



City of Richmond Lead Free Water Program FAQs

1. What is the City of Richmond's Lead Free Water program?

The City's Lead Free Water Program is focused on eliminating the risk of lead from entering drinking water. It encompasses the way the City treats the drinking water before it leaves the Water Treatment Plant; the work of identifying and eliminating all lead piping in the water distribution system by 2037; and adhering to increased water sampling regulations.

2. Is there lead in Richmond's drinking water?

Protecting public health and providing safe, clean, reliable water is at the heart of the City of Richmond's mission. Richmond's drinking water consistently meets and usually exceeds federal and state quality standards. DPU continuously monitors the safety of its drinking water, with continuous testing for numerous substances. The results of these tests are shared with VDH monthly and published annually in the City's [Consumer Confidence Report](#).

Richmond's drinking water does not contain lead when it leaves the treatment plant. Rather, instances of lead in water can occur from water service lines made of lead as well as internal plumbing materials. A portion of each water service line is owned by the City (public), and a portion is owned by the property owner (private). We remind citizens that eliminating the risk of lead getting into drinking water is a shared responsibility.

3. What are the health effects of lead exposure?

If too much lead enters your body from drinking water or other sources, serious problems can occur. It can damage the brain and kidneys and interfere with the production of red blood cells that carry oxygen to all parts of the body.

The greatest risk of lead exposure is to infants, young children, the elderly and pregnant women. Effects of lead in the brain have been linked to lower IQs in children. Adults with kidney problems and high blood pressure can be affected by even low levels of lead more than healthy adults. Lead is stored in the bones and can be released later in life. During pregnancy, lead from the mother's bones can be passed to the unborn child, which may affect brain development.

You can find more information on ways to protect you and your family from lead exposure from this EPA website. [Lead Safety Documents and Outreach Materials | US EPA](#)

4. How do I determine what type of pipe delivers water to my home?

A water service line is the pipe that delivers water to your home from the City's water main in the street or alley, through the City's water meter and into your home or business. The portion of the service line between the City's water main and the water meter is owned by the City

(public side). The portion between the meter and the house, is owned by the property owner (private side). Service lines may be constructed of copper, plastic, galvanized iron, lead or other materials.



These lines often enter homes in basements or crawl spaces. Wherever the hot water heater is located is also a good place to look when a crawl space or basement is not present.

5. What is the Service Line Inventory (SLI)? Why is it important?

The SLI is an on-line, interactive map that a customer can access to determine what information the City has related to the pipe, or service line, that provides water to their property. The City is required by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to identify service line pipe material for all customers. Since the City does not own and did not install the portion of the service line between the meter and the building, this material is not known and is being requested via the completion of a [survey](#).

It is important for customers to know what type of pipe delivers their water so that if it is lead, steps can be taken, up to and including pipe replacement, to mitigate the potential for lead particles to enter the drinking water. This information will also help the City develop a long-term lead replacement plan.

6. I am a renter in a residential house. Can I access the Service Line Inventory (SLI) application?

Yes. The survey will accept your input and we welcome your help in identifying pipe material and encourage you to share the information with your landlord. If you are not able to access where the service line enters the house, please discuss with your landlord as the property

owner may request assistance through the SLI app to have one of our SLI Certified Plumbers come out and make a pipe identification and enter the data into the SLI application.

7. What if I can't access where the service line enters my house?

The on-line survey allows for the Property Owner to request assistance with identifying the pipe material. When an Owner requests assistance to complete the on-line survey, the City will send the Owner a list of Certified Plumbers who may assist with service line identification. These plumbers are reimbursed for this work by the City with funding provided by the Virginia Department of Health.

8. Am I required to use the City's Certified Plumbers to complete this survey?

No, any plumber may assist you with the pipe identification. However, only those plumbers who are on the list of Certified Plumbers will receive reimbursement from the City for completion of the survey.

9. Are there funds available to help me pay for the replacement of my lead service line?

Richmond's current funding allocation is reaching capacity. The next funding cycle is anticipated to open in Spring 2025. In addition, Richmond will begin a program to complete replacements (public and private) in a targeted, block by block approach linking the Lead Service Line (LSL) Replacement projects along with other utility work so that all neighborhood disruptions can be minimized and replacements can be completed as cost efficiently as possible in areas with the most need.

The City of Richmond has and will continue to request grant funding from both state and federal Agencies to fund the replacement of private lead service lines.

10. I am a renter in a residential home, can I still apply for the Lead Service Line Replacement (LSLR) Grant?

Only Property Owners are eligible to apply for funds from the LSLR Grant program. The program is fully obligated at this time but continue to check back as additional grant funds are anticipated to become available in Spring 2025.

11. I know that my water service line is made of lead, now what?

Although the City treats the water when it leaves the Water Treatment Plant with a corrosion inhibitor, particles may still enter the system from lead service lines or interior plumbing fixtures. Measures that can be taken to minimize exposure to lead include using cold water for drinking and cooking, flushing your pipes after they have been stagnate for several hours and using a water filter that is certified to remove lead particles. Other tips can be found here:

[LeadFreeWater | Richmond](#)

12. My service line is made of lead. When will it be replaced?

The City has and will continue to replace lead pipes when found in the public right-of-way. The City has managed a grant program since 2018 to help property owners pay for replacement of their lead service lines. The City intends to expand its replacement program to target entire blocks. As additional funding becomes available, private side replacements will be conducted as part of targeted, public side replacements. In addition, the City intends to continue to reserve a portion of the grant funds for customer-initiated replacements. However, at this time, there are no additional funds for private side replacements. New grant funds are anticipated to be available by Spring 2025.

13. What number do I call if I have more questions?

The Lead Free Water Program phone number is 804-646-8600.