

Replacing lead and common supply pipes

This factsheet answers the most commonly asked questions about lead. It also gives details of our free lead and common supply pipe replacement scheme.

Replacing lead pipes

This factsheet answers the questions about lead which customers most often ask. It tells you how to check if you have lead pipes. And it explains how lead pipework can affect drinking water and water pressure. It also gives details of our free lead and common supply pipe replacement scheme.

Lead in our environment

Lead comes from many sources, such as car exhausts and old paint work. It may be naturally present in air, food, soil and in water. Lead can be harmful to health, especially for young children and unborn babies. The water from our treatment works supplied through our mains to the boundary of properties contains virtually no lead. But the water can dissolve tiny amounts of lead from the inside of lead supply pipes and internal plumbing. As a result the water coming out of your tap may contain more lead than the standard set by the Drinking Water Inspectorate.

How do I know if I have lead pipes?

Many houses built before 1970 have lead plumbing and also a lead supply pipe which connects the property to the water main in the street. If your home was built after 1970, it is unlikely to have lead pipes. A simple check is to look at the pipework in your kitchen. Find the pipe leading to the internal stop tap (usually under the kitchen sink). Lead pipes are dark grey (under any paint) and are soft and easily marked. This is only a guide and not conclusive. If in doubt please seek guidance from a plumber.

Lead and common supply pipe replacement scheme

If you think your property's internal pipework or supply pipe is made of lead, we advise you to consider replacing them. If you apply to replace your lead supply pipe under our scheme, we will replace the lead pipes that we own free of charge. We will also connect the new supply pipe to the water main free of charge. We can only do our work when you have finished your work.

Your property will be fed by one of two types of supply pipe:

- a separate supply pipe; or
- a common supply pipe.

To make it easier, we have explained each separately on the next page.

We would advise that you obtain a quote from a plumber before committing to replacing your lead pipes so you have a good understanding of how much it will cost to undertake this work.

How do I apply for the scheme?

To apply for the scheme you must be a United Utilities customer and be able to provide your water account number.

Apply on-line at unitedutilities.com/LeadpipeReplacement. Alternatively call us on 0845 746 1324 and we will register your application over the telephone. We will then confirm if your property is eligible for a free connection.

Lines are open between 9am and 5pm, Monday-Friday.

Sometimes we are not able to accept customers on to the scheme. For example, domestic flats/apartments on an internal common supply pipe or properties which are too far from a water main. The scheme is intended for domestic customers, but we will consider applications from commercial customers.

Getting in touch

If you need any more information, call us on **0845 746 1324** or textphone 0808 143 0295.

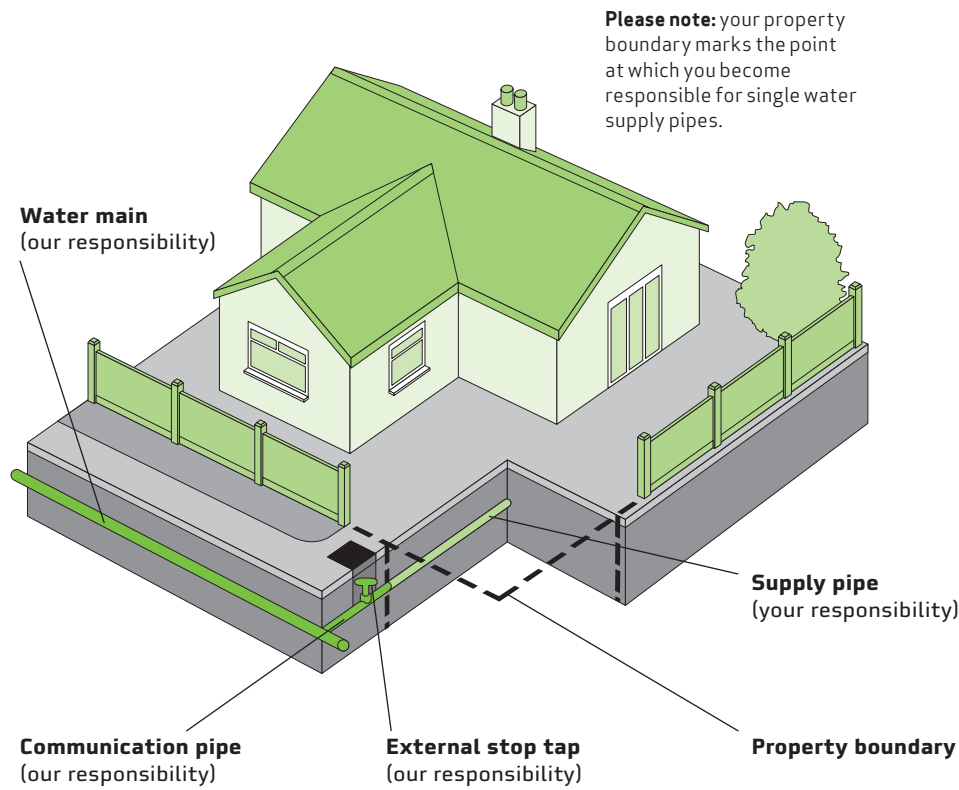
Or write to us at:

Lead and common supply pipe scheme
United Utilities
ARC
Haweswater House
Lingley Mere Business Park
Warrington
WA5 3LP

Please do not start relaying your pipe until we have accepted you onto this scheme.

Separate lead supply pipes

(Diagram is for illustration purposes only)



Please note: your property boundary marks the point at which you become responsible for single water supply pipes.

Separate lead supply pipes

The diagram above shows who is responsible for the water supply pipes on a separate supply.

Through our lead pipe replacement scheme, we will replace the length of pipe that is our responsibility and also provide a connection to the water main free of charge. Before applying for the scheme, you need to think about what you must do - especially as you may need to pay to replace the lead pipes you are responsible for.

What do I have to do?

Important: Before you arrange with your plumber to lay a new supply pipe (and undertake any necessary work to the plumbing inside your property) please ensure you have returned the enclosed application form to us and we have confirmed your acceptance onto the scheme. This will help to avoid unnecessary costs being incurred in the event of your application being rejected.

You or your plumber will have to lay a new supply pipe and do any necessary work to the plumbing inside your property. We will advise you where and how to lay your new supply pipe.

When you have completed this work, you need to contact us to arrange for one of our

inspectors to check the work. This is to make sure the work meets the Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations (these are explained later in the factsheet). There is no charge for this service. Please give us at least five working days notice for an appointment and make sure that you or your plumber is present at the inspection. Before arranging an appointment, please ensure you have met all requirements as shown in point 5 on the 'Step-by-step' process on page 5.

- If the work fails the inspection, you will need to arrange with your plumber to bring the work up to standard. You will then need to ask for another inspection.
- When your work has passed we will arrange for the connection to be completed. We aim to do this within six weeks of your work passing inspection or receipt of your WIAP (Water industry approved) certificate. If there are engineering difficulties, or we have to lay a new length of water main, this will take longer.
- **One of the conditions of the lead and common supply pipe replacement scheme is that you arrange to have your old pipework disconnected from the water supply. This is to protect you and your neighbours from leaks and from the risk of contamination from any stagnant water. When your old water supply pipe has been disconnected, and we have inspected the work, your plumber can fill in the hole.**

- If your relaid supply pipe does not meet the required standards and we have to make return visits, we may charge you for the extra visits.

If you do not disconnect your old water supply pipe as required by the Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations, and we have to do the work ourselves, we may charge you.

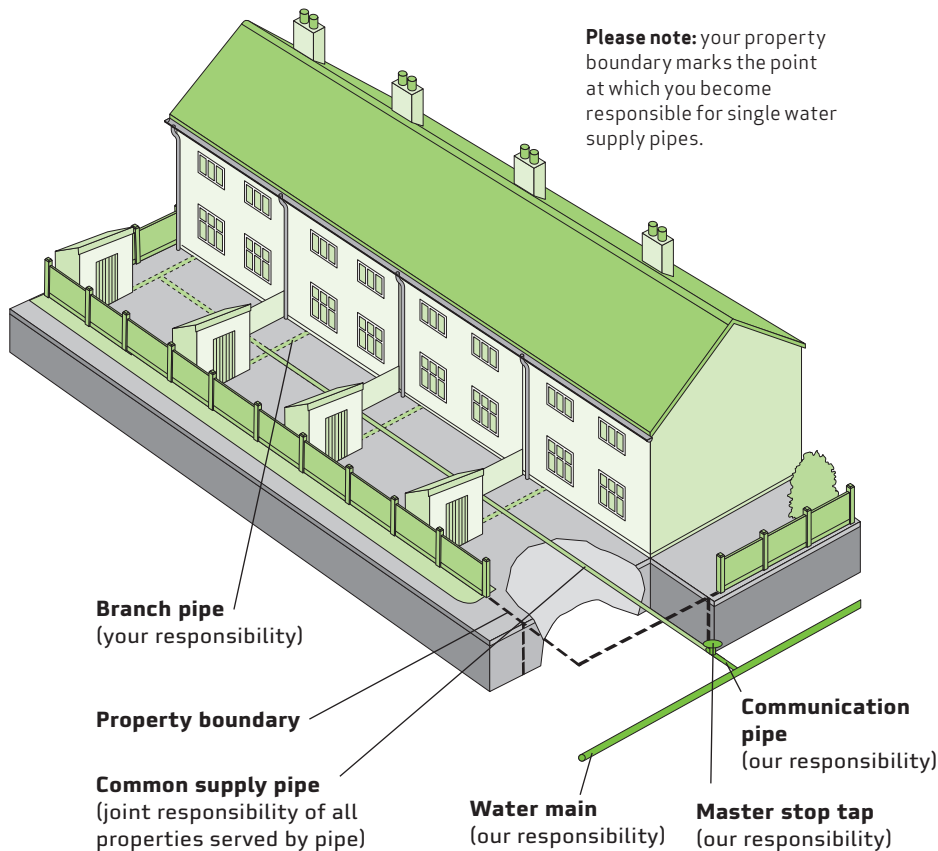
Please note:

You are free to use any plumber to replace your lead pipes. We recommend that you use a member of the Water Industry Approved Plumber Scheme. Visit the website: www.wras.co.uk/wiaps

It is your plumber's responsibility to complete the internal plumbing work to transfer you on to the new supply.

Common supply pipes

(Diagram is for illustration purposes only)



Please note: your property boundary marks the point at which you become responsible for single water supply pipes.

sure the work meets the Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations. There is no charge for this service. Please give us at least five working days notice for an appointment and make sure that you or your plumber is present at this inspection. Before arranging an appointment, please ensure you have met all requirements as shown in point 5 on the 'Step-by-step' process on page 5.

- If the work fails the inspection, you will need to arrange with your plumber to bring the work up to standard. You will then need to ask for another inspection.
- When your work has passed we will arrange for the connection to be completed. We aim to do this within six weeks of your work passing inspection or receipt of your WIAP (Water industry approved) certificate. If there are engineering difficulties, or we have to lay a new length of water main, this will take longer.
- Once the new supply is connected, your plumber will disconnect the lead supply in your house and transfer it onto the new single supply.
- **One of the conditions of the lead and common supply pipe replacement scheme is that you arrange to have your old branch pipe disconnected from the common supply pipe. This is to protect you and your neighbours from leaks and from the risk of contamination from any stagnant water. When your old branch pipe has been disconnected, and we have inspected the work, your plumber can fill in the hole.**
- If your re-lead supply pipe does not meet the required standards and we have to make return visits, we may charge you for the extra visits.

If you do not disconnect your old branch pipe as required by the Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations, and we have to do the work ourselves, we may charge you.

It is your plumber's responsibility to complete the internal plumbing work to transfer you on to the new supply

Common supply pipes

Many older properties, particularly terraced houses, are served by a common supply pipe. This pipe provides water to a number of houses from one single connection to the water main.

These supply pipes are usually made of lead or iron and are often too small for the water needs of modern kitchens and bathrooms. If you are on this type of system, you might notice that your water pressure is poor and is affected when your neighbours use their water.

We are responsible for the communication pipe from our water main to the boundary of the street where our main is. Common supply pipes are the joint responsibility of each property fed by the communication pipe. You alone are responsible for the branch pipe which brings water from the common supply pipe to your home or to your outbuilding.

Ideally, we would like all our customers to have their own separate supply pipes from our mains. Through our lead and common supply pipe replacement scheme, we will:

- provide a new connection to our water main; and
- lay a new length of pipe from our main to the boundary of the property where our main is.

These services are offered free of charge subject to acceptance onto our lead and common supply pipe replacement scheme.

Before applying for the scheme, you need to think about what you must do - especially as you will need to pay to replace the lead pipes you are responsible for.

What do I have to do?

Important: Before you arrange with your plumber to lay a new supply pipe (and undertake any necessary work to the plumbing inside your property) please ensure you have returned the enclosed application form to us and we have confirmed your acceptance onto the scheme. This will help to avoid unnecessary costs being incurred in the event of your application being rejected.

You or your plumber will have to lay a new separate supply pipe from your house to the boundary of the property where our main is. You will also have to do any necessary work to the plumbing inside your property. We will advise you where and how to lay your new supply pipe.

Don't forget you will also need to liaise with your neighbours if it appears the new water supply pipe needs to cross their land.

When you have completed this work, you need to contact us to arrange for one of our inspectors to check the work. This is to make

Your questions answered

Your factsheet refers to the Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations 1999, why is this important?

It is important that any work done to the water supply pipe meets the Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations. There is a separate factsheet 'How to lay a new water supply pipe' that explains how to carry out the work. It describes the standards which any work on the water network must meet. If you apply for the scheme, we will send you this factsheet. You should give it to your plumber so they know the work must meet the regulations.

We will not make the connection to our water main until all your work meets these standards.

Will replacing lead pipes affect my electrical earthing?

The safe earthing of your home and electrical appliances is your responsibility. In the past, the lead water supply pipe was often used as an electrical earth for homes. But removing the lead pipes may leave your home unsafe if there is an electrical fault. Please ask a competent electrician for advice on electrical earthing.

What if I've already replaced my internal plumbing?

If you have already replaced the pipes in your home, you may still have to replace the underground pipe between your house and the street. Under the scheme, we will provide a new pipe and connection to the water main free of charge. But you do have to replace the length of underground pipe that you are responsible for, up to the first drinking water tap.

Can you recommend a qualified plumber?

You are free to use any plumber to replace your lead pipes. We recommend that you use a member of the Water Industry Approved Plumber Scheme. Visit the website www.wras.co.uk/wiaps.

Please note: you may need to search under the 'groundworkers' section to find a contractor who specialises in laying service pipes. See the website for details.

Are there any grants to help with the costs?

As well as the free services we offer, your local council may be able to give you a grant to help with the cost of laying a new supply pipe. You should contact your local council before returning the application form and they will be able to advise you. Usually, the Environmental Health or Housing Department look after any grant scheme.

Will there be any disruption?

While we are carrying out our work, we aim to keep any disruption to a minimum. But there will be some disruption caused by digging to replace underground pipes. We might also have to shut off the water supply to you or your neighbours for a short time. We will tell you before we do this.

What if I don't want to replace my lead plumbing?

A simple way of reducing the amount of lead in your water is to run your tap for a few minutes. This is especially useful if the water has been standing in the pipes for a long time, such as overnight. Try not to waste the water that you run off. You can use it in other ways, such as watering the garden. But, the only way to make sure there is no lead in your water is to replace any lead pipework. We will replace any lead pipework owned by us free of charge. We advise you to replace your internal lead plumbing.

What if I have a water meter?

If you currently have a water meter it will need to be transferred onto the new pipework. If your water meter is currently located outside your property (usually in an underground box in the footpath), we will transfer the meter onto the new supply when we make the new connection.

If your meter is located inside your property, your plumber must transfer the meter onto the new pipework, immediately after the new connection has been made.

There is a separate factsheet 'Relocating your water meter installation specifications,' which explains how to do this. If you make an application for a new connection and have an internal meter, we will send you the factsheet, which you should give to your plumber.

After your connection has been made, we will need to inspect the meter to ensure the installation meets our requirements and also to replace the security seal on the meter. If the installation is not to the required standard, we will install a new meter outside your property and you may be charged for this.

Can the meter be moved outside?

If you want the meter moving from inside to outside, we can do this after the new connection has been made. There is a charge for this, as we cannot use the same meter and have to supply a new water meter. We will also have to amend our billing systems.

If you would like us to move your meter outside your home, please indicate this on the application form. Please be aware there will be a charge for this service (call us on 0845 746 1324 for details).

I don't have a water meter but I would like one

If you live on your own, have a small family, or live in a house with a high rateable value, you may be better off with a water meter.

To apply for a meter please call 0845 303 7744 or textphone 0808 143 1195. Alternatively, save time and apply online at www.unitedutilities.com/meters

Step by step process for dealing with your application

Important: Unfortunately, due to restrictions contained within the New Roads and Streetworks Act 1991, we are unable to carry out works on a public footpath or road if it has been resurfaced in the last three to five years. There may be instances when an application is refused due to this regulation.

1. Please check to see which type of pipe is currently serving your property.
2. Call us on **0845 746 1324** to register your interest or intention to replace your common or lead service pipe, or textphone on **0808 143 0295**. We will normally confirm immediately if you are accepted. Alternatively, complete the attached application form or apply on-line at unitedutilities.com/LeadpipeReplacement.

You must not start any work until we have confirmed that your property is accepted onto the scheme

3. We will send a letter to you to confirm your acceptance, and enclose helpful factsheets, including “**How to lay a new water supply pipe**” which has all the technical information you, or your plumber will need to lay the pipe.
4. You will then need to appoint a qualified plumber to replace the common or lead pipe in your premises up to the boundary of your property. You are free to use any plumber to replace your lead pipes. We recommend that you use a member of the Water Industry Approved Plumber Scheme.
5. Once your plumber has completed the work, please contact us on **0845 746 1324** to arrange for us to carry out an inspection. We are available to inspect the work Monday to Saturday 8am - 8pm (including bank holidays) and Sundays 10am to 2pm. However, if your plumber is WIAPS approved, no inspection will be required, just ask the plumber to send their WIAPS certificate to us and we'll go straight to step 7.

Before agreeing a date to carry out the inspection, you will need to answer ‘yes’ to the following questions:

- Is the internal pipe work laid to a minimum depth of 750mm (2 foot 6 inches)?
- Is the trench lined with soft earth or sand?
- Is the trench fully exposed?
- Is the pipe work insulated and ducted where it enters the building?
- Is the ducting sealed at both ends?
- Has the stop tap and drain off valve been fitted at the point of entry?
- Have you broken through the boundary i.e. trench to be excavated under wall or hedge, but no further than boundary?
- Is there at least 2 foot of pipe coiled up at the boundary?
- Is a mechanical stop end fitted at the end of the pipe, located at the edge of the boundary wall?

If you answer NO to any of the above, it will fail the inspection and your application will be refused. Please ensure you can answer yes to all of these questions before calling us to arrange your inspection.

6. Once the work passes inspection, you can fill in any holes/trenches within your boundary.
7. We then connect your pipe to the water main (this can take up to 6 weeks after the inspection or the certificate is submitted). Please note: if we encounter engineering difficulties, or have to lay a new length of water main, this could take up to six months to complete the connection.
8. When we have connected your new supply, your plumber can connect your internal pipework to the new supply.
9. If you're on a common supply, they will also disconnect your branch pipe from the shared pipe, at the same time. Once your plumber has completed this work, please contact us on 0845 746 1324 to arrange for us to carry out an inspection.
10. If you're on a single supply, we will try to permanently disconnect the old supply at the same time as we make the new connection. However, in certain circumstances we may need to return at a later date to complete the disconnection.

For more
information, call us
on 0845 746 1324
or textphone
0808 143 0295

unitedutilities.com

United Utilities Water PLC
Haweswater House
Lingley Mere Business Park
Lingley Green Avenue
Great Sankey
Warrington
WA5 3LP

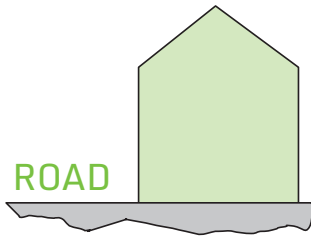
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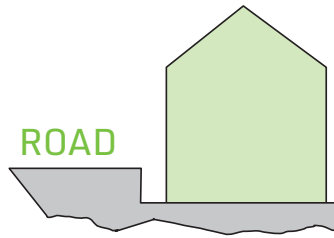
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Property details

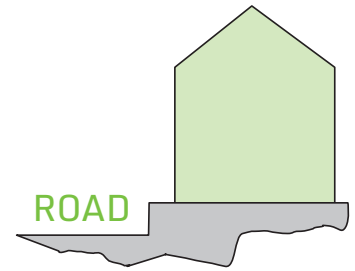
To help us with your application, please select the elevation type most like your property, using the tick box:



Normal elevation



Lowered elevation

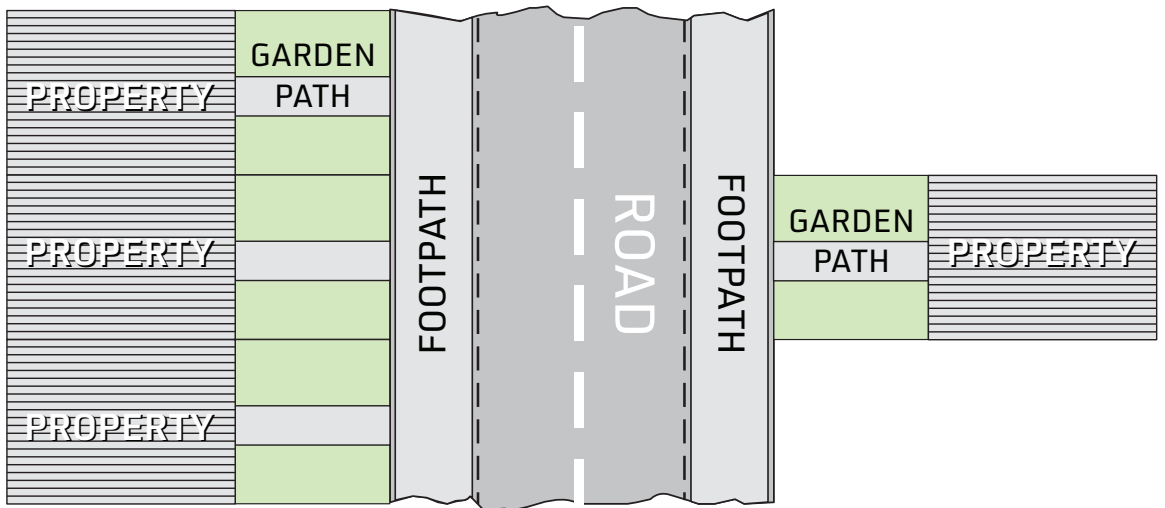


Raised elevation

Mark the diagram below with an 'X' to show where your external stop tap is located.

Common supply

Separate lead supply



Please tell us if your property is:

On a busy main road

On a regular bus route

Close to a pedestrian crossing

Please provide details of your plumber/contractor if known:

Name

Address

Post code

Tel no.

Please ensure that all sections are completed before returning your application form.

Please note:

The new service pipe must not be installed until you have received authorisation from United Utilities, and all plumbing work must be carried out to comply with current Water Supply Regulations 1999.

Please return your completed application form to:

**Lead and common supply pipe scheme
United Utilities, ARC
Haweswater House
Lingley Mere Business Park
Warrington WA5 3LP**

If you need any help with your application form, call us on **0845 746 1324** or textphone **0808 143 0295**