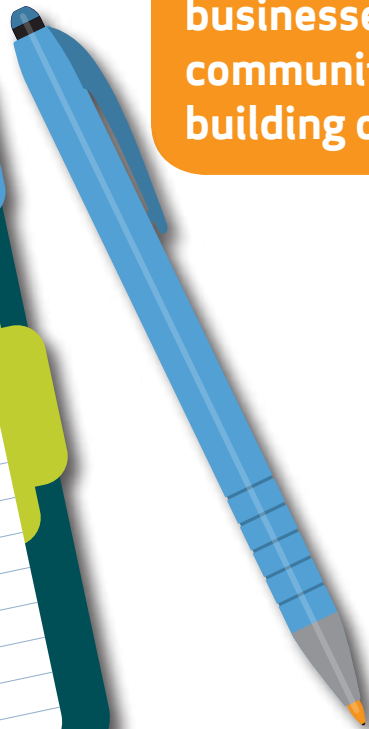


Checklist for lead pipes

- Were your premises built before 1970?
- Do your colleagues, or the public, have access to drinking water (including tea and coffee making facilities)?
- Do you use water for food preparation?

If you answered 'yes' to any of these questions, please read this short leaflet to find out how you can check for lead pipes and minimise the health risks.



Why it's important to check for lead pipes

If you own or manage a community building or business built before 1970, and members of the public or work colleagues have access to drinking water, it's important to find out if you have lead pipes.

Traces of lead in water can be harmful to health, with the greatest risk being to pregnant mothers and children under the age of six.

The risk is greater if water has been left standing in lead pipes for long periods of time (i.e. overnight, or over the weekend).

The leaflet explains how to check for lead pipes and what to do if you find them. The advice applies to all types of public building, from commercial businesses to buildings used by the local community.

Community centres
Libraries
Beauty salons
Retirement homes
Art galleries
Churches
Campsites
Shops
Theatres
Restaurants
Schools
Nightclubs
Pubs
Hospitals
Exhibition centres
Offices
Hotels
Cafes
Universities
Hairdressers

Your responsibility

As a public building owner, it's important that you ensure the drinking water you provide to any users of your premises is safe.

The Drinking Water Inspectorate (DWI), a public body which safeguards the quality and safety of drinking water in England and Wales, expects water for drinking and food preparation in public buildings to comply with limits for lead content.

Ultimately, these standards are enforceable, which means that if lead concentrations are found to be above the water quality standard for lead (see 'Meeting the standards' box on the right) further action could be taken, such as issuing a formal notice that the water is not safe to drink.

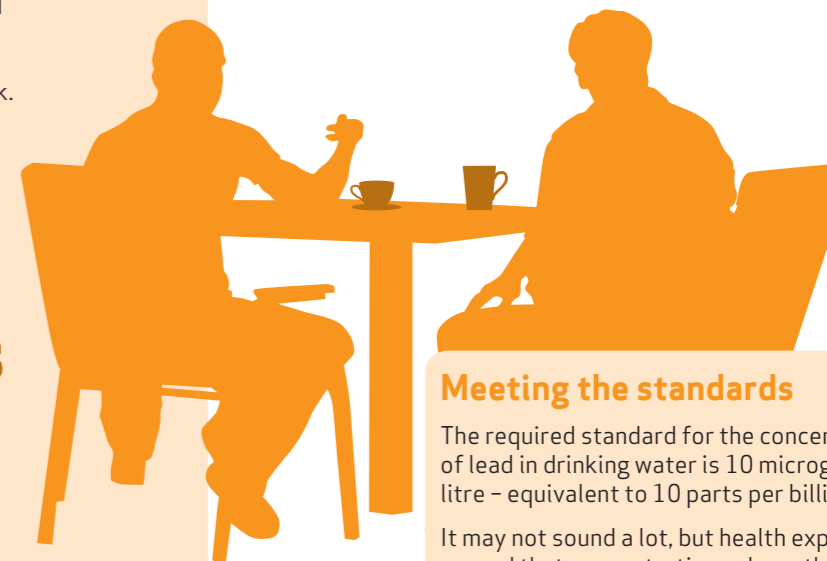
The good news is, there are lots of practical things you can do to minimise or eliminate the health risk, if you do discover lead pipes. See the top tips later in this leaflet.

Know your pipes

Around a third of pre-1970s buildings are estimated to still have some lead plumbing.

This could include:

- The outside supply pipe: the underground pipe which connects the building to the public water mains. Although outside, the pipe is still your responsibility.
- Internal pipework



Meeting the standards

The required standard for the concentration of lead in drinking water is 10 micrograms per litre – equivalent to 10 parts per billion.

It may not sound a lot, but health experts are agreed that concentrations above this amount can, over time, be harmful to health.

Checking for lead

Here are some simple ways to check if you have lead pipes:

1. Look in the right places:

Your premises are likely to have pipework in different places, so be sure to check toilet areas, kitchens and offices.

2. Scratch test:

Unpainted lead pipes are dull grey and easily scratched, revealing a shiny, silver colour beneath.

3. Unusual bends:

Lead is very malleable, and will often have irregular bends.

4. Speak to a plumber:

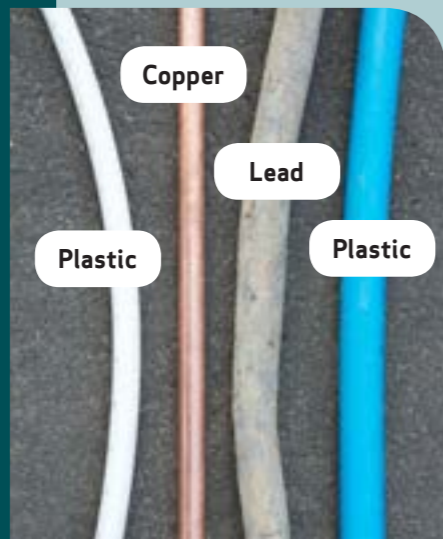
If you are still unsure, ask a plumber for a second opinion.

Watch the video

You'll find a useful, two minute video on our website which explains how to check for lead.

It's at unitedutilities.com/lead-pipes

Common internal water pipes. The lead pipe is easily distinguished by its dull grey colour.



Reducing lead risk: top tips

If you have lead water pipes, the surest way to safeguard the health of your colleagues and the public is to get the pipes replaced. In the meantime, there are a few simple things you can do to minimise the risk:



Run the water:

If your building is usually shut overnight, or during the weekend, water can sit in the pipes and lead concentrations can increase. Run the cold tap in the kitchen area (if you have one) first thing in the morning, to flush out any standing water. A sink full should do it. You can always use this water for your plants.



Use the kitchen tap:

Only use water from the cold tap in the kitchen (or the designated drinking water point for your building) for drinks and food preparation.



Do not disturb:

Try not to disturb or knock lead pipes, as this can increase the lead in your water.



Flush the loo:

Flushing the loo will also do the job of clearing any water that has been standing in the pipes overnight.



Boiling water doesn't remove lead!

If the water in your building is mostly used for making tea and coffee, don't assume that your colleagues are protected against lead.

Boiling the water doesn't remove lead, so you will still need to observe the safety precautions described above.

Extra benefits

As well as safeguarding health, replacing your lead supply pipe with a modern plastic version can improve water pressure. This is because the water can flow more easily through the new pipe.

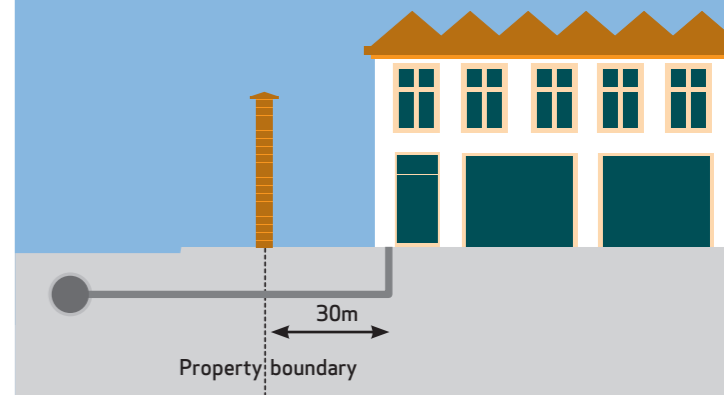
The new pipe will also be less prone to bursts or leaks, which could save you money in the long run.

The 30m rule

If your supply pipe (the underground pipe which connects your property to the public water mains) is longer than 30 metres, the usual advice to run the tap or flush the loo first thing in the morning may not be as effective in removing lead.

You can work out the length of your supply pipe by estimating the distance from the boundary of your property to the front of your building.

If you know your supply pipe is made from lead, and it's longer than 30 metres, it's worth giving serious consideration to getting it replaced.



Replacing pipes

The surest way to eliminate any health risk from lead pipes is to get them replaced.

You'll need to employ a plumber to do the work. You can find your nearest quality assured plumber at watersafe.org.uk, where there is a useful search facility.

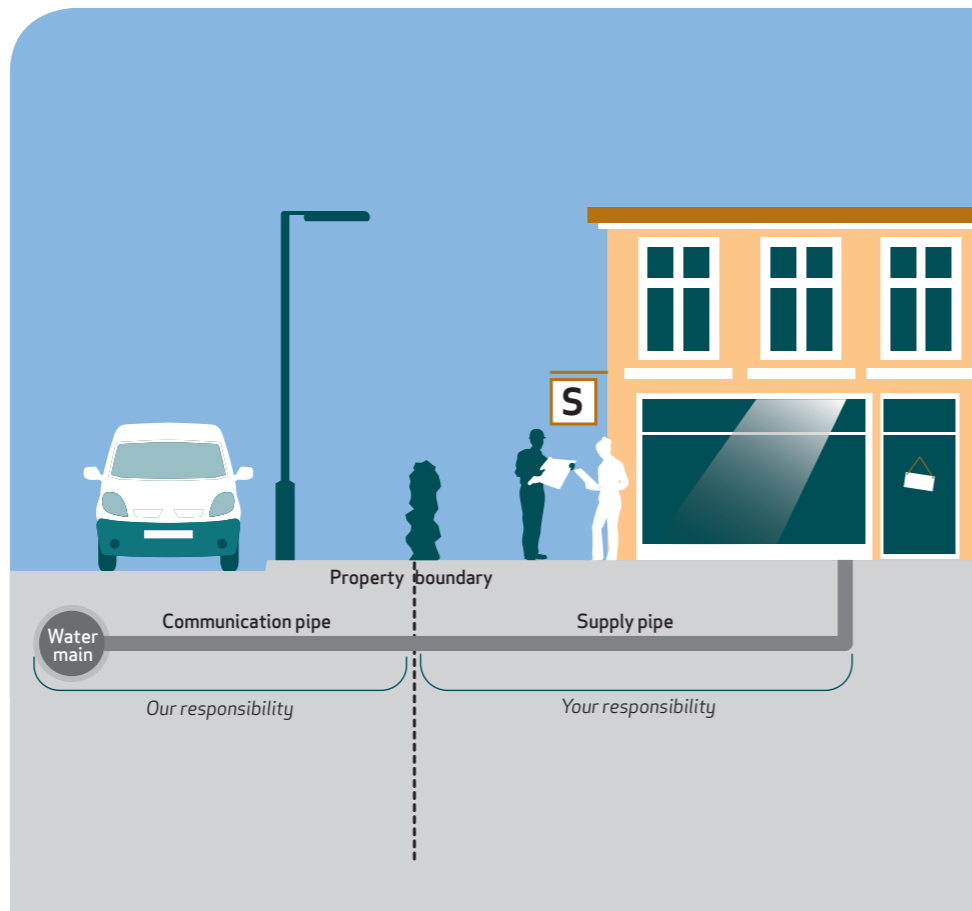
How it works

You are responsible for the pipes inside your building, and the underground supply pipe which runs from your building to your property boundary.

If you need to replace your supply pipe, we'll connect your new pipe up to our network, free of charge, once you've had the work done.

If we find any remaining lead beyond your property boundary (known as the communication pipe) we'll replace it.

For further advice about replacing your lead service pipe, getting reconnected, and to obtain an application form, please call us on **0345 072 6082**, or visit unitedutilities.com/lead-pipes



Check your lead risk

If you know that you have lead pipes, the following table will help you assess the health risk to your colleagues and the public.

If you identify one or more high risks, it is worth giving serious consideration to getting your pipes replaced.

Please also refer to the tips in this leaflet for other ways to reduce the health risk.

Risk factor	LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH
Water used for food and drink preparation	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently
Water used by children	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently
General use of water	High usage	Sometimes	Low usage
Length of service pipe <i>(measured from your property boundary to the building)</i>	Less than 3 metres	3-30 metres	Greater than 30 metres

Find out more

For more information about how to spot lead pipes, and practical steps to safeguard health, please visit: unitedutilities.com/lead-pipes

In case you need to contact us:



To talk to us about your bill:

0345 072 6072

Opening hours: 8.30am-5.30pm Mon to Fri

To talk to us about your water and wastewater services:

0345 6723 723

Opening hours: 8am - 8pm Mon to Fri;

8am - 6pm Sat; 8am - 12 noon Sun.

If you have hearing or speech difficulties, and use a
textphone, please dial **18001** followed by the number
you require.



You can write to us at:

United Utilities, PO Box 459, Warrington WA55 1WB



Or go online:

unitedutilities.com



United Utilities Water Limited,
Haweswater House, Lingley Mere Business Park, Lingley Green Avenue, Warrington WA5 3LP.
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