

Update from the Municipal Manager on Trenton Water Works and the latest notice to customers.

May 4, 2018

Some Trenton Water Works customers have recently received a letter identifying their property “*as having a lead gooseneck and/or water service line made up of lead-galvanized steel pipe, also known as a lead service line*” and offering “*to replace the portion of your service line with a new copper line at your expense*” (estimated from \$2500 to \$5000). Because of this notice, I have received calls from frustrated and concerned residents about how they should respond to TWW. In order to better understand the issues involved, I have done my own research and also met with our Construction Official and our Plumbing Official (both highly qualified and experienced in their fields) to best inform you on the notice you received. Please consider the following:

1) Research indicates that galvanized steel pipes installed as water lines between 1880 and 1960 were dipped in a protective zinc coating that also contained lead and other impurities. Accordingly, it is important to do your own investigation regarding the water lines going into your home (from the curb line to your dwelling) to determine the type you actually have (i.e., galvanized steel, copper, PVC or lead).

Your water service line runs from the curb to the inside of your home (the piping is found in the basement or in a readily accessible area of your home near or adjacent to an exterior wall). If you can't easily identify the type by a visual inspection, try this quick test: With a magnet and a screwdriver, start by scratching the outside of the pipe; 1) if its copper, the area will look like a penny and the magnet will NOT stick to it; 2) if its PVC (plastic), the area will appear ivory or white in color and the magnet will NOT stick to it; 3) if its galvanized steel, the area will have a silver-gray color and the magnet WILL stick to it; and 4) if its lead, the area will look shiny and silver and the magnet will NOT stick to it.

2) If you have lead piping (which would be highly unusual in a great majority of homes in Lawrence), of course you will need to replace it. If you have galvanized steel and a firm belief that the piping was manufactured before 1986, you should replace it. If you have steel piping that you have a firm belief was manufactured after 1986 or if you have copper or PVC piping, these will most likely not be an origin of lead in the water supply, **but you should take the additional step of having your water quality tested** by a private, independent company. If the test comes back with a high lead reading, TWW's replacement of its lines from the street to the curb line may very well resolve your issue or you may want to further investigate other possible sources (i.e., very old fixtures, such as faucets, may contain a lead element).

3) If you do decide to have the work done under the TWW program, you should request the name and license # of the contractor hired to do the work, and make your own inquiries as you would with any other contractor performing work for you. Since Lawrence Township does not own, control, manage or maintain any aspect of TWW, we have no involvement in the pipe replacement program and cannot provide definitive assurances regarding it.

4) It is always a great idea, if you have the means, to install your own water filtration system to provide the additional safe guard and peace of mind you may be seeking due to a lack of confidence in TWW.

None of us are happy about this situation (I am a TWW customer as well), but we should do our best to make informed decisions. We should all consider TWW's replacement of water lines delivering our water supply to us as a very positive step in the goal of having clean and safe water to use and drink in our daily lives. This is a long overdue and major improvement to the infrastructure of the water delivery system.

If anyone has any questions that you think I may be able to answer for you, please do not hesitate to contact me. If I can't answer your question, I will do my best to help you get the answer.

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