PLUMBER PROS — GUIDE

Lead service line replacement: start with the water utility

Use the utility inventory and ask who coordinates work on each part of the service line.

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Start with the water utility. Ask what material its service line inventory records for your property. Ask how it handles an unknown record. Do not decide the pipe material from the age of the home alone.

Understand the source

EPA's Lead Service Lines page, fetched 2026-11-10, describes inventories, public communication, replacement planning and funding resources. It says finding the location and material of service lines is a key step toward replacement. Use that process to begin the conversation. This guide does not set a legal deadline for your property.

Ask for the property record

Give the utility the service address. Ask for the inventory entry and any records used to classify it. If the record is uncertain, ask which verification method the utility accepts. Ask who can inspect and document the private portion. Keep the response and any material report.

Plan the full route

Ask which portions of the line the proposed job covers. Ask who owns each part, who will coordinate utility work and whether a public programme is available. Get any funding terms directly from the programme administrator. Do not assume a neighbour's funding offer applies to your property.

Compare the written scope

Ask the contractor and utility to identify the route, access areas, connection work and restoration. Ask how they coordinate interruption of water service. Request the permit and inspection plan for your address. The EPA source is US guidance; for a Canadian property, start with your local water utility and health authority rather than applying US programme terms.

Ask for interim and after-work instructions

Ask the utility for written instructions for drinking water use while the line is assessed and after work. Ask about flushing, sampling and any filter advice that applies to the job. Do not invent a flushing time or rely on a generic schedule when the utility has site instructions.

Keep the final record

Save the completed scope, contractor invoice and utility confirmation of the recorded material. Ask when the public inventory will reflect the work. Give future occupants the documents. Replacing a service line should produce a clear record of what changed, not just an invoice labelled plumbing repair.

Sources

Checked 2026-11-10. These pages can change.

- US Environmental Protection Agency: Lead Service Lines, accessed 2026-11-10.

Frequently asked questions

Should I hire before contacting the utility?

Contact the utility first to ask about its inventory, coordination process and any programme for your address.