



Notice to Water Utility Customers

Water Service Line Materials

For more than 100 years, residences in the City of Rifle have been plumbed with small diameter pipes that convey water from larger publicly owned water mains into a structure. These small diameter pipes are called service lines and are typically 3/4, 1, or 2-inch in diameter. The materials used in the construction of these service lines have varied throughout the decades as plumbing techniques and material costs have evolved. There are approximately 3500 service lines associated with customers served by the City's water system.

The most common service line materials in use today are polyethylene and copper. Utility Department staff whom have been involved with service line and meter installation for more than a decade believe that 99% of the City's service lines are constructed out of polyethylene or copper. This assessment is largely based on the timeframe of residential construction and knowledge of water main materials of construction. New service line materials today would most likely be polyethylene. Copper was the material of choice for the more recent decades. For structures constructed much earlier in Rifle, it becomes more difficult to discuss the materials used for service line construction for lack of surviving records and the likelihood that many of these service lines have been replaced with newer materials.

The Utility Department occasionally encounters a service line constructed of lead but this is becoming infrequent. It has been the practice of the City to remove lead service lines when encountered for both health related reasons and the difficulty of connection to newer water main and component materials. In the last year, only one lead service line has been encountered and removed.

The City is requesting assistance from you to identify lead service lines that may remain. The City's compliance with Safe Drinking Water Act regulations requires sampling and monitoring to occur at locations where lead is likely to exist. Regulatory revisions on the horizon are likely to require that all lead service lines be removed on a yet to be defined timeline. The City and ratepayers would benefit from knowing whether lead service lines still exist in the City's water system.

The photo below contains service lines of different materials as an aid to help people identify service line materials that may be in use. Service lines materials typically can be verified in the vicinity of the water meter or at locations where the line enters the structure, crawlspace, or meter pit. The dull gray metal colored service line is made of lead and is positioned at the left in the photo. The blue plastic line is made of polypropylene and is positioned in the center of the photo. The lines positioned at the right in the photo are copper (new and tarnished).



Left to right: Lead service line, polypropylene service line, copper service lines (new and tarnished).

The City requests that you examine the location where the service line enters your structure, or examine the materials of construction near your water meter. If you observe a lead service line or a service line constructed of materials not shown above, we request that you call the Utility Department at 970-665-6558 and identify your address. A lead service line can be confirmed if it scratches easily with a key.