

The City of Norman Utilities Department will begin field work for the inventory of water lines in the community on October 16, 2023, in accordance with [revisions to the Lead & Copper Rule \(LCR\)](#) that include new nationwide regulations.

Since the adoption of LCR in 1991, the City of Norman Utilities Department has taken great pride in providing safe and reliable water to customers. Our agency has been and continues to remain well within compliance of the Lead & Copper Rule as shown through regular sampling. The revisions announced by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in December 2021 are intended to strengthen the original Lead and Copper Rule (LCR). As there is no safe level of lead exposure in drinking water and the primary source of lead in drinking water is from infrastructure, strengthening the LCR will reduce the exposure of the community to lead. Lead exposure can lead to lifelong and irreversible health issues.

FREQUENTLY-ASKED-QUESTIONS (FAQs)

WHAT WILL INVENTORY OPERATIONS CONSIST OF?

- “Potholing” – or holes to view waterlines – will occur in neighborhoods. This means small holes will be drilled around service lines in front yards so that proper identification of the material of water pipes can be recorded for inventory. Cutting or moving of lines will not occur as part of this process. This process will not affect water service and any holes created will be backfilled. Residents are advised, however, that digging will occur on both the “public side” (line from the City water main to the water meter within public easement or right-of-way) and “private side” (line from your water meter to your front doorstep) for full inventory. (Note that potholing of the private side line will still occur within the City right-of-way or easement and generally within a few feet of the meter box.) Initial survey plans include potholing for 250 randomly selected properties in core Norman where the material of lines is unknown and subdivisions were platted in 1950 or earlier.

WHY IS THIS BEING DONE?

- While lead is a naturally occurring metal commonly used in plumbing materials prior to 1986, lead exposure can be harmful. Proper inventory of lead lines will allow property owners to understand health risks, be advised of protective measures, and take part in plans to replace lines if desired. Per federal mandates, the City of Norman must complete and submit an inventory of lines by October 16, 2024, so work is beginning now. The inventory findings will be made available to the public. Data will guide additional work and future pothole locations as the Utilities Department works to get an accurate inventory of the lines.

WILL I BE NOTIFIED WHEN DIGGING OCCURS?

- The City of Norman is working to provide public information to the community at-large about the inventory work but, due to the size and scope of this project, individual property owners will not always be notified in advance. Door hangers with more information about this work will be left at all residences where digging takes place. Digging will normally take place during traditional business hours. The table below shows the potential categories for results at a specific location and what those results mean.

PUBLIC SIDE SERVICE LINE		PRIVATE SIDE SERVICE LINE	
MATERIAL	MATERIAL	MATERIAL	FUTURE IMPACTS / ACTIONS
Lead	Lead lines may require future replacement or actions to reduce exposure if disturbed. Though water treatment processes reduce the potential for exposure, additional measures by customers can reduce the potential for exposure further.	Lead	Lead lines may require future replacement or actions to reduce exposure if disturbed. Though water treatment processes reduce the potential for exposure, additional measures by customers can reduce the potential for exposure further.

PUBLIC SIDE SERVICE LINE		PRIVATE SIDE SERVICE LINE	
MATERIAL	MATERIAL	MATERIAL	FUTURE IMPACTS / ACTIONS
Non-Lead	No future actions would be anticipated for compliance with the LCR revisions for the Public Side Service Line.	Galvanized	Based on the possibility or confirmation of Public lead service lines, galvanized lines may require future replacement or actions to reduce exposure if disturbed. Though water treatment processes reduce the potential for exposure, additional measures by customers can reduce the potential for exposure further.
		Non-Lead	No future actions would be anticipated for compliance with the LCR revisions for the Private Side Service Line.

DO I HAVE A ROLE OR RESPONSIBILITY IN THIS PROCESS?

- Public lines are the responsibility of the City of Norman and future replacement as required or planned will be done at the cost of the City of Norman. However, the City is not able to expend public funds for private lines. Property owners will be fully responsible for the replacement of private lead lines. Though replacement is advised for lead lines, it is not currently required by law.

ARE ALL LEAD LINES HAZARDOUS?

- The chemistry of water within the Norman distribution system is in a ‘coating’ state to lightly coat the inside of lead lines. This ensures that lead within piping is not leaching into the water. Regular testing is carried out at locations with lead pipes to stay aware of potential contaminations and water quality reports (CCRs) are published annually for all consumers. The most recent Consumer Confidence Report (CCR) can be found [here](#). However, lead particulates can be released into the water within a pipe if the pipe is cut or majorly disturbed. If disturbances to an identified line are made by the City due to line replacements, staff will provide your home with an appropriate water pitcher and enough filters to last 6 months. Unlike contaminants like bacteria, metals cannot be removed by boiling. Any water used for consumption must be ran through a filter designed to remove lead. Activities such as bathing or washing dishes are still safe to carry out.

HOW CAN LEAD EXPOSURE BE PREVENTED?

- The best way to prevent the risks associated with lead exposure is to find and replace all lead service lines in the city. The City is actively working on identifying and replacing all known locations of lead service lines on the public side. This will be a lengthy and costly process.

Additionally, as mentioned above, Corrosion Control Treatment processes conducted at the Water Treatment Plant will continue to involve the addition of chemicals that coat the inside of waterlines, acting as barrier so lead stays attached to the waterline and doesn’t dissolve into your water. Further, the Water Treatment Plant adjusts the pH of the water to ensure that the stability of the water does not become corrosive.

CAN I HAVE MY LINES TESTED INDEPENDENTLY?

- Yes. Property owners interested in testing can contact the Vernon Campbell Water Treatment Plant at 405.321.2182 for a list of private labs that offer testing or find them at normanok.gov/media/18185.

CAN I REQUEST TO HAVE INVENTORY OPERATIONS CARRIED OUT BY THE CITY AT MY PROPERTY?

- Due to limited staffing, associated costs and required timelines, requests for potholing will not be taken. Locations chosen have been strategically selected based on when the property was platted and specific guidance from the EPA.

WHERE CAN I LEARN MORE ABOUT LEAD AND ASSOCIATED RISKS?

- You can learn more at <https://www.epa.gov/ground-water-and-drinking-water/basic-information-about-lead-drinking-water>

WHERE CAN I LEARN MORE ABOUT CITY OPERATIONS REGARDING LEAD LINE INVENTORY AND THE LCR?

- Additional questions can be forwarded to the Vernon Campbell Water Treatment Plant at 405.321.2182.