



Common Questions about Lead

Is Ann Arbor's water safe to drink?

Yes, Ann Arbor's water is safe to drink. The City of Ann Arbor employs a rigorous drinking water testing regime to ensure safety and integrity. Testing results are published each year in the Water Quality Report available online at www.a2gov.org/A2H2O or in paper copies at Larcom City Hall, 301 E. Huron St.

Is Ann Arbor at risk of having a lead problem?

Drinking water leaving the treatment plant contains no lead and no lead service lines exist in the city's drinking water system. Some residences may still have lead service lines, which connect the residence to the water main, or lead pipes inside the dwelling. The city does not have records or maintain these pipes. Lead can make its way into drinking water if the composition of the water traveling through lead pipes is overly corrosive, which has been the case in some communities. Ann Arbor's water is not corrosive; stringent water treatment protocols are in place by the city to manage the water system's composition. The City has also not changed sources or treatment, and sample results are consistently extremely low or non-detect.

While the city system contains no lead service lines, city records indicate there are approximately 150 galvanized iron service lines that contain 18-to-24-inch flexible lead connections that exist at various locations. These "goosenecks," as they are commonly called, were installed prior to World War II. The City has taken out hundreds of these goosenecks since 1991 and has a plan to remove the rest.

What about privately owned pipe?

The City does not have records of what material is on the owner's portion of the service line or in the dwelling. City crews inform residents if we discover a lead or galvanized service line. A certified plumber can help determine your service line and indoor plumbing materials, and the plumber can help identify other potential sources of lead.

What are other potential sources of lead in water?

In cities with lead service lines, the service line is the largest source of lead in their system. Other sources of lead can be lead solder used to join copper pipes. Dwelling with copper plumbing installed prior to 1988 could contain this lead solder. There could also be lead materials in some brass faucets purchased before 2014. Again, lead is only a problem if the composition of the water in the system is corrosive.

Are my children at risk of lead from water in Ann Arbor Public School buildings?

Given 25 years of sampling homes in Ann Arbor, and consistently finding extremely low levels of lead, and given the nature of our water source and treatment, the risk from lead in drinking water in school buildings is very low. However, the City and the public schools are in discussion about sampling school buildings.

How often does Ann Arbor test for lead in the public water supply?

Our testing has always shown extremely low levels of lead, and the city currently collects and analyzes samples from 51 homes every three years. The age of a building and type of plumbing helps to determine if lead materials may be present in the dwelling's plumbing and who meets criteria for testing. The City has no record of individual household service line or plumbing materials.

Environmental Protection Agency requires 90 percent of the samples be lower than 15 parts per billion. In the city's sampling in 2015, 90 percent of the samples were below 2 parts per billion and 100 percent of the samples were below 6 parts per billion.

The only way to know with certainty if you have lead at the tap is to have your water tested by a certified laboratory. If you would like your tap tested, please contact the Water Treatment Plant at 734.994.2840 to arrange sampling.

Are there other sources of lead in the environment?

To learn more about lead and sources of exposure, please visit www.epa.gov/lead.

If Ann Arbor doesn't have a problem, why does the water quality report have information about the health effects of lead?

A precautionary health effects statement about lead is included in the city's annual Water Quality Report not because there is a problem, but to inform residents. The Water Quality Report (www.a2gov.org/A2H2O) also contains other tips on how to minimize lead in your homes.

What other testing does Ann Arbor do to ensure safe drinking water?

The City of Ann Arbor performs dozens of different tests on its water at various stages in the treatment process. The City tests its water for many more contaminants than those that are regulated. Please refer to the City's annual Water Quality report for specific information (www.a2gov.org/A2H2O).