

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ's) – Lead in the Drinking Water?

1. Does the Oconomowoc water system have Lead components in it? Yes, approximately 900 of the almost 5,500 connections (16%) have water service laterals that are made of lead material. The majority of those are 5/8-inch and a very small number are 1.5-inch diameter lead. They are generally located in the oldest parts of the City.
2. What are the effects of and who is the most susceptible to Lead exposure? Lead can pose a significant risk to your health if too much of it enters your body. Lead can cause damage to the brain, red blood cells and kidneys. The greatest risk is to young children along with pregnant and breast feeding women.



3. What are the chances my home has lead plumbing? Homes built before the 1960's most likely have a lead water service lateral, unless it was known to be replaced. Additionally, prior to 1984 lead solder was used in many internal plumbing installations. So, even if you do not have a lead service lateral, there are other means for lead to get into your homes plumbing system.
4. Who owns what portion of the water service lateral? The water transmission mains and the service laterals up to the curb-stop valve is owned and maintained by the Utility. The remainder of the lateral from the curb-stop to the water meter inside the customer's home is owned by the property owner. An illustration is shown below to help.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ's) – Lead in the Drinking Water (cont.)

5. **Who is responsible for repair/replacement of the Lead service laterals?** At this time, the City does not have a Lead Service Replacement Program. Unlike some communities that have been mandated by the WDNR to have a replacement program for lead services. The reason these communities have a program is because they have had continued violations of the Lead standard and this is the corrective action dictated by the WDNR. The City does have a proactive approach to its' annual Street Program in which it coordinates the replacement of the underground utilities at the same time as the road is rehabilitated.

6. **What is the difference between a water main and a water service lateral?** A water transmission main are the larger diameter mains located in the middle of the street connecting our wells, pumping stations, and elevated towers together in a grid like fashion throughout the water service area of the City. As a whole, the City's distribution system is made up of approximately 99 miles of water mains varying in size from 4-inch to 16-inch diameter with the majority of the pipe material being ductile and cast iron and a very small amount being PVC or HDPE material. The water service laterals are smaller diameter pipes ranging in size from 5/8- inches to the most typical size of 1-inch or 1 ¼-inch. They are installed as a connection to the main in the street, allowing water to flow into your home thru the water meter in the basement. The typical lateral material is copper, with a few lead and galvanized steel water services typically in houses built prior to the 1960's.

7. **Does the City add any chemicals to mitigate the presence of Lead in the drinking water?** Yes, the Utility adds a blended ortho-phosphate (in addition to chlorine and fluoride) to help aid in corrosion control. The ortho-phosphate coats the inside of the pipes to help prevent the breaking down of the pipe material and easily entering the drinking water system.

8. **Does the City test for Lead and what have the results been?** Yes, the City has collected Lead (and Copper) samples as recently as 2007, 2008, 2009, 2011 and 2014. The WDNR has worked with the City to establish 60 approved sites to sample for Lead & Copper. In 2014, the reported value for Lead (90% percentile) was 9.0 ppb. That is then compared to an Action Level for Lead of 15 ppb to determine compliance. The City was again in compliance with the Lead standard and no follow-up was required. The Utility has had a great track record of being compliant with its Lead and Copper testing requirements.

9. **Is there a device that homeowners can purchase or any measures they can take to minimize the exposure to lead from their drinking water?** Installation of certain filters or reverse osmosis treatment equipment can strip away a very high percentage of potential contaminants, including lead. An RO system would be installed after your water meter and can treat the entire household's water before any consumption from water fixtures. The Utility recommends if you are going to use water for cooking or drinking from any faucet, let the water run (for approximately 20 seconds) prior to consumption to help flush the water that has been sitting for an extended period of time in the pipes out and replace it with fresh.

10. **Who can I call if I want additional information?** If you have any additional questions, not covered by these general FAQ's, please feel free to call our office at 262-569-2196.