

Byfield Water District

Answers to Frequently asked questions.

Is my water safe to use and drink?

Yes, your water is currently safe to drink. However, as part of our commitment to ensuring the highest water quality standards and to maintain compliance with new regulations, we were required to inform you via mail that you have a lead, galvanized, or **unknown material water service.**

In accordance with regulations and guidelines set forth by the state of Massachusetts and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), regular testing and monitoring of water quality are conducted at specific water services to ensure compliance with safety standards. Our water system is monitored and treated to meet these stringent requirements, and no lead action level exceedance has been identified.

To help reduce your lead exposure, run your water before drinking and cooking. Water that sits stagnant in a lead pipe for a prolonged period is most likely to contain lead.

Why are lead pipes harmful?

According to the EPA, CDC, and WHO, lead is a toxic, malleable metal that poses a serious health risk when consumed. However, your water is currently safe to use and consume, even if your pipes are lead. Our water is treated to prevent corrosion of the pipes and the dissolution of lead into the water.

To help reduce your lead exposure, run your water before drinking and cooking. Water that sits stagnant in a lead pipe for a prolonged period is most likely to contain lead.

Why are galvanized pipes harmful?

Galvanized pipes are iron or steel pipes coated in zinc on the exterior to provide corrosion resistance. These pipes were historically used in conjunction with lead pipes or can be lined on the interior with lead. Lead can be absorbed by these pipes and re-released over time if the water conditions are not treated for corrosion control. Our water is treated to prevent corrosion of the pipes and the dissolution of lead into the water.

To help reduce your lead exposure, run your water before drinking and cooking. Water that sits stagnant in a lead pipe for a prolonged period is most likely to contain lead.

Why are unknown material pipes harmful?

Unknown material pipes could be made of Lead or Galvanized materials and, therefore, could contain lead.

How do I know if I have lead piping?

Customers should follow the directions on their letter to complete the self-assessment. You can find the QR code on page two and follow the directions from their mobile device.

Why am I only finding out about this now?

Historically, regulations have required water systems to utilize corrosion control treatment to prevent the dissolution of lead from legacy pipes into the water. Regulations and guidelines set forth by the state of Massachusetts and the EPA require regular testing and monitoring of water quality at specific water services to ensure compliance with safety standards. Our water system is monitored and treated to meet these stringent requirements. And no lead action level exceedance has been identified.

The EPA and the state of Massachusetts have recently released new regulations requiring water systems to identify water service materials and inform customers who have lead, galvanized, or unknown-material water services that they could be at an increased risk of lead exposure than someone without a lead service.

Who owns the Water Service?

You and the water system jointly own the water service. The system owns the portion of the service under the road and up to the property line. The portion of the service over your property is owned by you.

What is the plan moving forward?

We are still discussing internally the plans for confirming pipe material on service lines identified as UNKNOWNED. At this time we have no reason to believe that water service lines identified as UNKNOWN need to be replaced. As soon as we have information to share, we will contact you.

Is this going to cost me anything?

We are still discussing internally the plans for replacing lead service lines. As soon as we have information to share, we will contact you.

Do I need to take any action?

You are not required to take any action. This information is being provided for your benefit and awareness. Our website has links to government websites that provide tips and tricks for minimizing your potential exposure to lead.

Can I pay to have my water service replaced?

Yes, you can hire a contractor to replace your portion of the water service. Please inform us if you choose this option, and we may replace our portion of the service at the same time.

The System maintains a list of approved water service contractors. We can provide you with the list if you wish.

How much will it cost to have my water service replaced?

We cannot provide estimates for private-side replacements as it is our current policy not to complete service replacements on private property.

The System maintains a list of approved water service contractors. We can provide you with the list if you wish.

Will my yard be ruined?

Our system has a longstanding policy of not completing work on private property. However, we maintain a list of approved water service contractors that can replace your service.

Depending on the method used to remove and replace the pipes, your yard may be impacted. The main method of service extraction will be to cut a hole in the yard near the property line and pull the service lines out through that hole, thus saving your property from any unnecessary digging.

If that method were to fail, the next step would be to dig a trench to install the service. This may impact your yard more heavily.

Where can I go to find other useful information?

Our website has additional information that includes the most recent Lead & Copper testing Results, and useful links to other resources.