



Lead FAQs

Where does lead in water come from?

Lead is not found in Moorhead's source water or treated water when it leaves Moorhead Public Service's (MPS') drinking Water Treatment Plant. Lead contamination of drinking water comes from lead service lines (LSLs) that connect the watermain to the home, household plumbing fixtures, and lead solder.

Does Moorhead have LSLs?

Yes. Most LSLs in Moorhead were typically installed during the 1930s and 1940s. In rare instances, LSLs may have been installed as late as the 1970s. MPS customers can find information on service line material information on addresses located in Minnesota at [Minnesota Service Line Material Tool \(umn.edu\)](https://www.umn.edu/SLMTool). Customers can also email MPS with any questions regarding their service line material at LSLProject@mpsutility.com.

MPS staff is in the process of completing the Lead Service Line Inventory Project. MPS staff has been reviewing historical water distribution system maintenance data to determine which homes in Moorhead have an LSL. MPS has also completed service line inventories by performing door-to-door verifications, as well as requesting that customers complete MPS's Lead Service Line Inventory survey that can be found on [MPS's website](#). Customers can also contact MPS to determine if they have an LSL, or hire a certified plumber to determine potential lead exposure from other sources, such as household plumbing fixtures. MPS will also be completing an Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) project and will verify all service lines during this project.

What does MPS do to reduce lead in drinking water?

MPS uses a two-step treatment process to reduce lead leaching from LSLs, plumbing fixtures, and solder in the home. First, the water's pH is adjusted to approximately 9.30, which allows the water to produce a small amount of scale on the inside of the pipes. Additionally, MPS adds a corrosion inhibitor called polyphosphate to further protect pipes from corrosion. Combining these treatment techniques allows a small coating to form inside the water pipes so that lead does not leach into the water.

Is funding available to replace LSLs?

Yes. Funding is now available to replace LSLs in Minnesota and ***must*** be organized through a public water system (PWS), such as MPS, in order to be eligible to receive reimbursement.

Funding to replace LSLs is provided through the 2023 Minnesota Legislature and the federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, and is being facilitated through the Minnesota Drinking Water Revolving Fund (DWRF) program. A PWS can apply for funding through the DWRF to replace LSLs on behalf of its customers. Private residents are ***not*** eligible to individually apply for funding through the DWRF.

When organized through MPS, replacements of the LSL will be completed at **no cost** to the property owner for any privately owned portion of the LSL. The funding will provide a 100 percent grant for the privately owned portion of the LSL. MPS will replace the publicly owned portion of the LSL by using a combination of grant funds and zero-interest loans. Once the work is completed, MPS will receive a grant to pay off the loan portion.

Does MPS have a plan to reduce the number of LSLs in Moorhead?

MPS' current strategy is to replace the MPS-owned (public) portion of LSLs during watermain replacement projects, water service leaks, and other maintenance projects. Over the past year, MPS has applied for LSL replacement funding through the DWRF mentioned above. In 2024, MPS was approved by the Minnesota Public Facilities Authority to receive funding, and awarded its first Lead Service Line Replacement (Pilot Project). This Pilot Project was competitively bid and contracted to replace 12 privately owned portions of LSLs identified during MPS' 2023 watermain replacement projects. MPS will continue to apply for this type of DWRF funding to sequentially remove LSLs. MPS will also continue to complete verifications of unknown service lines, incorporating the data into MPS' GIS database for staff to analyze and investigate future strategies to replace LSLs.

What is a safe level of lead in water?

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has set the maximum contaminant level goal (MCLG) for lead at zero. Due to lead leaching from the plumbing inside of homes, a zero level is not entirely possible in some locations. Therefore, through the Lead and Copper Rule Revision (LCRR) and the Lead and Copper Rule Improvements (LCRI), EPA set a revised action level (AL) of 10 parts per billion (ppb) for nationwide lead monitoring. An analogy for the concentration of parts per billion is one drop of water in a 14,000-gallon swimming pool. EPA's updated rules require all PWS to test for lead in drinking water to ensure that the water meets EPA guidelines.

Has MPS ever violated the Lead and Copper Rule?

No. MPS has never been out of compliance with the Lead and Copper Rule (LCR) since testing began in 1992. Only 1.4 percent of the lead samples tested have been over the previous action level of 15 ppb since testing has been required by the LCR. These samples did not trigger an LCR violation because the 90th percentile level of samples was less than the action level. With EPA's rule revisions, MPS will analyze water samples to ensure that lead is less than the revised action level of 10 ppb.

What can I do to ensure I am not exposed to lead in drinking water if I have an LSL, or lead in my home plumbing?

If you believe your family is at risk for lead exposure from tap water, we encourage customers to obtain testing from a certified laboratory. Contact us at LSLProject@mpsutility.com for information on accredited laboratories where MPS can assist you to have your water tested and learn more about the lead levels in your drinking water. Alternatively, you can contact a Minnesota Department of Health accredited laboratory, [search here](#), to purchase a sample container and instructions on how to submit a sample. Please note, water samples may not adequately capture or represent all the sources of lead that may be present. For information on sources of lead that include service lines and interior plumbing, please visit [here](#).

Families can take steps to reduce their risk of lead exposure by:

1. Flushing out the lines after a period of stagnation (such as overnight hours) to get fresh water coming from the main. (Consider using the water to flush toilets or watering your plants to minimize waste.)
2. Purchasing a point-of-use treatment device certified to remove lead and make sure the device is properly maintained.
3. Only use cold tap water for drinking and preparing food. Avoid consuming water from the hot water tap, where lead is more likely to be present.
4. Periodically remove and clean the faucet screen/aerator. While the faucet screen/aerator is removed, run water to eliminate any debris.