Steps to Locate and Identify Your Water Service Line

1. Find Your Water Meter

The first step is to locate your water meter. Your water meter may be inside: in the basement, crawlspace, or garage.

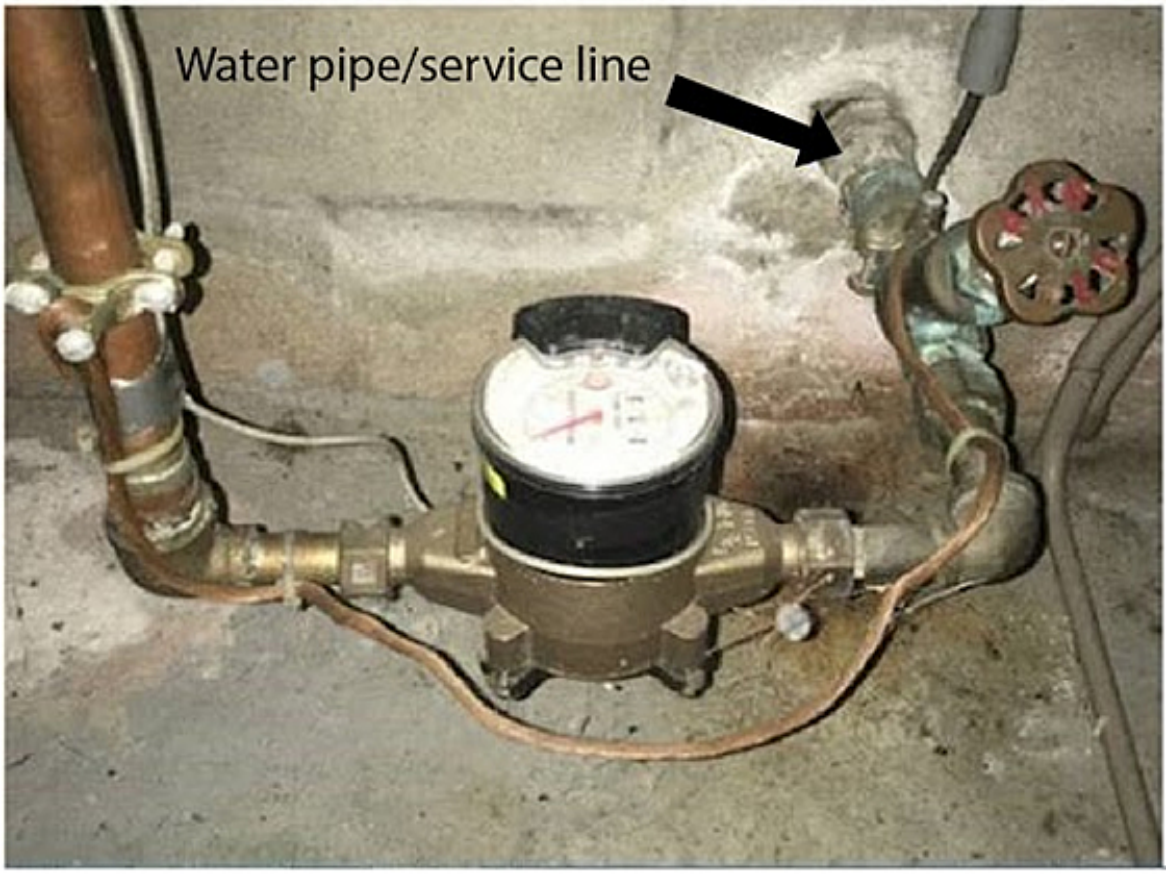
Or your water meter may be outside: near your home (or building) between the water main in the street and your house, on the sidewalk, or in your yard.

2. Find Your Service Line

If your meter is outside, then the line should enter your home or building closest to that spot.

If your meter is inside, then the line should be near it on the same wall.

If you couldn't find your meter, look for the service line by checking your basement or first floor, looking first along the exterior walls particularly on the side of the building facing the street. The incoming pipe will come through an external wall or the floor and then connect to the water meter. You should see a valve on it, and it may look something like the picture below. Once you find the pipe, continue to the next section.



Steps to Identify the Material of Your Water Service Line Pipe

Examples of typical water service pipe materials:

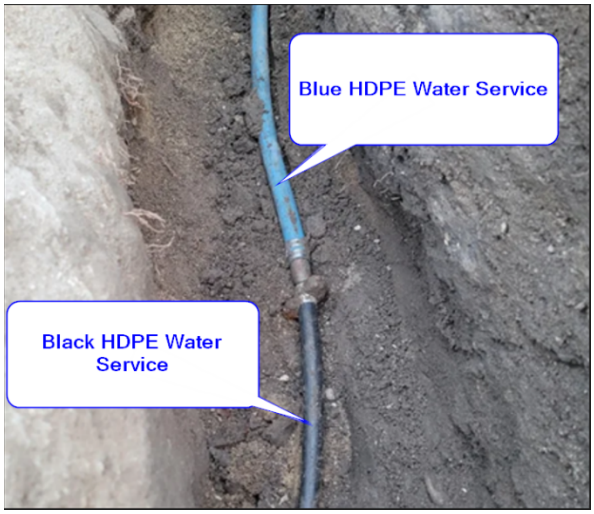
Plastic | Scratched Lead | Copper | Galvanized Steel & valve

1. Is it Plastic?

Plastic pipes are usually made of either PVC (Polyvinyl Chloride) or HDPE (High Density Polyethylene) and can be various colors including white, blue, black, green, etc. Plastic is not a source of lead in drinking water.

Please be aware that there still might be lead in other parts of your interior plumbing.

White PVC



Black and Blue HDPE

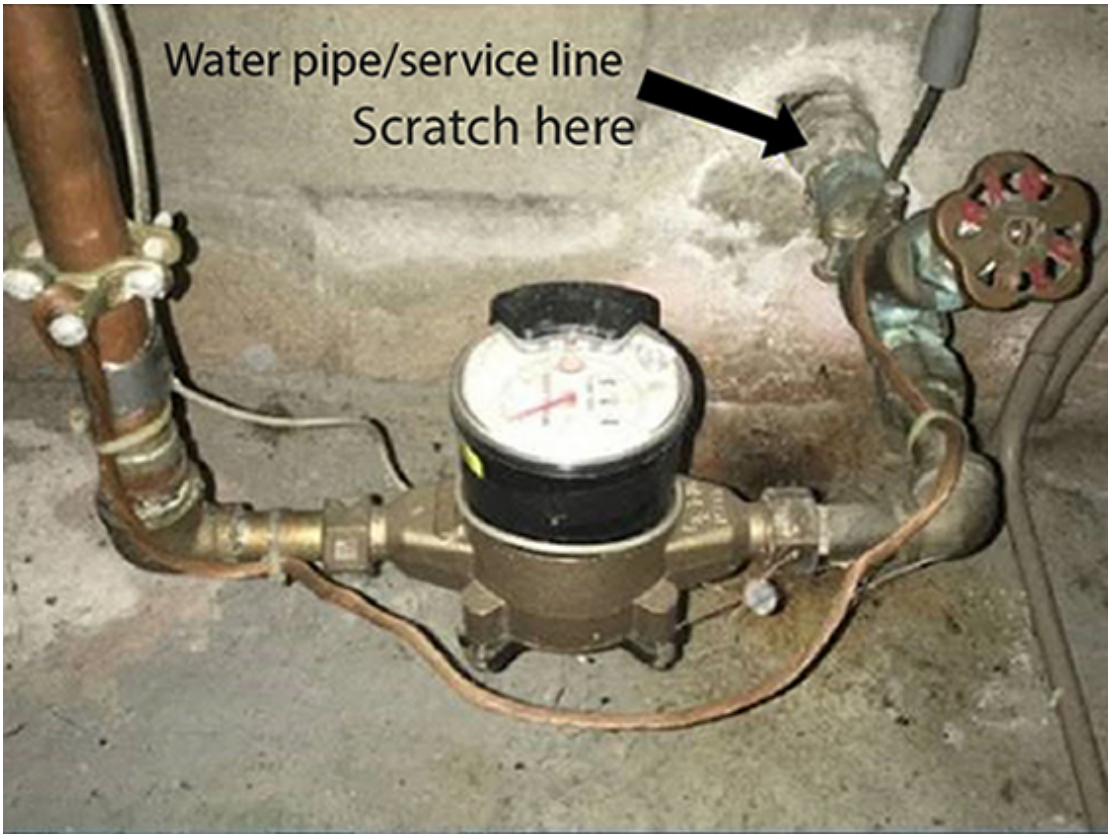
2. Is it Metal? - Determine what kind of metal...

Materials You May Need

You may need something to scratch the pipe, like a key or coin and a magnet (any magnet will work) to test your pipes. These tools will be used to determine if your metal pipes are made from copper, galvanized steel, or lead.

Observe the pipe close to where it comes in through the wall or floor. (If the pipe is painted, use sandpaper to gently expose the metal first.)

- Note the color of the pipe (orange, pale orange, brown, shade of gray, etc.)
- Scratch the pipe with a key or coin (like you would a lottery ticket). Note whether it is soft or is hard to scratch; and the color beneath the scratch
- Use a magnet on the pipe and note if a magnet sticks to the pipe or not
- Tap the pipe with a key or coin, note whether the sound produced is a dull noise, or a metallic ringing.

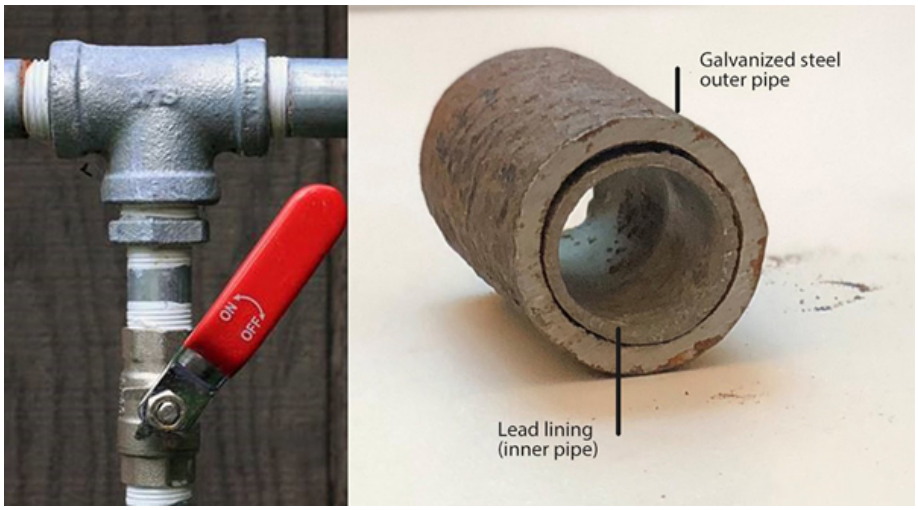


2a. Copper Pipes

Copper pipes may appear as dull brown color, but if you scratch the pipe, underneath it will be orange like a penny. A magnet will not stick to a copper pipe, and tapping a copper pipe with a coin will produce a metallic ringing noise. Copper is not a source of lead in drinking water. However, you may still have lead elsewhere in your interior plumbing.

2b. Galvanized Steel Pipes

Galvanized steel pipes are a dull gray color. They are hard to scratch, and underneath the color of the pipe will remain a dull gray. A magnet will stick to galvanized steel, and tapping a steel pipe with a coin will produce a metallic ringing noise. Steel pipes also typically have threaded fittings. Steel pipes on their own are not a source of lead in drinking water (unless they have been lined with lead); however, steel pipes in older homes may pose a serious risk if they have been connected to lead plumbing at any point. Galvanized steel pipes can trap lead on their inside surface and periodically release those bits of lead, even after lead plumbing is removed.



2c. Lead Pipes

Lead pipes are typically a dull gray color and are very soft. Lead pipes can be easily scratched and will turn a shiny silver color when scratched. A magnet will not stick to lead, and tapping a lead pipe with a coin will produce a dull noise. Lead pipes typically are not threaded. Lead pipes are more likely to be found in older cities and homes built before 1986.

Remember to please complete the Customer Survey Form by entering your address/account number, selecting the material that the private portion of your service line is made of (if you were able to determine), and uploading one or more pictures of your pipe where it enters the building.