



# **LEAD FREE SYRACUSE**

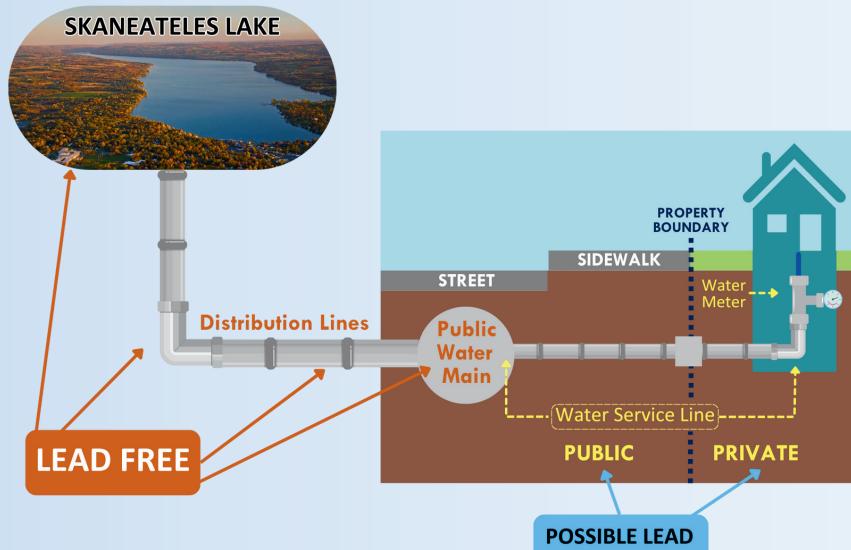
## **IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT LEAD IN DRINKING WATER AND FACTS ABOUT LEAD SERVICE LINES**

## OVERVIEW

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has set the Maximum Contaminant Level Goal (MCLG), the level of a contaminant at which there would be no risk to human health, for lead at zero, based on scientific evidence that there is no safe level of lead exposure. The City of Syracuse (“City”) is responding comprehensively and transparently to the EPA 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 take steps toward EPA compliance regarding lead service lines and is working in conjunction with the New York State and Onondaga County Health Departments to address lead concerns.



# **SOURCES OF LEAD IN DRINKING WATER**

## **What health effects can lead cause?**

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

## **Are there other sources of lead? How can children be exposed?**

Lead is a common metal found in the environment. Drinking water is only one possible source of lead exposure. In our area, the most common way children are exposed to lead is from lead-based paint. Chipping or peeling lead-based paint creates lead dust. Children can pick up lead dust when they crawl on the floor or put their hands and toys in their mouth. It's important to wash your child's toys and hands often, to remove lead dust. Children can also be exposed to lead through contaminated soil or from consumer products such as imported toys, pottery/ceramics, pewter, food, spices, or cosmetics. Adults with certain jobs (construction, house painting, plumbing, auto repair, or jewelry repair) or hobbies (fishing, making or shooting firearms, or making stained glass or pottery) can bring lead into the home on work clothing and shoes.

## **How does lead enter drinking water?**

Homes built before 1986 may have lead in plumbing like water service lines, pipes, solder, and plumbing fixtures. Lead may enter the water as it passes through the lead pipes or when it sits overnight in a home's plumbing system. Plumbing materials, including pipes, new brass faucets, fittings, and valves, including those advertised as "lead-free," may contribute to lead in drinking water. The law currently allows pipes, fittings, and fixtures with up to 0.25 percent weighted average of lead to be identified as "lead-free." Skaneateles Lake is the source water for the City of Syracuse and does not contain lead. 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.

## Steps You Can Take to Reduce Your Exposure to Lead in Your Water

If you are concerned about the lead levels at your location, there are several things you can do separately or in combination:

- **Run your water to flush out lead.** Before drinking, flush your home's pipes for several minutes 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, and the length of the lead service line. Please contact the utility for further recommendations on flushing times.
- **Use cold water.** Do not use hot water from the tap for cooking, drinking or making baby formula. Lead dissolves more easily into hot water.
- **Do not boil water to remove lead.** Boiling water does not reduce lead.
- **Use a water filter properly.** Using a filter can reduce lead in drinking water. If you use a filter, it should be certified to remove lead. For information about identifying filters certified to reduce lead, visit the EPA's website at: <https://www.epa.gov/water-research/consumer-tool-identifying-point-use-and-pitcher-filters-certified-reduce-lead>
- **Follow the manufacturer's instructions provided with the filter to learn how to properly install, maintain, and use your cartridge and when to replace it.** For more information on facts and advice on home water filtration systems, visit EPA's website at <https://www.epa.gov/ground-water-and-drinking-water/home-drinking-water-filtration-fact-sheet>
- **Clean your aerator.** Regularly remove and clean your faucet's screen (also known as an aerator) if it is equipped with 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.
- **Learn what your service line material is.** A service line is the pipe that connects your home to the water main. Visit [syr.gov/Lead-Free-Syracuse](http://syr.gov/Lead-Free-Syracuse) and use the map to learn what your service line is made of. If you don't find information about your service line material online or it is shown as unknown, contact us at 315-448-8354 or a licensed plumber to identify your service line material.  
For a video showing how to self-identify your service line material, visit: [health.ny.gov/environmental/water/drinking/lead/](http://health.ny.gov/environmental/water/drinking/lead/)
- **Get your child tested for lead.** A simple blood test from your child's doctor or the Onondaga County Health Department can detect lead exposure. There is no safe level of lead—elevated levels may require public health action. If your child's result is elevated, the Onondaga County Health Department will contact you. For more information, call 315-435-3271, email [LeadFreeKids@ongov.net](mailto:LeadFreeKids@ongov.net), visit [onondaga.gov/health-env/lead/](http://onondaga.gov/health-env/lead/), or use this link to find out if your child needs a lead test: [redcap.link/r8076nak](http://redcap.link/r8076nak).

## What is Syracuse doing?

The City of Syracuse Water Department treats drinking water with orthophosphate, a food-grade additive approved by the FDA and recognized by the EPA for reducing lead levels by coating lead service lines. The City continues to monitor water quality, actively replaces lead lines during projects, and is developing a plan to replace all 17,000+ lead service lines.

## SERVICE LINE REPLACEMENTS

The City is currently replacing private service lines at homes where only the public infrastructure had previously been upgraded. At the same time, it is developing a comprehensive plan to replace all 17,000+ lead service lines. Priority will be guided by the City's Equity Score, which considers race, income, age, disability, education, and housing burden.

## 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](http://syr.gov/lead-free-Syracuse).

## PUBLIC EDUCATION

A dedicated page on the Water Department's website, [syr.gov/Lead-Free-Syracuse](http://syr.gov/Lead-Free-Syracuse), is available with information about lead service lines and answers to frequently asked questions. Annually, 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.

## 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. Subsequent sampling conducted by an independent third-party firm determined that the results were below the EPA's standard level of concern for action. The EPA uses the 90th percentile value to assess lead levels, if more than 10% of the 100 sampled homes exceed 15 parts per billion, action is required. 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.



# LEAD FREE SYRACUSE

## HELPFUL LINKS AND RESOURCES

### **City of Syracuse Water Department**

[syr.gov/lead-free-Syracuse](http://syr.gov/lead-free-Syracuse) | 315-448-8354 | [waterlead@syr.gov](mailto:waterlead@syr.gov)

### **Onondaga County Health Department Lead Poisoning Prevention**

[onondaga.gov/health-lead/](http://onondaga.gov/health-lead/) | 315-435-3271 | [LeadFreeKids@ongov.net](mailto:LeadFreeKids@ongov.net)

### **Onondaga County Health Department Safe Drinking Water**

[onondaga.gov/health-env/lead/I](http://onondaga.gov/health-env/lead/I) | 315-435-6600 | [PHEng@ongov.net](mailto:PHEng@ongov.net)

### **New York State Department of Health**

[health.ny.gov/environmental/water/drinking/lead/](http://health.ny.gov/environmental/water/drinking/lead/) | 518-402-7600

Replace your plumbing fixtures if they are found to contain lead. Visit [epa.gov/system/files/documents/2024-06/how-to-id-lead-free-certified-drinking-water-products-epa\\_june-2024.pdf](http://epa.gov/system/files/documents/2024-06/how-to-id-lead-free-certified-drinking-water-products-epa_june-2024.pdf) to learn more about lead-containing plumbing fixtures and how to identify lead-free certification marks on new fixtures.

Learn about construction in your neighborhood. Contact us at 315-448-8354 or [WaterLead@syr.gov](mailto:WaterLead@syr.gov) 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 if present.



For more information, call **315-448-8354**

Para más información, llame al **315-448-8354**

Pour plus d'informations, appelez le  
**315-448-8354**

على لمزيد من المعلومات، اتصل **315-448- 8354**

Để biết thêm thông tin, hãy gọi **315-448-8354**

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