



# DRINKING WATER & LEAD

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### *Does Burlington have lead drinking water pipes?*

Our distribution system does not contain lead pipes—though we do have some joints that contain lead solder. However, these joints are wrapped with rope, and the solder is NOT in contact with the water running through the pipe.

### *Is there any possibility that there could be lead in my drinking water?*

We are not aware of any properties in Burlington that have water service lines made from lead. The water service line connects our water mains to your interior plumbing, and this line along with faucets and other internal plumbing fixtures are the most common sources of lead. If your home has any plumbing fixtures made prior to 1986, then it is possible that the fittings or welding solder contain lead.

### *What is the City doing to protect me from lead exposure in the drinking water?*

Lead enters drinking water when corrosion occurs in the pipe, faucet, or fixture the water is passing through. To prevent corrosion, the City adds a chemical called Zinc Orthophosphate to the water supply before it leaves our water treatment plant. Zinc Orthophosphate coats the drinking water pipes and fixtures, preventing corrosion and therefore reducing the likelihood of any lead that could be present from entering the water.

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## How can I protect myself from lead exposure in drinking water?

*First, understand whether you may be at risk for lead exposure in your home.*

1. **Learn about your drinking water system.** EPA requires all community water systems to prepare and deliver an annual water quality report by July 1st each year. This report is available on our website, or can be obtained in hard copy by contacting Customer Care at (802) 863-4501 or [water-resources@burlingtonvt.gov](mailto:water-resources@burlingtonvt.gov).
2. **Have your water tested.** If you are concerned that there could be lead in the plumbing in your home, there is testing available. The Vermont Department of Health provides chemical, radiological, and microbiological analyses for public and private drinking water. Review the available tests, costs, and instructions for taking an appropriate sample by visiting [www.healthvermont.gov/lab/drinking-water](http://www.healthvermont.gov/lab/drinking-water) or calling 1-800-660-9997.

*If there is lead in your drinking water, there are ways to reduce exposure:*

1. **Flush your pipes before drinking.** The longer water sits in the pipe, the more lead it may contain. Running the water until it's as cold as possible can help ensure you are not drinking water that has been sitting in your pipes. This can take 5-30 seconds if water was used recently, or up to 2 minutes if not.
2. **Use cold water for drinking & eating.** Cold water is less likely to contain lead. Never add warm water to baby formula. Note: Boiling water does not get rid of lead contamination.
3. **Use filters or treatment devices.** You can learn more about products specifically designed to reduce lead contamination at [www.nsf.org](http://www.nsf.org).

