HOW TO DETERMINE THE PIPE MATERIAL USED IN YOUR SERVICE LINE

Service lines can be made of galvanized steel, lead, copper, or plastic. Local construction practices and ordinances impacted the type of pipe material used in communities at specific times. Local ordinances in the Detroit area began prohibiting the use of lead pipe in plumbing codes as early as 1947. Some communities used a small connector pipe made of lead, commonly called a gooseneck, to connect a galvanized steel service line to the water main. The presence of a lead gooseneck cannot be determined by examining plumbing in your home. If you are unsure about the type of service line at your home, contact your local municipality.

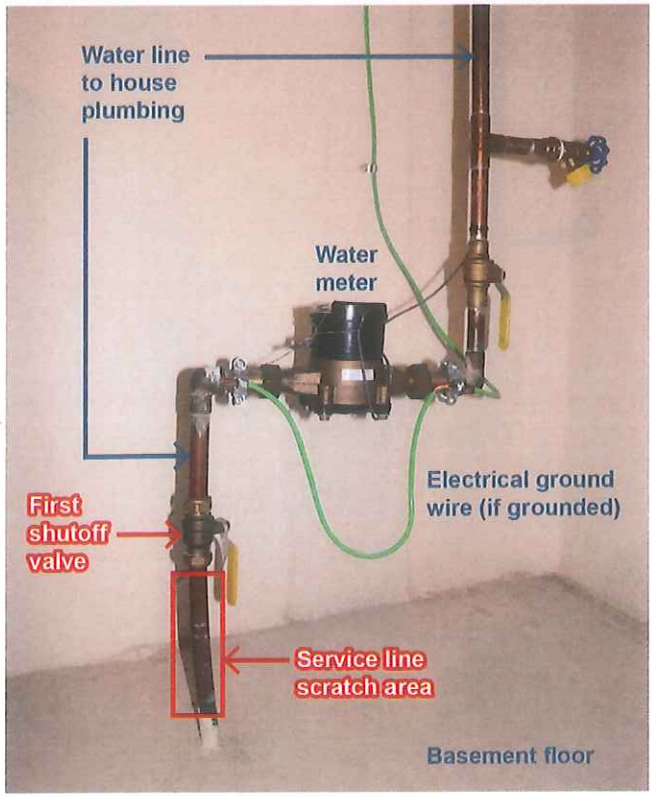
Two simple tests can be performed using a screwdriver and a magnet to help determine the service line material entering your home. Locate where the service line comes through the floor or wall into your home (see bottom right picture). This should be near your main water shutoff valve and water meter.

If you have a metal pipe below the first shutoff valve, use the flat edge of a screwdriver to carefully scratch through any corrosion that may have built up on the outside of the pipe. Place a magnet on the scratched area. If the magnet sticks to the pipe, it is galvanized steel. If the magnet does not stick and the scraped area is:

- shiny, silver in color, and looks like a nickel, the pipe is made of lead.
- copper in color and looks like a penny, the pipe is made of copper.

If the pipe feels like plastic, is white or gray in color, and joined with a clamp, glued or screwed together, it is plastic and no further tests are required.

PIPE MATERIALS USED IN SERVICE LINES



Scratch the pipe area coming into the house below the first shutoff valve. NOTE: The piping above the shutoff valve, known as the water line to house plumbing, should not be tested as it is likely made of a different material than the service line.

GLWA
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