

A notice from the EPA

In 2024 the Coop received a request from the Wisconsin DNR to inventory the service line materials for our properties. Lead was the concern and we were aware of that metal in lines of the five properties built in the early 1920s. As required, we assayed it in their water and reported the level to the owners along with text on the consequences of lead.

We had no way to determine the material of the service lines for our other properties which were all built from the 1940s on, but we knew from installation information that none contained lead. For those properties the many columns in the inventory would be set to null or “unknown but not lead.” Such an inventory would not be very useful. In early 2024 we had already begun discussions, at the instigation of our Alder, with Madison Water Utility regarding the eventual replacement of our Coop system. Reluctantly we came to realize that the only way to ensure reliable water for the neighborhood was to switch to the Utility system. Since all Coop service lines would then be abandoned, inventorying them didn’t seem urgent.

In 2025 the DNR notified us that the inventory was still due, the deadline had passed and we were in violation. With some effort we then did submit an inventory and in October 2025 the DNR reported that it satisfied federal requirements and that the violation was resolved. The inventory is available at lakeForestWater.org.

However, eight months later we were surprised by an order from the EPA requiring us to send all users a notification of that earlier resolved violation. The text, included below, is mainly from the EPA with some additions for our system. I don’t think you’ll find anything in this pointless notice to question the safety of your water other than the lead which was already known to those affected. The regional administrator has been understanding but is required to certify that the Coop has responded to the order. I have always admired the EPA and discounted grumbles about overregulation. Still, I can’t help but find it ironic that, under the current regime, major polluters and political cronies are let free while the agency cracks down on a triviality.

Gary Davis, gdavis@wisc.edu, 608.239.8039

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR DRINKING WATER

Lake Forest Water Co-op Failed to Develop, Make Publicly Accessible, and Report an Initial Service Line Inventory

Our water system recently violated a drinking water requirement. As our co-op members, you have a right to know what happened, what you should do, and what we did to correct this situation.

We were required to develop and make publicly available an initial inventory of service lines connected to our distribution system by October 16, 2024. Our system failed to submit this initial inventory of service lines to the State by October 16, 2024. The inventory must identify the service line materials as lead, galvanized requiring replacement (GRR)¹, lead-status unknown/unknown, or non-lead. Identifying and ultimately removing lead and GRR service lines is an important way to protect public health.

We notified persons served at service connections with a lead service line on November 14, 2024.

We did then develop the inventory for the service lines for all properties. It is available at lakeforestwater.org. For all but the 5 properties built around 1920 the service line material is unknown, but we have reason to believe that none of them contain lead. Ron Slane and before him his family were involved in all new installations which began in the 1940s and Ron assured us that lead was not used in any lines.

We submitted the inventory to the WIDNR, and on October 9, 2025 were informed that it is consistent with federal requirements.

The following text is required to be included by the EPA whether it's relevant to you or not.

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.

What should I do?

Listed below are some steps you can take to reduce your exposure to lead:

Learn what your service line material is. Contact us at admin@lakeforestwater.org or a licensed plumber to determine if the pipe that connects your home to the water main (called a service line) is made from lead, galvanized, or other materials. Protect Your Tap: A quick check for lead is the EPA's online step by step guide to learn how to find lead pipes in your home (www.epa.gov/pyt).

Learn about construction in your neighborhood. Unless your service line is not made of lead or galvanized you should be aware of any nearby construction or maintenance work that could disturb the line. Ground tremors from construction may suddenly cause more lead to be released from lead or galvanized service lines in the area.

Use your filter properly. Using a filter can reduce lead in drinking water. If you use a filter, make sure you use a filter certified to remove lead. Read the directions to learn how to properly install and use your cartridge and when to replace it. Using the cartridge after it has expired can make it less effective at removing lead. Do not run hot water through the filter.

Clean your aerator. Regularly remove and clean your faucet's screen (also known as an aerator). Sediment, debris, and lead particles can collect in your aerator. If lead particles are caught in the aerator, lead can get into your water.

Use cold water. Use only cold water for drinking, cooking, and making baby formula. Remember, boiling water does not remove lead from water.

Run your water. The more time water has been sitting in pipes, the more lead it may contain. Before drinking, flush your home's pipes by running the tap, taking a shower, doing laundry, or doing a load of dishes. The amount of time to run the water will depend on whether your home has a lead service line or not, and the length of the lead service line. Residents should contact their water utility for recommendations about flushing times in their community.

Have your water tested. Contact your water utility to have your water tested and to learn more about the lead levels in your drinking water.

What does this mean?

Service line inventories are the foundation from which water systems take action to address a significant source of lead in drinking water. Establishing an inventory of service line materials and identifying the location of lead and GRR service lines is a key step in getting them replaced and protecting public health. Typically, lead enters water supplies by leaching from lead pipes,

brass faucets, plumbing with leaded solder, and other plumbing components containing lead. In homes with lead pipes that connect the home to the water main, also known as lead services lines, these pipes are typically the most significant source of lead in the water. Lead pipes are more likely to be found in older cities and homes built before 1986. Service lines made of galvanized iron or steel that are (or were previously) downstream of lead service lines are classified as galvanized requiring replacement (GRR) because galvanized service lines that are or ever were downstream from an LSL can adsorb lead and contribute to lead in drinking water. Identifying and ultimately removing lead and GRR service lines is an important way to protect public health.

For more information on reducing lead exposure around your home/building and the health effects of lead, visit EPA's Web site at <http://www.epa.gov/lead> or contact your health care provider.

For more information, please contact Gary Davis at 608.239.8039 or gdavis@wisc.edu.

Please share this information with all the other people who drink this water, especially those who may not have received this notice directly (for example, people in apartments, nursing homes, schools, and businesses). You can do this by posting this notice in a public place or distributing copies by hand or mail.

This notice is being sent to you by Lake Forest Water Co-op, Public Water System ID#: 11302324.

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