

Pipe Identification Procedures

How to Identify a Lead Water Service Line

Tools Needed:

Flathead Screwdriver, Refrigerator Magnet, and a Penny (or other coin)

Step One:

Locate the water service line coming into the building.

This is typically found in the basement. An “inlet valve” and the water meter are installed on the pipe after the point of entry.

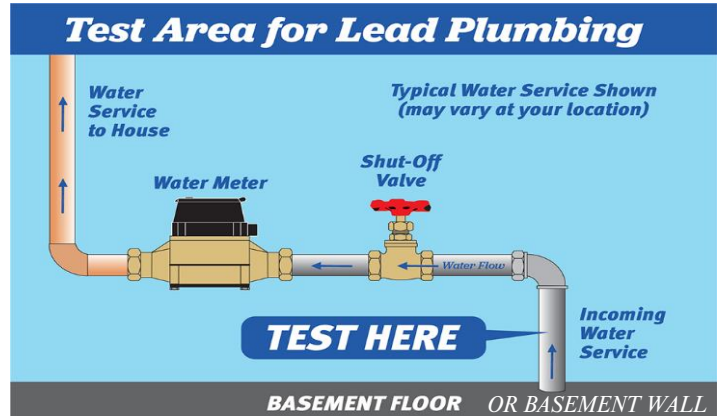
Identify a test area on the pipe between the point where it comes into the building and the inlet valve. If the pipe is covered or wrapped, expose a small area of metal.

Step Two:

Scratch the surface of the pipe.

Use the flat edge of the screwdriver or other tool to scratch through any corrosion that may have built up on the outside of the pipe.

Do Not use a knife or other sharp instrument and take care not to puncture a hole in the pipe.



NOTE: The incoming water service in your home can either come up from the basement floor or out of the side wall in the basement. If you do not have a basement, the incoming water service should come up through the floor on the main level.

Step Three:

Compare your findings to the chart below.

Each type of pipe will produce a different type of scratch, react to the magnet differently and produce a unique sound when tapped with a metal coin.



Lead Pipes

The Scratch Test

If the scraped area is shiny and silver, your service line is lead.

The Magnet Test

A magnet will not stick to a lead pipe.

The Tapping Test

Tapping a lead pipe with a coin will produce a dull noise.



Copper Pipes

The Scratch Test

If the scraped area is copper in color, like a penny, your service line is copper.

The Magnet Test

A magnet will not stick to a copper pipe.

The Tapping Test

Tapping a copper pipe with a coin will produce a metallic ringing noise.



Galvanized Pipes

The Scratch Test

If the scraped area remains a dull gray, your service line is galvanized steel.

The Magnet Test

A magnet sticks to a galvanized pipe.

The Tapping Test

Tapping a galvanized pipe with a coin will produce a metallic ringing noise.