



ROAD SALT, LEAD & DRINKING WATER

What is the Connection?

Road salt helps to keep our roadways and sidewalks free of ice during the winter, preventing slips and falls on sidewalks and collisions on roadways. It is important to keep people safe in the winter, however, overapplying salt has consequences.

Excessive use of salt does more harm than good by damaging and corroding our infrastructure. Salt can accelerate the corrosion of water pipes and leach dangerous chemicals like lead into our drinking water.

Impacts of Lead in Drinking Water

The EPA reports that lead in water poses cardiovascular, kidney and reproductive health risks to adults and even low levels of lead in the blood of children can result in:

- behavior and learning problems
- lower IQ and hyperactivity
- slowed growth
- hearing problems
- anemia

SCOPE OF THE ISSUE

Chloride (a component of road salt) is known to mobilize heavy metals and is incredibly corrosive to water pipes. Homes and businesses with lead and copper pipes have an increased risk of lead corroding into tap water when elevated levels of chloride are present.

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), in November 2025 there were an estimated 4 million lead service lines in the United States. Many of these are connecting water mains to private properties and are concentrated in older urban areas. They pose significant risk to human health.

To find out if you have lead in your drinking water, have your water tested.

To learn more, visit: epa.gov/safewater

JOIN SALT WATCH

Want to find out how much chloride is in local waterways?
Visit saltwatch.org to request your free Salt Watch Kit!



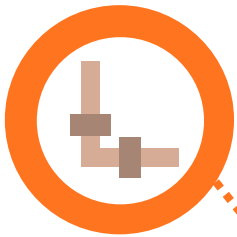
SOURCES OF LEAD IN DRINKING WATER



Faucets: Faucets and fixtures made or installed prior to 2014 may have lead content exceeding today's standards.



Galvanized pipes: Galvanized pipes (even lead-free ones) can accumulate lead particles from other sources (e.g. lead lines or lead solder), later releasing them into the water supply.



Copper Pipe with Lead Solder: Copper pipes installed before 1987 were often joined with lead-based solder, meaning they may contain traces of lead.



Lead Service Lines: Pipes that run from the public water main to a residence may be a source of lead contamination.

..... **Property Line**

Utility-Owned Water Main