Customer Guide for Identifying Service Lines from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

What is a water service line?

A water service line is the pipe that connects the water main to your home or building inlet. Service lines may be made of copper or other materials such as galvanized iron or steel, plastic, brass, or lead. If any portion of the pipe is made of lead, it is called a lead service line (LSL).

Steps to check the materials of the service line:

The following steps will help you determine what material the pipe in your home is made of.

1. Find your water meter: Your water meter may be located inside or outside of the building.

- Typical inside locations include the basement, crawl space, or garage.
- Typical outside locations are between the water main in the street and the house, on the sidewalk, or in the yard.

2. Find your service line

- If your meter is inside, the service line will enter the house near the meter, on the same wall.
- If your meter is outside, the service line most likely enters the house at a point closest to the meter.
- If your service line is not visible, contact your water system for guidance.

3. Identify your service line material

Plastic: The pipe is typically white or gray but can also be other colors. Although plastic does not contribute to lead in drinking water, lead may still be present in other parts of the plumbing system such as faucets and bonding material called solder.

Metal: To find out what kind of metal pipe you have, perform two simple tests 1) a scratch test with a coin or key and 2) a magnet test. You will need a key and/or penny and a magnet for these tests.

First, use the coin or key to gently scratch the pipe close to where it comes in through the wall or floor. Then, place the magnet on the pipe and see if it sticks. Using the information below, you can determine what your pipe is made of Copper**.** After scratching, if the pipe is the same color as a penny and may have a solid or splotchy film, varying in color from bright green to dark brown, you may have a copper pipe. A scratch test on copper pipe will expose a shiny copper penny color. If you place the magnet on the pipe and it does not stick, this confirms this is not copper.

3. Identify your service line material (continued)

Galvanized iron or steel**.** If the pipe is silver or gray, hard to scratch with a key or coin you may have an iron or steel pipe. If you place a magnet on the pipe and it sticks to the pipe, you may have galvanized steel pipes.

Lead**.** If a scratch test produces a shiny silver color, your pipe is likely made of lead. If you try to attach the magnet to the pipe and it does not stick, you may have a lead pipe.