



**American Water Works  
Association**

## Utility Member Benefit

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## Public Affairs Advisory

**TO: AWWA Member Utilities**

**FROM: AWWA Public Affairs**

**DATE: December 7, 2010**

<b>Who:</b>	<b>Water utilities</b>
<b>What:</b>	<b>News stories on partial lead service line replacement</b>
<b>When:</b>	<b>Expected soon</b>

Water utilities should be prepared to answer media inquiries about lead in drinking water -- and especially lead service line replacement practices -- in anticipation of a Washington Post story that will likely be transmitted nationally.

The Post contacted AWWA on the issue of lead service line replacement following the publication of a Centers for Disease Control (CDC) study in the journal *Environmental Research*. The study focused on Washington, D.C. between 2000 and 2006. Among the authors' conclusions are that:

- Lead service lines were a risk factor for elevated blood lead levels even when the utility met the EPA water action level.
- Partially replacing lead service lines may not decrease the risk of elevated blood lead levels associated with lead service line exposure.

The Post may also surface AWWA's 1994 legal action that challenged USEPA's criteria defining when a water system "controls" lead service lines and must take steps to replace them. The EPA proposal was remanded on technical grounds after AWWA argued that water systems could not be held accountable for service lines inside the customer's property. In reconsidering the rule, EPA accepted AWWA's argument that utilities cannot be required to replace lead service lines which they do not own or control.

Recent utility research suggests that disrupting lead service lines -- as occurs during lead service line replacement -- can substantially increase lead levels for a period of time. When lead pipe remains after the disruption, lead levels can continue to be elevated longer. In 2006, AWWA prepared a guide with practical steps utilities can take to encourage customers to replace the portion of the lead service line under their control. It is available by download here:

[www.awwa.org/files/Advocacy/Govtaff/Documents/Lead\\_And\\_Copper\\_Strategies\\_For\\_Lines.pdf](http://www.awwa.org/files/Advocacy/Govtaff/Documents/Lead_And_Copper_Strategies_For_Lines.pdf)

Utilities may want to prepare responses for the following questions:

- How many service lines do you have, and what percentage of those are lead service lines?
- Are there particular neighborhoods more likely to have lead service lines? How old are most of the homes that have them?
- How do you currently deal with lead service lines? Is there a replacement program in place?
- Have you ever had an exceedance of the Lead and Copper Rule?
- Is there financial assistance available for customers wanting to replace lead service lines?
- Do you have a list of laboratories that can test for lead? Do you have guidance available on sampling?

A 2008 report funded by the Water Research Foundation describes the contribution of service lines to household lead levels, the effects of disturbing service lines on lead levels in the home, and practices to reduce lead levels associated with lead service line replacement. More information is available here: <http://www.waterresearchfoundation.org/research/TopicsAndProjects/projectSnapshot.aspx?pn=3018>

AWWA has consumer-oriented information on lead in drinking water available on its DrinkTap.org consumer site. The page includes tips on how consumers can protect themselves from lead in drinking water. <http://www.drinktap.org/consumerdnn/Home/WaterInformation/WaterQuality/LeadinWater/tabid/70/Default.aspx>

Further information on public policy related to lead in drinking water is available on AWWA's Government Affairs web page. <http://www.awwa.org/Government/Content.cfm?ItemNumber=1321&navItemNumber=3843>

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