



Service Line Inventory (SLI): Customer Outreach Guide

What you and your customers need to know

All community and non-transient, non-community public water systems must develop an inventory to identify the materials of service lines connected to the public water distribution system. The initial service line inventory must be submitted to the department by **October 16, 2024**. Creating an accurate and complete service line inventory is important for identifying the presence of lead service lines and protecting public health. The service line inventory will be a significant undertaking for many water systems, especially those with many “unknown” service lines.

It is essential that water systems communicate with consumers about the importance of assisting with the service line identification process and the risks of lead in drinking water. Ongoing and transparent communication with your consumers can help increase public participation with service line identification and increase consumers’ confidence in their tap water. Water systems should consider using a variety of methods to reach consumers, including mail, information on water bills, social media or website posts, or informational door hangers.

Communications checklist

The department has created messaging and communication templates you can download and share with your customers. The checklist below includes the recommended materials water systems should provide to customers now, via mail, email, or a combination of methods. Don’t wait to start outreach to your customers!

[CDPHE - Water Quality Control Division letter of support](#)

Provides information to consumers that their help with service line classification is supported by a regulating agency. The letter of support should be downloaded as a PDF file.

[Outreach letter to customers from water provider](#)

Provides information on lead exposure and why customer-identification of their service line material is important. The department’s template should be downloaded as a Word file and edited to include your system-specific contact information and to fit your communication needs.

[Customer survey form](#)

Help verify customer-owned unknown service lines using customer survey forms. Don’t forget to include instructions on material identification and how to submit the completed survey. A [fillable PDF version](#) is also available for electronic delivery.

[Customer service line material identification instructions](#)

Include with the customer survey explaining how to locate the service line and identify the material type. The instructions can be downloaded either as a PDF file or a Word document if you wish to make edits.

[Lead fact sheet](#)

Provides an overview on lead in drinking water and how consumers can reduce their exposure. The fact sheet should be downloaded as a PDF file.

Customer outreach about lead

For systems that do not know the material of the customer-owned portion of the service line, the customer can be a reliable source of information to help identify the service line material. However, many customers are unlikely to know where their service line enters the home/building and how to identify the material. An effective communication plan should include all relevant information such as why lead service lines are a concern, how to locate the service line entering the home, how to identify the material, and how to provide the service line information and a photo back to you in communications to customers.

Customers may also request additional information about the health effects of lead and what the next steps are if they have a lead service line. It is important to have clear messaging available to customers about why lead is a concern, steps consumers can take to reduce their lead exposure, and opportunities for lead service line replacement.

Customer surveys

Sending a short voluntary survey to customers can help water systems obtain information on private side service lines. When the material of the private/customer-owned service line is unknown, customer surveys can reduce the time and costs associated with verifying the material. Educating your consumers about the importance of identifying service line materials and reducing lead exposure can help increase participation in surveys. Follow the steps below to ensure an effective customer survey program:

- Provide a brief letter along with the customer survey explaining the purpose of the survey and why lead in drinking water is a concern. The department has created a [sample letter template](#) you can edit and include with your survey, or you can create your own messaging.
- Ask the right questions, including but not limited to: physical address, home build date, and service line material type. You can use the department's [customer survey template](#) or create your own survey. Online surveys (e.g. Google Forms or a similar platform), are a great tool that make participation easier and can be configured to accept photo uploads.

- Include instructions for the home/building occupant on how to locate the service line entry point into the building and determine the service line material type. You can use the department's [material identification instructions](#) or create your own.
- Request that customers submit photos of the pipe entering the home along with their survey. This can help increase your confidence in the survey results.
- Offer an incentive for completing the survey. A small amount (\$5 to \$20) off the customer's water bill, gift certificates to local or box stores, or entry into a raffle after submitting the survey can increase customer participation.

Department support

The department's Water Quality Control Division has created a [letter of support](#) that water systems can send to their consumers explaining the importance of service line identification and requesting their assistance in identifying pipe materials serving water to their property.

Water systems are encouraged to distribute this letter to their consumers (via email, direct delivery, or included in a water bill or newsletter) as soon as possible to help boost homeowner/resident cooperation and awareness.

Communicating about the risks of lead

It is important that consumers understand where lead in tap water comes from, and why it is a concern. Lead service lines are often the most significant source of lead in drinking water. Lead from solder, faucets, and fixtures can also contribute to lead in drinking water. Source waters (rivers, lakes, wells) do not usually contain lead; lead enters drinking water when plumbing materials that contain lead corrode. Lead is more likely to be found in older homes (built pre-1960s) and is not expected to be found in homes built after the state's January 31, 1988 lead ban.

The department has developed a [fact sheet](#) (also available in [Spanish](#)) about lead in drinking water, including health effects and ways to reduce exposure. Systems may provide consumers with a paper copy or a link to the document to learn more about lead and their health.

If you are currently aware of, or later discover lead or galvanized requiring replacement service lines in your distribution system, the water system must provide information to the consumer on ways they can reduce their exposure to lead and opportunities for replacing the service line. This communication is not only required under the LCRR, but is essential for protecting public health. The department will have additional information and notification templates available online in early 2024. The department has developed a [guide for water systems with lead or galvanized requiring replacement service lines](#), outlining additional steps the system must take.

Resources

- Drinking Water Lead and Copper Rule & Revisions webpage: <https://cdphe.colorado.gov/lcr>

- AWWA Lead Communications webpage and resources:
<https://www.awwa.org/Resources-Tools/Resource-Topics/Contaminants-of-Concern/Lead/Lead-Communications>
- AWWA Lead Communications Guide and Toolkit:
<https://www.awwa.org/Portals/0/AWWA/Communications/2022LeadPageAssets/2022AWWA-LeadCommunicationsGuideAndToolkit.pdf>
- AWWA Guide for Water Systems Addressing Service Line Repair and Replacement:
<https://www.awwa.org/Portals/0/AWWA/Communications/FINALLeadServiceLineCommGuide.pdf>