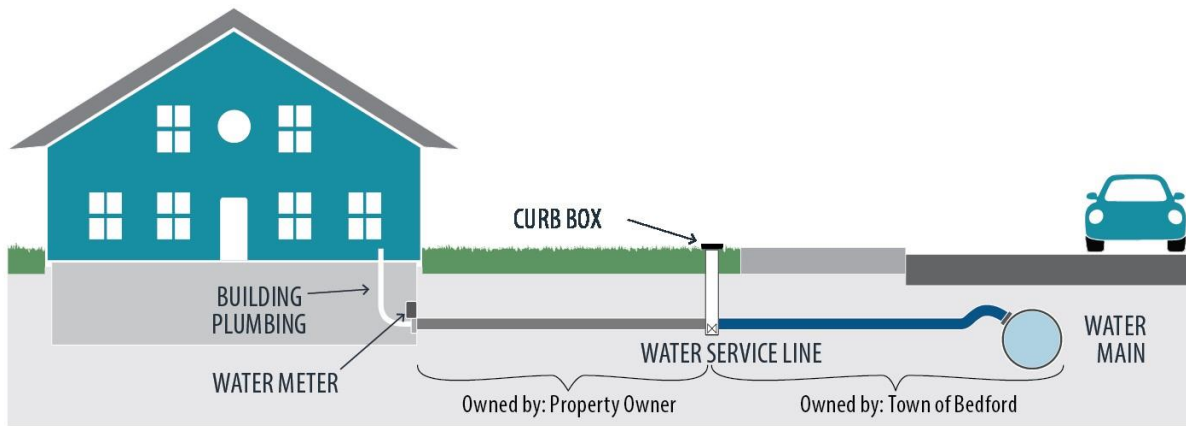


1. **What is a water service line?**

- a. Water service lines are the small pipes that carry water from the Town’s water main in the street into homes/buildings.



2. **Is the water safe to drink?**

- a. Bedford takes a number of steps to make sure your water is safe to drink. 100% of our water comes from MWRA which treats the water to minimize lead leaching from pipes and plumbing fixtures. Our Water division samples for lead in the areas of town that are most likely to have lead pipe materials and all results have been below reporting levels, indicating no lead exposure.
- b. The lead testing results are available to the public yearly in Bedford’s annual [Consumer Confidence Report](#).
- c. Out of an abundance of caution, if your home is serviced by an “unknown” service material, you may want to purchase a certified lead removal water pitcher and filters until the Town can verify your water service material type.

3. **Is the water safe for my pet to drink?**

- a. Bedford takes a number of steps to make sure your water is safe to drink. 100% of our water comes from MWRA which treats the water to minimize lead leaching from pipes and plumbing fixtures. Our Water division samples for lead in the areas of town that are most likely to have lead pipe materials and all results have been below reporting levels, indicating no lead exposure.
- b. The lead testing results are available to the public yearly in Bedford’s annual Consumer Confidence Report.
- c. Out of an abundance of caution, if your home is serviced by an “unknown” service material, you may want to purchase a certified lead removal water pitcher and filters until the Town can verify your water service material type.

4. **Can I shower in water with lead?**

- a. Yes. Bathing and showering should be safe for you and your children, even if the water contains lead over EPA’s action level. Human skin does not absorb lead in water.



5. **Why are lead water service lines an issue?**

- a. 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. Because lead may pose serious health risks, both the EPA and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) agree that “there is no known safe level of lead in a child’s blood”.
- b. Contact your health care provider or your local health department to find out if your child needs to be tested for lead. A blood lead level test is the only way to know if your child is being exposed to lead. For more information on Massachusetts’ childhood lead testing program, contact the Department of Public Health (DPH) at <https://www.mass.gov/orgs/childhood-lead-poisoning-prevention-program> or at 1-800-532-9571.
- c. If you have health concerns, please contact your health care provider with any questions.

6. **Why did I not receive a notice about my water service?**

- a. Notices regarding water service line materials are only sent out to customers whose water service falls into the below category:
 - Unknown** – Could possibly contain lead
 - Galvanized*** – Requiring Replacement
 - Lead*** – Requiring Replacement
 - * - No known lead or galvanized services currently
- b. If you did not receive a letter that means the DPW has records indicating a copper service line material or your house was constructed after the Federal Lead ban in 1986.

7. **What does it mean if my water service line material is unknown?**

- a. The information provided in the Water Service Line Inventory is based on the best available data that Bedford DPW has at this time. If the material type listed is “Unknown,” that means we have no records of a material type for your service line or there are conflicting records.



8. **What can I do to reduce the risks of lead in my drinking water?**

- a. If you know lead is present in your drinking water (from a water test), if you have pipes or plumbing fixtures that contain lead, or if you don't know the material type, you can take steps to minimize potential lead exposure until all sources of lead have been removed.
- b. Use only cold water for drinking and cooking - Before drinking, flush the water system by running the tap until the water is cold to the touch, especially if you have not used the water for a few hours. The longer water remains standing in a lead pipe, the greater the chance lead can leach into the water.
- c. Flush the pipes - Let the water run to bring in fresh water that has not been standing in the pipes. Flushing times can vary based on the internal plumbing configuration. Once fresh water has been obtained, bottle it and stick it in your refrigerator for ready use later on.
- d. Put a bottle of water in the refrigerator at night for later use.
- e. Regularly clean your faucet aerator - Particles containing lead from solder or household plumbing can become trapped in your faucet aerator. Regularly cleaning aerators every few months will remove these particles and reduce your exposure to lead. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LbJGwQIWhBM>
- f. Replace faucets and fixtures containing lead (manufactured prior to 2014).
- g. Replace your private lead water service.

9. **Which type of filter removes lead?**

- a. The National Sanitation Foundation (NSF) advises that filters certified as NSF-053 effectively reduce lead in water. The NSF certification logo should be visible on the packaging. These filters can remove up to 99 percent of the lead.
- b. For additional information please visit the webpage below for the USEPA's Consumer Tool for Identifying Point-of-Use and Pitcher Filters Certified to Reduce Lead in Drinking Water
- c. <https://www.epa.gov/water-research/consumer-tool-identifying-point-use-and-pitcher-filters-certified-reduce-lead>

Note: EPA changes weblink addresses frequently – if this link is broken please search for “Consumer Tool for Identifying Point-of-Use and Pitcher Filters Certified to Reduce Lead in Drinking Water”

10. **Can I independently get my water tested for lead?**

- a. Yes. Lead from solder, fixtures, and pipes found in the plumbing of some buildings or homes can be released into water, so it may be possible that your home's drinking water contains lead. If you are concerned about elevated lead levels in your home's water, you may wish to test the water.
- b. You can use any [Massachusetts Certified Drinking Water Laboratory](#). The Town of Bedford recommends you use a certified lab that processes water samples from both private (homeowners/commercial) and municipal customers.



11. How does Bedford Public Works determine the material of my water service?

- a. Service line material information is based upon historical permit or service installation records, water main installation/replacement records, meter records, and/or misc. maintenance, repair and replacement work. If existing records are incomplete or unclear, a visible inspection of the water service entering your home can provide valuable information. As the effort to investigate this information can take appreciable time, Bedford staff have already completed an exhaustive review of these records, and reviewed data collected from the previous water meter replacement program in 2018.

12. What material are water service lines typically made out of?

- a. The composition of water service lines are generally related to the age of the service. Prior to the mid 1930's, typical residential water service lines were made of lead or galvanized iron pipe. In the mid 1930's, the industry began changing over to using copper service lines.

13. Have all water service line materials in Bedford been identified?

- a. While Bedford has many records dating back to the 1900's and we have been reviewing and improving data recording, some data gaps remain.
- b. We have been tackling the inventory based on the approximate year built in the Bedford Assessors Database.
- c. In 1986, Congress amended the Safe Drinking Water Act to ban the use of lead in plumbing, solder, and flux in public water systems and in plumbing that provides water for human consumption, however Bedford had required copper water services beginning in 1984. So for any homes built after 1984, we can confidently say that your water service material is copper.

14. What does it mean if my water service line material is "Non-Lead"?

- a. The information contained in the Water Service Line Inventory is based on the best available data that Bedford has in its possession. If the material type is listed as "Non-Lead", the DPW has records indicating that the water service line material is Copper, Plastic (high density polyethylene - HDPE), Cement Lined Iron, Ductile Iron, or water service lines of unknown material installed after the 1986 lead ban.
- b. Although your service line may not be made of lead, you can still be exposed to lead in the water through internal plumbing fixtures. To reduce the potential for lead exposure from tap water, you should run your faucet for at least 30 seconds or until it gets cold. Once the water is cold, run it for an additional 15 seconds.

15. When will my service be identified?

- a. The DPW plans to start field verification by digging up service lines in the street starting in the early Spring of next year. Our consultant is creating a statistical model to provide the Town with locations to perform this excavation work. We will be digging about 20% of the unknown service material locations to populate the model to predict the remaining service line materials. This is a MA DEP approved verification method, however the DEP may require more verification in the future.
- b. The DPW's goal is to complete the verifications as soon as possible but no later than 2027.



16. How long will the investigation take, and if lead is identified, how long before I can start using water again?

- a. The investigation will take no more than 2 years, starting in early 2025. If a lead service is identified the Town will replace the line as soon as possible, with the expectation that work will be complete in a few days.
- b. As part of the federal regulations the Town will be supplying the property with a certified to reduce lead pitcher and 6 months of filters. The DPW will also be instructing the homeowner to flush their house daily for 5 minutes for the next 6 months. This is to ensure any lead particles that may have been disturbed are removed from the plumbing. And lastly there is required sampling that is to be offered to these residents for 3 to 6 months following the replacement.

17. Do I need to be home for the investigation work?

- a. If the pipe material is labelled “unknown” on the private side then the easiest and quickest way to verify the material is to let us come into your home and check the pipe where it comes into the house, usually in the basement next to the water meter.
- b. If the pipe material is labelled “unknown” on the public side then you do not need to be home as the Town will need to excavate in the street to determine the pipe material.

18. Who owns a water service line?

In Bedford, the Town owns the portion of the line from the water main in the street up to the property line. From the property line to the house, the service line belongs to the homeowner. If a lead or galvanized steel service line is found, the Town is committed to replacing the entire portion of the line at no cost to the resident.

19. Why Replace my Lead Service?

Lead becomes a public health concern when it migrates from pipes and fixtures into drinking water. The MWRA treats Bedford’s drinking water to minimize lead leaching from pipes and plumbing fixtures into the water. This treatment protects customers from lead exposure in drinking water, even when lead pipes or lead-containing plumbing fixtures are present.

Bedford’s Water Division monitors lead in drinking water by regularly sampling and testing for lead at taps throughout the water system. The lead testing results are available to the public yearly in Bedford’s annual [Consumer Confidence Report](#).



20. What are Galvanized Pipes?

- a. Galvanized Steel or Iron Pipes are a dull gray color. They are hard to scratch, and underneath the color of the pipe will remain dull gray. A magnet will stick to galvanized steel, and tapping a steel pipe with a coin will produce a metallic ringing noise. Steel pipes also typically have threaded fittings. Steel pipes on their own are not a source of lead in drinking water (unless they have been lined with lead); however, steel pipes in older homes may pose a serious risk if they have been connected to lead plumbing at any point. Galvanized steel pipes can trap lead on their inside surface and periodically release those bits of lead, even after lead plumbing is removed.



21. How long has the Town known about this and why are we receiving letters now?

- a. The Revised Lead and Copper Rule was first introduced in 2021 and gave communities until October of 2024 to create an inventory of pipe materials. Bedford has been working with our consultant to investigate all of our records for material information since early 2023. After completing an exhaustive search of Town records for this information we have narrowed the list of properties that are still unknown pipe materials and were required to submit this list to MA DEP. We are notifying these properties about the inventory and about the next steps for verification of the pipe material.

22. Does the Water Department currently sample for lead?

- a. The Water Department currently samples sites throughout Town for both lead and copper. Please visit <https://www.bedfordma.gov/492/Water-Sewer-Division> for the most recent test results.

23. Where Can I Get More Information About My Drinking Water?

- a. Read Bedford’s most recent annual water quality report at <https://www.bedfordma.gov/492/Water-Sewer-Division> , which provides an general overview of drinking water quality in Bedford, from the source to your tap.

