

## Cleaning a faucet aerator

The aerator is the assembly and screen the water passes through as it leaves the faucet.

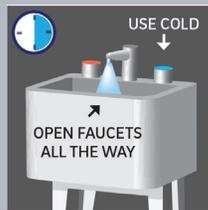
Tiny particles can get caught on the screen of the aerator. These particles may contain lead. To clean the aerator:

- Remove the aerator, turning it clockwise. You might need a pliers or a wrench
- Keep the parts in the order you removed them
- Rinse the pieces and brush off any particles
- If there is a mineral build up or rust, soak the parts in vinegar and brush with a toothbrush
- Replace any broken parts
- Put the assembly back together



## How to do a whole-house flush

1. Remove aerators from all faucets. (See directions above.)
2. **If an aerator cannot be removed, do not use that faucet.**
3. Starting at the basement, turn on the cold water faucets one by one.
4. After 30 minutes, starting at the top of the house, turn off the faucets one by one, ending up in the basement.
5. Replace the aerators.
6. Clean the aerators once a month.



## More information

For more information on lead in drinking water go to these sources:

- For more information on lead in drinking water, read our brochure *Keeping Lead Out*. Go to [stpaul.gov/water](http://stpaul.gov/water) and scroll to publications on the right hand side. Select *Keeping Lead Out*. For a copy, call customer service at 651-266-6350
- To read our annual water quality report, which contains information on the lead levels in our water, go to [stpaul.gov/waterquality](http://stpaul.gov/waterquality). For a hard copy, contact customer service at 651-266-6350
- For information on lead in drinking water go to: [stpaul.gov/departments/water-services/lead-information](http://stpaul.gov/departments/water-services/lead-information)
- To get your water tested for lead, contact our water quality lab at 651-266-1365
- For more information on replacing your water service line, including the lead service assessment program in Saint Paul, call our engineering service desk at 651-266-6270
- For more extensive information on lead in general, go the Minnesota Department of Health's website at [www.health.state.mn.us/lead](http://www.health.state.mn.us/lead)



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# Saint Paul Regional Water Services

*Information on lead service lines and partial lead service line replacements*



## Lead Service Lines

A water service line runs from the house to the street, connecting the water from the water main to the home. In the SPRWS service area, water service lines are typically made of copper or lead.

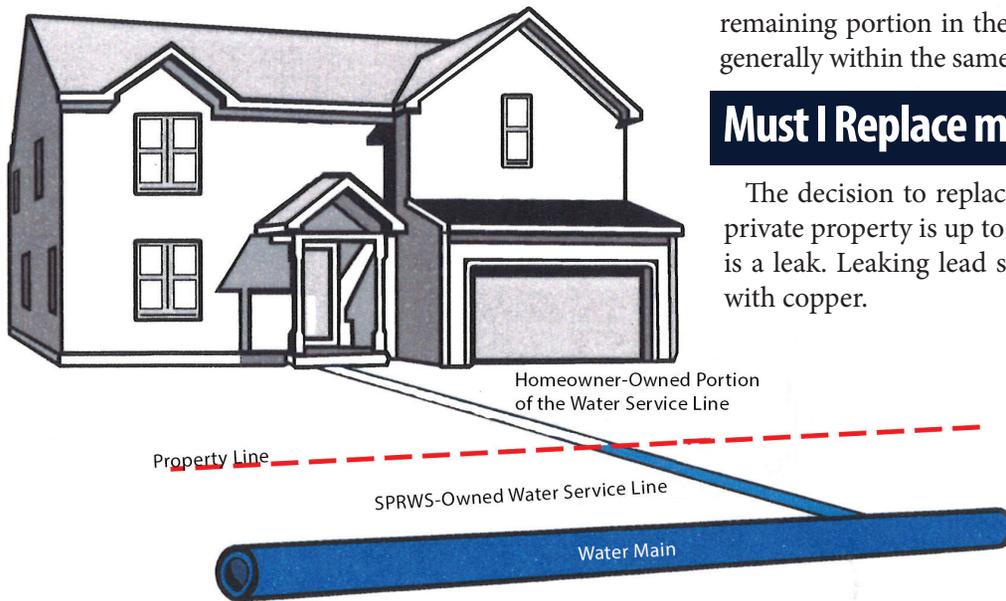
Homes built before 1927 had lead service lines installed at that time, along with some homes built between the years 1944 and 1947.

Property owners are responsible for the portion of the water service line located within private property, while SPRWS maintains water service lines within the public right-of-way.

## How Do I Know if I Have lead?

To find out what information is available regarding the water service line on your property, go to [billpay.saintpaulwater.com](http://billpay.saintpaulwater.com) and click on “What’s my water service line made of?”

Lead pipes are a dull gray in color and are soft enough to scratch easily with a house key. A magnet will not stick to a lead pipe. A licensed plumber can help you determine if your household plumbing is made of lead. You can also view this video for more information: <https://vimeo.com/286395985>



## Why does it matter?

Lead from lead water service lines can leach into drinking water. Water that has been sitting a long time could pick up trace elements of lead from the service lines, especially if it has been sitting for more than six hours, like overnight. If you have lead lines, and you have not used water for six hours, you should run the cold water for 3 -5 minutes before drinking it or using it for cooking.

SPRWS treats the water to reduce the exposure to lead in drinking water by monitoring and adjusting the pH and alkalinity levels of the water, reducing the leaching of lead into the water.

## Can I Replace my Lead Service Line?

Yes. You can always replace your lead service line. If your property is located in St. Paul, you can have the cost of the lead service line replacement assessed to your property taxes over a 20-year period. Costs vary, but average between \$2,000 and \$3,000. Property owners are strongly encouraged to get three quotes from reputable vendors prior to having any work done, as these costs can vary greatly, depending on the vendor.

Whenever a property owner replaces their portion of a lead water service line, SPRWS will replace the remaining portion in the right-of-way without charge, generally within the same construction season.

## Must I Replace my Lead Service Line?

The decision to replace a lead water service line on private property is up to the home owner, unless there is a leak. Leaking lead service lines must be replaced with copper.

## Partial Lead Replacements

### What is a partial lead service replacement?

A partial lead service replacement is when only one section, either the private or public end, of the lead service line gets replaced.

### What do I need to know about a partial lead service line replacement?

When only a portion of a lead service line is replaced, the construction work can expose a portion of the lead line to drinking water. When the lead line is cut and reconnected to copper, the lead line is exposed to drinking water. This fresh exposure can allow lead to leach into the drinking water.

The construction work can cause particles of lead to flake off into the drinking water and get caught in the faucet aerators. Cleaning the faucet aerators can remove these particles.

**Lead can be harmful. It can impact normal physical and mental development in babies and young children, cause deficits in attention span, hearing, and learning abilities of children, and increase blood pressure in adults.**

### What precautions can I take?

SPRWS recommends doing a high-velocity, whole-house flush after a partial lead service line replacement. (See “How to do a whole-house flush” in this brochure.)

Once the house has been flushed, replace the aerators on the faucets. (See “Cleaning a faucet aerator” in this brochure.)

Clean the aerators once a month for six months after a lead service line replacement.

As an additional precaution, SPRWS is providing a filtered water pitcher and additional filters to all homes that have had a partial lead service line replacement.

Use the water pitcher for drinking and cooking water for the entire six months following a lead service line replacement.