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## FAQ: Questions about Lead and Drinking Water

**Q: Does my drinking water in Detroit contain lead?**

**A:** The water in Detroit meets all regulatory standards under the Safe Drinking Water Act. When lead is present in water, it is the result of corrosion or the wearing away of materials in the water distribution system and household plumbing that contain lead. Water provided to DWSD customers contain anti-corrosion agents to prevent leaching from lead service lines. Detailed information about lead and water can be found on the Detroit Water and Sewerage Department (DWSD) website under Water Quality Reports at [detroitmi.gov/dwsd](http://detroitmi.gov/dwsd).

**Q: Is there corrosion control in the drinking water in Detroit?**

**A:** The Great Lakes Water Authority (GLWA) is the water treatment provider for DWSD. GLWA administers frequent and rigorous water quality monitoring ensuring corrosion control is provided in its water system. Water systems across the United States, including the GLWA, use a corrosion control inhibitor to protect the pipes in their distribution systems and the plumbing inside of homes and buildings. Effective corrosion control is one important element in preventing elevated lead levels. GLWA uses ortho-phosphate as the corrosion control chemical which reacts with the metal surfaces inside the water distribution system and home plumbing. Ortho-phosphate is a non-harmful nutrient essential to all animals and is available in most foods. The ortho-phosphate forms a protective barrier between the drinking water and the metal surfaces in the water distribution system. Water quality is measured at the treatment plants at varying intervals depending on the chemical or process being monitored, 24 hours a day 7 days a week.

**Q: What are the lead levels in Detroit's drinking water?**

**A:** The most recent testing in Detroit was completed in 2014 which found that 100% of the homes tested were well below the EPA's action level. Standards under the EPA's "lead and copper rule" state that if lead in the water exceeds 15 ppb (parts per billion), remedial action is required. The lead levels in Detroit water at 2.3 ppb are far under the federal action limit and Detroit is considered an optimized community by the EPA for its corrosion control efforts.

**Q: What if I see discoloration at my water faucet?**

**A:** If you see discoloration in your water, run your water for several minutes and flush toilets to reduce sediment possibly sitting in the pipes. If there is no change, stop using your water immediately and call the DWSD emergency services line at 313-267-7401. DWSD field services will investigate the issue. The water main or hydrant may need to be flushed by DWSD. The issue may have resulted in low pressure from a repair done on a nearby water main, or by nearby construction that involves water service.



**Q. What is a lead service line?**

**A.** Lead service lines connect the water main in the street to your house. Normally the service line is copper, but in older cities, the lines may be lead. DWSD routinely replaces its side of the service line (from the main to the curb stop) when performing water main repairs or replacements, but it is left to the homeowner to replace pipes and other materials on your property.

**Q: What are the responsibilities of DWSD and customers?**

**A:** DWSD is responsible for providing high quality drinking water. Customers are responsible for the service lines from the stop box (or meter well) to their home or business. DWSD is not responsible for the variety of materials used in plumbing components within residential and commercial properties.

**Q. What can I do to minimize my risk if I have a lead service line?**

**A.** If your home has a lead service line or plumbing that may contain soldered joints or plumbing fixtures that may contain lead, you can limit your exposure to lead by flushing your tap water any time the tap has gone unused for more than a couple of hours. Let your water run 1-2 minutes before using the water for drinking or cooking. Flushing clears standing water from your plumbing and service line which ensures you are receiving water from the water main.

**Q: If I am interested in having my water tested, what is the water testing policy?**

**A:** DWSD is collaborating with the Great Lakes Water Authority – the new organization that manages the treatment plants – to revise a policy to fulfill requests of residents in Detroit who want their water tested. In the meantime, you may request a water quality test for your home by calling the DWSD Customer Care for more information at 313-267-8000. The fee is \$75 fee. A third-party, independent testing lab can also be used if preferred.