

## **Do you have a lead service connection?**

### **QUESTIONS & ANSWERS**

For any questions about the material below please contact our Customer Contact Centre at (780) 882-7800 or by emailing: [repair@aquatera.ca](mailto:repair@aquatera.ca)

Our thanks to the City of Calgary for their assistance with the creation of this document.

#### **How can lead get into my tap water?**

Despite the high quality of drinking water delivered to consumers from regulated water treatment facilities and distributions systems, the lead from older service connections and plumbing can leach into your tap water.

Leaching can happen when water flows through older lead service connections or plumbing, particularly if they are corroding, or through brass fittings that may have high lead content. Higher concentrations of lead are generally found in samples taken from taps that have not been turned on for more than six (6) hours in homes built before 1960.

#### **Is lead in my drinking water a health concern?**

There are many environmental sources of lead, such as paint, soil and dust. As these materials are ingested, the lead they contact can accumulate in our blood. Lead in drinking water is a minor contributor to overall blood lead levels in adults.

Blood lead levels across Canada are quite low and have been falling over the last few decades due to regulations to reduce environmental contributors of lead, such as the removal of lead from all gasoline.

Elevated blood lead levels are a concern for unborn babies and children five (5) years of age or younger because they absorb lead more readily than older individuals.

#### **What is Alberta's standard for lead in drinking water?**

The Guidelines for Canadian Drinking Water Quality, adopted by Alberta through regulation, specifies a maximum acceptable concentration for a number of parameters. The maximum acceptable concentration for lead in drinking water to protect public health is 10 micrograms per litre (parts per billion) or 0.01 mg/L.

#### **How can I tell if my water contains lead in excess of the maximum acceptable concentration in the Guidelines for Canadian Drinking Water?**

Lead dissolved in water cannot be seen, and has no taste or smell. Laboratory analysis is necessary to determine lead levels in your water. Lead in drinking water poses a potential health threat only to unborn babies and children five years of age and younger. Water testing is



only recommended in homes built before 1960 where pregnant women or young children may reside.

Aquatera records indicate that no lead line or lead services are within the regional distribution system. Should lead be encountered, it is immediately replaced with copper services.

### **Who will pay to replace lead pipes?**

The section of service pipe between the water main and the curb stop is owned by Aquatera. Aquatera is responsible for the costs associated with this portion of the line. The section between the curb stop and the house is owned by the home owner. The homeowner is responsible for costs associated with this portion of the line.

### **How do I know if my plumbing or service connection contains lead?**

Generally, the age of a home is a good indicator of the likelihood of having lead service connections. Homes built prior to 1960 could potentially have lead in their water service connections.

A plumber or a licensed home inspector can identify lead pipes within your home. You can also contact Aquatera to come physically inspect to determine if the service line within your home is lead.

### **What should I do if I live in a house with a lead service connection?**

Lead service connections are only of concern in homes where pregnant women and/or children five (5) years of age or younger reside. For non-pregnant adults and children six (6) and older, lead in drinking water is a minimal risk. In homes where lead levels in drinking water do not exceed the acceptable limit, it may be that no further action is required.

### **Do breastfeeding mothers need to use filtered water or bottled water if they have lead service connections?**

No. Breastfeeding is beneficial to babies and lead transfer from breast milk is minimal. Breastfeeding mothers can follow the recommendations for non-pregnant adults.

### **What should households with older children and non-pregnant adults do if they have lead service connections?**

Older children and adults are at a very low risk of adverse health effects from lead in drinking water. Health risks are generally associated with long-term exposure to lead from other environmental sources. Nevertheless, concerned homeowners can have their water tested for lead levels.



**Where can I get more information?**

For more information – you can email: [repairs@aquatera.ca](mailto:repairs@aquatera.ca) or call (780) 882-7800.

For health information with respect to lead, you can call Alberta HealthLink at 1-866-408-5465,

For information on the quality of drinking water from Aquatera, you can contact Alberta Environment's information line at 1 (780) 427-2700 (or you can dial 310-0000 first for toll free access).