

What should SUEZ customers know about lead in drinking water in Bergen and Hudson counties?

- SUEZ has reported to the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection that a limited number of homes in Bergen and Hudson counties tested above the government standard for lead.
- The water leaving the treatment plant that serves the area has no detectable level of lead. In addition, no water mains, the pipes that carry water from the treatment plant, have lead.
- The likely source of lead in the drinking water is from the service lines, pipes that extend from the water mains to individual homes and businesses, and from lead fixtures in homes.
- SUEZ conducts nearly 50,000 water quality tests each year in this system alone, including lead. SUEZ tests homes known to be served by lead service lines.
- All of the 108 homes SUEZ recently tested had lead service lines and the results showed lead levels above the government standard in 16 of those homes.
- Approximately 5 percent of the utility-owned service lines in the system – SUEZ owns the pipe from the main to the property line — contain lead. An additional 15 percent of the system has lead goosenecks – a short piece of flexible piping that connects a water main to a service line.

What is SUEZ doing to correct the problem?

- SUEZ has had corrosion control in place for decades. The current treatment coats the inside of pipes to prevent lead from entering the water supply.
- SUEZ will continue to rigorously monitor the system and will test for the next 12 months to make sure that the corrosion control is working exactly as it should.
- The ultimate goal is to remove all lead in the system.
- In addition to corrosion control, every time that SUEZ is doing work in the ground and finds lead, it is removed. SUEZ is now expanding that program to more specifically target lead service line replacements in the system.

What steps is SUEZ taking for customers?

- Customers who are served or may be served by a utility-owned lead service line can request a test of their drinking water by calling the customer service center at 800-422-5987
- If a test result is above the government's standard, SUEZ will provide a water pitcher with a filter that removes lead from drinking water
- SUEZ has established a new water quality website – www.SUEZWQ.com -- that provides further details about lead in the drinking water
- Customers can find more information or determine if their home or business is served by a utility-owned lead service line by:
 - checking their online accounts
 - visiting www.SUEZWQ.com or www.SUEZsuezwater.com/njwg
 - emailing sueznjcustserv@suez-na.com or
 - calling the customer service center at 800-422-5987

FAQs

Q: Is the water safe to drink?

SUEZ takes the safety of the drinking water seriously. The water leaving the treatment plant has no detectable level of lead. SUEZ rigorously monitors the water – conducting nearly 50,000 tests a year. This is an issue with the service lines and interior plumbing of homes. If customers are among the 5 percent in the system served by a lead service line, the 15 percent with lead goosenecks, or there are lead fixtures in the home, there is the possibility that lead could enter the drinking water. Even so, it is not certain lead will be found in the water – remember that SUEZ tested 108 homes with lead lines and 16 of those were above the safety standard. That is why SUEZ is providing testing for customers with lead lines.

Q: To whom does this notice apply?

This applies to SUEZ customers in Bergen and Hudson counties only.

The notice does not apply to Franklin Lakes, Allendale or Saddle River. It also does not apply to residents in municipalities that contract with SUEZ to operate their water systems. This includes Jersey City, Bayonne, Hoboken, Rahway, Kearny and Orange.

Q: What are the health effects of lead?

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control suggests that long-term exposure to lead in water is a concern for infants, young children and pregnant women. Lead can cause serious health issues because it can lead to neurological and kidney damage and interfere with the body's production of red blood cells. Risk will vary, however, depending on the individual, the circumstances, and the amount of water consumed. For more information, consult a health professional.

Q: Should I have my children tested for lead in their blood?

If you are concerned about lead exposure, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection recommends contacting the local health department or a healthcare provider to find out how to get tested for lead. A family doctor or pediatrician can perform a blood test for lead and provide additional information about the health effects of lead.

Q: If my water has high lead levels, is it safe to take a bath or shower?

Yes. As per the Centers for Disease Control, bathing and showering should be safe for adults and children, even if the water contains lead over EPA’s action level. Human skin does not absorb lead in water.

Q: What can I do to lessen exposure to lead if it is present?

Before using any tap water for drinking or cooking, flush the home’s water system by running the kitchen tap (or any other tap used for drinking or cooking water) on COLD for 1–2 minutes. Never use hot water from the faucet for drinking or cooking, especially when making baby formula or food for infants. More information is available on SUEZWQ.

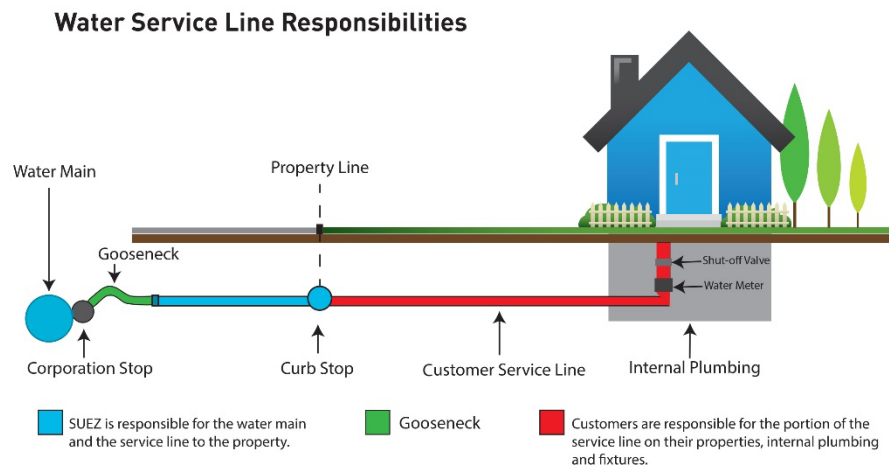
Q: How does lead get into the drinking water?

The primary source of lead in drinking water is from service lines made of lead, lead goosenecks, and from lead fixtures in homes. Service lines are pipes that extend from water mains to individual residences or businesses. Water quality professionals rigorously test the safety of water distributed from SUEZ treatment plants in Northern New Jersey and continue to find NO detectable levels of lead.

Other indoor plumbing pipes and fixtures may contain lead that could enter drinking water, including lead solder that connects pipes in homes as well as brass faucets. Homes or buildings built prior to 1986 are more likely to have lead pipes, fixtures and solder. Lead service lines are typically only present in older homes, but older brass faucets with lead content may be found in newer homes.

Q: Who owns the service line?

SUEZ owns the portion of the service line that runs from the water main to the homeowner’s property line, while the customer owns the remaining portion that extends from the property line into the home or business.



Q: How can customers find out if their homes have a lead service line or fixtures?

To find out if the SUEZ portion of the service pipe has lead, customers can check their online account, visit www.SUEZWQ.com or www.SUEZsuezwater.com/njwq, or call or email SUEZ customer service center at 800-422-5987 and sueznjcustserv@suez-na.com. SUEZ customer service representatives are available to answer questions, including those about lead lines and testing.

Customers still need to determine the material used in their portion of the line. To determine if a home's service line is made of lead customers (or a plumber) need to inspect the line. Lead service lines are generally a dull gray color and are very soft. You can identify them easily by carefully scratching with a flat-tipped screwdriver. If the pipe is made of lead, the scratched area will turn a bright silver color. Do not use a knife or other sharp instrument and take care not to puncture a hole in the pipe. (A video that demonstrates how to conduct a scratch test is available at www.SUEZWQ.com.)

A qualified plumber can also determine if the home contains lead-based plumbing fixtures.

SUEZ recommends that customers who have lead service lines on their properties hire a licensed contractor to replace the line. If replacing pipes and household plumbing is not an option, many water filters are effective in removing lead. Be sure to check the label or contact the manufacturer to confirm the filter is certified for lead removal.

Q. How can customers get their water tested if they are not on the list of utility-owned lead lines?

Customers that may be concerned can contact a laboratory that will perform a test for lead. The following labs are among those listed on the DEP's water quality website:

AGRA Environmental and Laboratory Services -- 973-989-0010
APL (Aqua Pro-Tech Laboratories) -- 973-227-0422
EMSL -- 856-303-2546
Eurofins Eaton Analytical -- 800-332-4345
Garden State Laboratories -- 908-688-8900
Hampton- Clarke -- 973-244-9770

For more information, visit SUEZWQ.com.