

How to Identify your Water Service Line Material

Follow the steps on this page to perform a self-identification of your service line. Use the photographs to help determine your water service line material.



Copper Pipe

Copper pipe may be shiny, like a new penny, or orange/brown in color. When scratched it will shine like a new penny. Copper pipe is not magnetic, so a magnet **will not** stick to it.

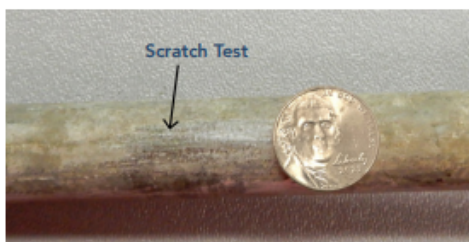


Wipe Joint

If your service line has a wipe joint, you have a lead service line. No scratch test is needed.

To perform a self-identification of your service line to find out if it is made of lead, follow these simple steps to perform a scratch test or other identification method:

1. Locate the water shut-off valve. It should be immediately after the service line comes through the foundation or basement wall.
2. If the service line is painted, lightly sand it with sandpaper to expose the metal. Carefully scratch the metal pipe with a key or coin. Do not use a sharp tool or knife. Be careful not to make a hole in the pipe. If the pipe metal is shiny like a new nickel, it could be lead or steel.
3. To find out if the pipe is lead or steel, use a strong magnet. Place it on the pipe. If the magnet sticks, it is galvanized steel pipe. If it doesn't stick, it is lead.
4. **Alternative 1:** You can buy a lead test kit at a hardware, or home improvement store. These kits are used to test lead paint but also work on lead pipe. The test kit will determine the material of the pipe, but it is not for testing the water in the pipe.
5. **Alternative 2:** You can have a licensed plumber inspect your service line to determine if the pipe material is made of lead.



Galvanized Steel Pipe

Galvanized steel pipe may be shiny or dull, silver or gray in color, and shiny like a new nickel when scratched. A magnet **will** stick to it.



Lead Pipe

Lead pipe will be a dull silver, or blue-gray in color. Lead pipe will be shiny when scratched. Lead pipe is not magnetic, so a magnet **will not** stick to it.