City of St. Louis **Water Division**

How to identify your water service line material

Follow the steps on this page to perform a scratch test. Use the photographs to help determine your water service line material

Copper Pipe
Bare pipe may be shiny, copper in color and will not change colors very much after Scratch Test. A strong refrigerator magnet **_WILL NOT_** stick to copper pipe.

Lead Pipe
Bare pipe will be a dull silver or gray in color. Lead pipe wlll be shiny after the Scratch Test. A strong refrigerator magnet **_WILL NOT_** stick to lead pipe.

Galvanized Pipe
Bare pipe may be shiny or dull and silver or gray in color. May or may not be shiny after the Scratch Test. A strong refrigerator magnet **_WILL_** stick to galvanized pipe.


Wipe Joint

Lead Service Line
Typical Lead Service Line with Wipe Joint.
"If a wipe joint is present, you have a lead service line"
No scratch test needed.

To find out if your water service line is made of lead, follow these steps to perform a scratch test:

1. Find the water shut-off valve in your basement. Look at the pipe that comes through the outside wall of your home and connects to your home's shut-off valve.

2. If the pipe is painted, use sandpaper to expose the metal. Carefully scratch the metal pipe (like you would a lottery ticket) with a key or a coin. Do not use a knife or other sharp tool. Take care not to make a hole in the pipe. If the scratch turns a shiny silver color, it could be lead or steel.

3. To determine if the pipe is lead or steel, get a strong refrigerator magnet. Place the magnet on the pipe. If a magnet sticks, it is a steel pipe.

4. You can also buy a lead test kit at a hardware or home improvement store. These kits are used to test what the pipe is made from—not the water inside.
    Look for an EPA-recognized kit.

Lead is dull, very soft, and will turn a shiny silver color when scratched.
TO HOME
FROM STREET
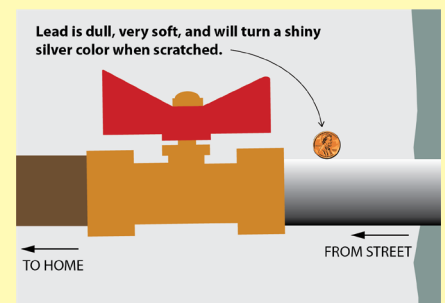
Other Ways to Identify Your Service Line Material

1. Purchase a lead test kit from a hardware store. Make sure the test kit is for pipe material, not for water testing.

2. Have a licensed plumber inspect your service line to determine the material.