



# Green Bay Water Utility

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – DRINKING WATER NOTICE:

### **IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT POSSIBLE LEAD IN GREEN BAY DRINKING WATER** ***Green Bay Water Utility Says Less Than Four Percent of Service Lines Affected***

GREEN BAY, Wis. (February 27, 2017) – After finding lead levels in some homes above the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) action limit in 2016, the Green Bay Water Utility is continuing its lead education efforts. The City of Green Bay has approximately 1,400 remaining lead service lines, meaning **less than four percent of utility customers are affected.**

Green Bay Water Utility began conducting routine monitoring for lead in drinking water in 1992. Historically, the lead levels have been below the EPA action limit of 15 parts per billion (ppb), or 0.015 milligrams of lead per liter of water (mg/L). Lead water lines were last installed in Green Bay in 1944, and lead solder was banned in Wisconsin in 1984. Homes built after these dates are less likely to have issues with lead.

Although the primary sources of lead exposure are lead-based paint and lead-contaminated dust or soil, the EPA estimates that 10-to-20 percent of a person’s potential exposure to lead may come from drinking water.

**Green Bay Water Utility’s source water, water mains and finished drinking water do not contain lead.** When water is in contact with pipes (or service lines) and plumbing containing lead for several hours, the lead may enter drinking water. Homes built before 1984 are more likely to have lead pipes or lead solder.

Although most area homes have very low levels of lead in their drinking water, lead can cause serious health problems. There are several actions that Green Bay Water Utility is taking to address the concern of lead in drinking water:

- In order to remove minerals from the walls of water mains that are known to contribute to the lead levels in homes, Green Bay Water Utility will continuously perform its **Uni-directional Flushing (UDF) program** on all 440 miles of its distribution water mains.
- The utility will also continue replacing the portion of each lead water service line that it owns if the line contributes lead concentrations of more than 15 ppb during and after completing the comprehensive flushing program. **Homeowners with privately owned lead water service lines are also required to replace them under Green Bay Ordinance 21.11.** Contact Green Bay Water Utility funding assistance program details.
- In addition, lead service lines on streets that are being resurfaced and reconstructed are actively replaced each year.
- **Green Bay Water Utility plans to have all known utility owned lead service lines removed and replaced by 2021.**

If too much lead enters your body from drinking water or other sources, it can cause serious health problems, especially for pregnant women and children six years old and younger. Lead can cause damage to the brain and kidneys, and can interfere with the production of red blood cells that carry oxygen to all parts of your body. Scientists have linked the effects of lead on the brain with lowered IQ in

children. Low levels of lead can affect adults with kidney problems and high blood pressure more than healthy adults. Lead is also stored in the bones and it can be released later in life. During pregnancy, a child receives lead from the mother's bones, which may affect brain development.

Here are some steps you can take to reduce your exposure to lead in your water:

- **Run your water to flush out lead.** Run water for one-to-two minutes to flush lead from interior plumbing or until it becomes cold or reaches a steady temperature before using it for drinking or cooking, if it hasn't been used for several hours.
- **Use cold water for cooking and preparing baby formula.** DO NOT cook with or drink water from the hot water tap; lead dissolves more easily into hot water.
- **Do not boil water to remove lead.** Boiling water will not reduce lead.
- **Determine whether or not the service line that connects your home or apartment to the water main is made of lead.** The best way to determine if your service line is made of lead is by either hiring a licensed plumber to inspect the line or by contacting the plumbing contractor who installed the line. You can also learn how to identify private water service line material at [gbwater.org/water-quality/how-to-identify-private-water-service-line-material/](http://gbwater.org/water-quality/how-to-identify-private-water-service-line-material/), or see [gbwater.org/water-quality/map-of-lead-service-lines/](http://gbwater.org/water-quality/map-of-lead-service-lines/) for a map and list of known lead service line addresses.
- **Identify and replace plumbing fixtures and solder containing lead.**
- **Have an electrician check your wiring.** If grounding wires from the electrical system are attached to your pipes, corrosion may be greater. DO NOT attempt to change the wiring yourself because improper grounding can cause electrical shock and fire hazards.
- **Test your water for lead.** Call us at (920) 448-3480 to find out how to get your water tested for lead. See our website at [gbwater.org](http://gbwater.org) for a list of labs certified to test lead in drinking water levels.
- **Get your child's blood tested.** Contact your local health department or healthcare provider to find out how you can get your child tested for lead if you are concerned about exposure.
- **Look for alternative drinking water sources or treatment of water.** You may want to consider purchasing bottled water or a water filter.

Call Green Bay Water Utility at (920) 448-3480 or visit [gbwater.org](http://gbwater.org) to find out how to get your water tested for lead or for more information on steps the utility is taking to address the lead action level exceedance. For more information on reducing lead exposure around your home/building and the health effects of lead, visit EPA's website at [epa.gov/lead](http://epa.gov/lead) or contact your health care provider.

Water quality test data for Green Bay Water Utility can be found on Wisconsin DNR website at [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov) under public water system ID 40503562.

#### About Green Bay Water Utility

For more than 130 years, Green Bay Water Utility has been supplying high-quality drinking water at a reasonable cost to customers in Green Bay and in several surrounding communities. With offices located at 631 S. Adams St. in Green Bay, Green Bay Water Utility is dedicated to supplying friendly, convenient and dependable service to all customers. For more information, visit [gbwater.org](http://gbwater.org).

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