



Help Your Favorite Area Non-Profit With GRANT

# Do you have lead in your water? City of Boston wants to help

E-MAIL

FACEBOOK

TWITTER

GOOGLE

LINKEDIN

2

By **Matt Rocheleau**

GLOBE STAFF APRIL 07, 2016

The City of Boston will give property owners up to \$2,000 and four years of no-interest financing to help them replace water lines at their homes or businesses that may be leaching harmful lead into drinking water.

More than 5,000 properties in the city are connected to water mains in the street by lead service lines, city officials said.

Replacing such lines typically costs between \$2,500 and \$3,000 in Boston, officials said. The amount depends on the length of the line.

“It is our hope that residents will take advantage of this program to replace lead water service [lines] at their property to help us move the City of Boston towards a safer housing stock and a healthier city,” Mayor Martin J. Walsh said Thursday in a statement.

Concerns over the amount of lead in drinking water at homes, schools, and other buildings have been reignited in the wake of the water crisis in Flint, Mich., where dangerous lead levels were recently discovered.

**Search: Boston buildings**

## with lead service lines

---

Children are particularly vulnerable to lead poisoning, which can seriously damage the brain, kidneys, nervous system, and red blood cells, potentially affecting physical development and the ability to learn.

“The health and safety of our residents is our top priority, and in Boston we are making significant strides toward replacing the remaining lead pipes across the city,” Walsh said.

Previously, the city had offered lead service line replacement incentives of up to \$1,000 and two years of interest-free financing, and the program only applied to residential properties housing three families or less.

Property owners must hire a contractor selected by the Boston Water and Sewer Commission to do the work.

The commission puts out a bid each year to pick a contractor to do all the line replacement work for that year, said the commission’s deputy general counsel Jim Steinkrauss. The current contractor charges \$153 per foot to replace lines that are either 5/8 or 3/8 of an inch in diameter — the most common sizes, he said.

The new program will increase costs for the city, but how much depends on how many property owners sign up, Steinkrauss said.

City officials said that since 2005, when the program originally started, it has helped fund the replacement of 1,391 lines.

Officials say their count may underestimate the actual number of lead service lines. The city had previously estimated that there were only 3,500 properties with the lines, but recently conducted a review that uncovered hundreds of additional addresses suspected to be connected to such lines.

Steinkrauss said the city plans to send out notices soon to property owners whose buildings would be eligible.

More details about the program can be found at the commission's website, [bwsc.org](http://bwsc.org), or by calling the commission's Lead Hotline at 617-989-7888.

Water is virtually lead-free when it leaves reservoirs on its way into Boston, officials say. Water mains, the large pipes that carry water beneath streets, do not add lead to the water. Those mains are made of concrete, iron, or steel.

But service lines may be made of lead, particularly older ones. As those pipes age and corrode, they can leach lead into the water flowing from the main into the building's plumbing.

In Massachusetts, the installation of lead service lines stopped largely by the 1940s, officials believe.

The Massachusetts Water Resources Authority announced last month it was launching a \$100 million interest-free loan program to help 47 cities and towns, including Boston, cover the cost of replacing an estimated 28,000 water service lines across those communities.

Boston is still looking at the MWRA program. It did not affect the city's decision to go forward with its upgraded program, said Steinkrauss.

Fixing lead service lines may not provide total protection. Homes built before 1986 may have lead solder in their interior plumbing, and faucets made through 2013 may contain enough lead to contribute to elevated lead levels in water.

Lead poisoning can also be caused by exposure to sources other than water, including lead in paint, soil, household dust, food, and certain types of pottery, porcelain, and pewter.

If you live in Boston, [you can look up your address here](#) to see if it may have a lead service line.

Even if you're not on the list, if you're concerned, you can contact the commission to confirm whether your home has lead problems. The commission says it will inspect any customer's service line if requested.

*Matt Rocheleau can be reached at [matthew.rocheleau@globe.com](mailto:matthew.rocheleau@globe.com).*

Get [Today's Headlines](#) from the Globe in your inbox:

[Privacy Policy](#)

SHOW 2 COMMENTS

Stay updated, right in your news feed.

## Top 10 Trending Articles

Most Viewed

Most Commented

Most Shared

Patriots release Dominique Easley

Trump would be a disaster, but Cruz would be apocalyptic

Patriots 2016 schedule

'The Sisterhood of the Traveling Prom Dress'

Governor Baker halts speech under onslaught of boos at LG...

Baker, Walsh to launch anti-marijuana campaign

### Learn more

ClassPass raises prices and local fitness buffs fume

[SUBSCRIBE](#) [BOSTON GLOBE INSIDERS](#) [EPAPER EDITION](#) [NEWS IN EDUCATION](#)

Vermont immigrant investor program operated Ponzi-like s...

[MY ACCOUNT](#)

[LOGOUT](#)

A mother's frank depiction of daughter's overdose touches t...

[MANAGE MY ACCOUNT](#)

[DOWNLOAD CUSTOMER SERVICE APP](#)

Bad deals in 2014 continue to haunt Red Sox

[CONTACT](#)

[HELP](#)

[FAQS](#)

[GLOBE NEWSROOM](#)

[ADVERTISE](#)

[SOCIAL](#)

[FACEBOOK](#)

[TWITTER](#)

[MORE](#)

[ARCHIVES](#)

[PRIVACY POLICY](#)

GOOGLE+

TERMS OF SERVICE

TERMS OF PURCHASE

YOUR AD CHOICES

WORK AT BOSTON GLOBE MEDIA

---

© 2016 BOSTON GLOBE MEDIA PARTNERS, LLC

---

---