Line?

Service lines are the individual pipes that run from the water main in the street to a home or building. They consist of two sections: the *public-side* and the *private-side*. The *public side* of the service line runs from the water main to the curb stop (a valve that is often located near the property line or sidewalk) and the *private side* runs from the curb stop to the home.

Why and When Are Lead Service Lines Being Replaced?

The East Providence Water Utilities Division will be replacing lead service lines over the next ten years. Please contact (401)435-7741 or waterdept@eastprovidenceri.gov for information on scheduling a free service line inspection and/or a service line replacement.

Important: If you or the property owner (if different) decide to replace the private side portion of the lead service line on your/their own, please contact (401)435-7741 or waterdept@eastprovidenceri.gov. The East Providence Water Utilities Division must attempt to coordinate simultaneous replacement of the public side portion or replace the public side portion in a timely manner after being notified, at no cost to the property owner.

Steps You Can Take to Reduce Exposure to Lead in Drinking Water

- **Treat the water.** Some water filters can remove lead from water. This water is safe to use for drinking and cooking. If after you have taken the steps to verify your service line material and it is found to contain lead, you may request a water filter from the East Providence Water Utilities Division. A filter pitcher or point-of-use device and six months of filter replacements will be provided to you, along with filter use instructions. Follow the instructions for the installation (if applicable), use, and maintenance of any filter. Change out replacement cartridges according to the filter instructions.

Note: Water softeners and reverse osmosis units will also remove lead from water but can make the water more corrosive to lead solder and plumbing by removing certain minerals. The installation of the treatment units at the point of entry into homes with lead plumbing should only be done under supervision of a qualified water treatment professional.

- **Run the cold water to flush out lead, even if you have a filter.** Flushing the tap means running the cold-water faucet for 3 to 5 minutes before using the water for drinking or cooking. Lead can build up in water when it sits still in the pipes. Flushing the pipes (or letting the cold water run before using it) will remove the

water that may contain higher lead levels. Flush the pipes before using water for drinking or cooking any time the water has gone unused for more than six hours.

Flushing tap water is a simple and low-cost measure you can take to protect your health. It usually uses less than one gallon of water. **See the attached flier or visit the Rhode Island Department of Health website <https://health.ri.gov/water/about/lead/> for more detailed instructions on flushing your plumbing.**

- **Use cold water for preparing baby formula, even if you have a filter.** It is recommended that bottled or filtered water be used for drinking and preparing baby formula. If you need hot water, draw water from the cold tap and then heat it.
- **Use cold water for cooking, even if you have a filter.** Because lead from lead-containing plumbing materials and pipes can dissolve into hot water more easily than cold water, never drink, cook, or prepare beverages using hot water from the tap. Boiling water can kill bacteria, viruses, and other disease-causing organisms, but it will not reduce lead levels.
- **Remove and clean aerators/screens on plumbing fixtures, even if you have a filter.** Aerator screens are located at the tip of faucets. Over time, particles and sediment can collect in the aerator screen. Remove and clean aerators screens every two weeks.

Protect Your Child from Lead – Information from the Rhode Island Department of Health

Get your child tested for lead. Lead can be measured in the blood. Your child should have at least two blood lead screening tests by 36 months (one screening by 18 months and the second screening at least 9 months after) and an annual lead screening until the age of six. Contact the Rhode Island Department of Health or your healthcare provider to find out when their most recent lead screening test was and the results. Your family doctor or pediatrician can perform a blood test for lead and provide you with information about the health effects of lead. In Rhode Island, lead screening is a mandated coverage health insurance benefit and is free of charge. Learn more at health.ri.gov/lead/.

Get your home tested for lead. If your home was built before 1978, it likely has lead-based paint. A licensed lead inspector can inspect your home and test the paint and soil for lead. Most rental housing built before 1978 is required to have a Certificate of Lead Conformance, showing the property has passed a lead inspection. Contact RIDOH to learn more about lead inspections.

For More Information

Contact us at (401)435-7741 or waterdept@eastprovidenceri.gov. For more information on reducing lead exposure around your home and the health effects of lead, visit the Rhode Island Department of Health website health.ri.gov/lead/ or contact your health care provider. For more information about lead exposure through drinking water visit <https://health.ri.gov/water/about/lead/>.

This notice is being sent to you by **THE EAST PROVIDENCE WATER UTILITIES DIVISION, PWS #ID 1615610, 60 COMMERCIAL WA, EAST PROVIDENCE, RI, 02914**

Date distributed: _____.