# FAQs Regarding the City of Newark's Water Filters & Efforts to Address Lead in the Water

## WATER FILTER QUESTIONS

**What happened with the water filters?**
On August 9, follow up testing by the City of Newark have shown that a small sample of water filters (2 out of 3) provided to the City may not be removing lead to the low levels expected by city, state and federal officials. At this time, the City of Newark is aware of only two residences where water filters are not working as expected.

**What is the City doing to address this issue?**
The City of Newark is currently expanding testing of filtered drinking water to more Newark homes. We are closely coordinating with the Governor's office, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP), the United States Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA), and the filter manufacturer to determine the full scope of the situation and best course of action.

The City of Newark and State of New Jersey are prepared to do everything possible to address this situation. Until additional testing is completed and out of an abundance of caution, bottled water will be provided by the City and State. Residents in the Pequannock service area who have lead services lines are advised to use bottled water for drinking, cooking and preparing baby formula.

In addition, the City has issued robocalls to residents and is issuing a public notice in various languages to residents. Updates will be provided on www.NewarkLeadServiceLine.com and through the media.

**How will residents be able to determine their eligibility for bottled water?**
Residents who live in the Pequannock service area and have a lead service line are advised to use bottled water for drinking, cooking and preparing baby formula. To determine if you live in the Pequannock service area, please visit www.NewarkLeadServiceLine.com and use the mapping tool feature.

**Who is impacted?**

Out of an abundance of caution and until more testing can be done, the City of Newark and the State of New Jersey are providing bottled water to residents in the Pequannock service area who have lead service lines.

**How many cases will be provided to impacted residents?**
Two cases of bottled water will be made available per household to residents in the Pequannock service area with lead service lines.

**Do impacted residents need any form of identification to obtain bottled water?**
Residents must show the most recent proof of residency to pick up bottled water, including: a tax bill, water bill, lease agreement, utility bill, cable bill, driver's license or government-issued ID.

**Is there assistance available for residents who are unable to visit a distribution center in person?**
The City is coordinating closely with the Office of Emergency Management (OEM) to assist residents who are unable to visit a distribution center in person. If residents have special accommodations, they may call the Department of Water & Sewer for assistance at 973-733-6303.

**Are residents from the Wanaque service area eligible?**
No. Residents from the Wanaque service area are not impacted. Until additional testing is complete and out of an abundance of caution, residents from the Pequannock service area who have lead service lines are eligible for bottled water.

**How long will the City be providing bottled water?**
Bottled water will be available while we continue to conduct extensive testing, as well as sample and analyze the data. When we receive the additional testing results, we will evaluate the data and identify the required corrective action as quickly as possible.

**Where can residents pick up bottled water?**
Out of an abundance of caution, bottled water will be provided by the City and State. Residents in the Pequannock service area with lead services lines can pick up water at the following locations:

- The City of Newark Department of Health and Wellness, 110 William Street
- Bo Porter Sports Complex, 378 Lyons Avenue
- Boylan Street Recreation Center, 916 South Orange Avenue
- Vince Lombardi Center, 201 Bloomfield Avenue

Bottled water was made available starting at 3:00pm on Monday, August 12. On Tuesday, August 13 and for the remainder of the week, pick up hours are 11:00am-7:00pm at the recreation centers listed above and 8:30am-4:30pm at the Department of Health and Wellness.

**What does this mean for corrosion control?**
It is important to understand that long-term distribution of bottled water has the potential to impact the City's new corrosion control treatment that was launched in May.

As part of the City's initial filter testing, our engineers are already seeing reduced lead levels based on the addition of orthophosphate. The City of Newark is optimistic that the orthophosphate will eventually provide the protective coating necessary to prevent releasing from lead pipes. In fact, experts expect to see a further reduction in lead levels by the end of this year if enough orthophosphate is circulated within the system.

In order to continue these positive steps forward, residents must continue to keep City water flowing through their pipes because this is necessary to move the orthophosphate through the system and form a protective coating around the inner lining of the pipes. Examples of flushing include washing dishes, bathing or flushing the toilet.

**How are you notifying residents?**
The City has begun to and will continue to aggressively reach out to residents through the media, robocalls, public notice, social media campaign and mailings. A Virtual Town Hall will be scheduled soon.

**How many filters and replacement cartridges have been distributed to residents?**
Over 38,000 water filters and over 31,000 replacement cartridges have been distributed to residents.

# OTHER QUESTIONS

**What is the City doing to lower lead levels in drinking water?**
The City has taken significant steps toward minimizing risks for residents by:

- Installed a new corrosion control treatment system that experts expect will reduce lead levels by the end of this year
- Developed a partnership with the State of New Jersey to replace residential lead service lines for impacted homeowners where the cost to the homeowner will be no more than $1,000, pending additional funding
- Opened distribution centers and executing a comprehensive door-to-door canvassing campaign across the city to deploy filters
- Offering free water testing to homeowners and free blood testing for children under the age of 6
- Distributed over 38,000 water filters and over 31,000 replacement cartridges to impacted homeowners, free-of-charge

**How can lead get into the drinking water?**
Lead is introduced into water when it releases out of lead service lines or lead plumbing in homes. Older cities like Newark with lead service lines and plumbing are required by federal law to add a standard corrosion control substance to their water to prevent lead from releasing into the water. The corrosion control used in Newark's Pequannock water system became ineffective as a result of regulatory changes to water treatment. The City is in the process of implementing a different corrosion control. During the period that it will take for the new corrosion control to become effective, the city is distributing filters to affected homes at no charge and as of August 12 distributing bottled water.

**Where have elevated levels of lead been found?**
Approximately 15,000 single-family and multi-family homes with decades-old lead service lines or plumbing containing lead on their property that are served by the Pequannock system – which includes the West Ward and parts of the North, Central and South wards – are at risk of elevated levels of lead.

The majority of Newark households are not impacted because they receive water from the Wanaque system, where testing shows corrosion control is still effective at curtailing leaching in lead lines. Service lines in homes built after 1986 do not contain lead, and in 1953 the City of Newark disallowed new construction projects to utilize lead service lines and plumbing.

Office buildings, apartments, hotels and hospitals are unlikely to have lead service lines because ductile or cast-iron pipes were typically used in the construction of larger buildings, rather than lead. Businesses located in the Pequannock service area that have lead service lines may be impacted. Most of the Downtown zone is not impacted because it is not served by the Pequannock system. The Downtown zone is served by the Wanaque water system.

Residents and businesses without lead service lines or lead plumbing are not at risk. Free water testing is available for residents in either service area.

**What are some of the ways that the city and state educating residents about this issue?**
The City has conducted numerous Virtual Town Halls, established www.NewarkLeadServiceLine.com, sent out multi-lingual newsletters to residents and hosted press conferences. The City has also put together multiple multi-lingual educational how-to videos focused on how to install a water filters and replacement cartridges.

The New Jersey Department of Health partnered with the Newark Department of Health & Community Wellness to send letters to nearly 400 pediatricians and over 93,000 households, recommending repeat blood lead screening for all children. Letters sent to households included FAQs in English, Spanish and Portuguese to assist in all residents.

**Is the City of Newark in compliance with state and federal regulations?**
Yes. The City of Newark is in full compliance with all lead corrosion treatment requirements. The City has at all times been working with state regulators to address elevated levels of lead in the water.

The City is going above and beyond what the law requires in distributing filters and securing state funding to replace private lead service lines. In fact, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection has repeatedly stated that Newark is in full compliance with what the Safe Drinking Water Act requires Newark to do to make sure the water is treated properly to reduce lead corrosion as much as possible. Moreover, the Safe Drinking Water Act does not require Newark to either provide filters for its residents or secure state funding to help residents replace lead service lines, but City officials are making it a priority of doing both. With the Lead Service Line Replacement Program, the city is going beyond the federal Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Lead and Copper Rule.

**What progress is being made with the city's offer to provide free water testing?**
The City of Newark is offering free water testing upon request. Since October 2018, the number of requests received has increased rapidly and exponentially. As a result, the City has been working diligently to perform all water test for residents and any household whose testing shows a lead exceedance in the water is provided a certified water filter.

**What is the Lead Service Line Replacement Program?**
In New Jersey and across the nation, we must upgrade our drinking water infrastructure. The reality is that the cost of updating water infrastructure falls disproportionately on America's older cities – often low-income communities of color.

The City of Newark has made significant progress to finally tackle this decades-old issue of lead service lines through the Lead Service Line Replacement Program – an unprecedented eight-year, $75 million program to replace approximately 15,000 lead service lines (LSLs) across the city. The goal is to replace 1,500 LSLs throughout each phase. Since March, over 700 lead service lines on private property have been replaced. There is no deadline to apply to the Lead Service Line Replacement Program. To register, visit www.NewarkLeadServiceLine.com.

**How are households selected for the Lead Service Line Replacement Program?**
The City's goal is to ensure that the Lead Service Line Replacement Program is distributed evenly in each ward on a first come, first serve basis. However, neighborhoods and populations most at risk based on scientific and mapping data were targeted with additional outreach including letters to encourage sign-ups for the program. Homeowners who apply to the program and identify themselves as priority status – including elderly people, women and children – will be prioritized. Since the Lead Service Line Replacement Program is voluntary, distribution of the program depends upon those residents who respond and indicate that they would like to enroll.

While a majority of homes in Newark are not impacted by elevated levels of lead, the City encourages all residents to participate in the Lead Service Line Replacement Program because the goal is to modernize Newark's infrastructure and replace all of Newark's outdated lead service lines.

**How much will it cost to replace the lead service lines?**
The Lead Service Line Replacement Program is a $75 million program offering to replace all remaining known Lead Service Lines (LSLs) in the city within an eight-year period. The average cost of replacing lead service lines for a homeowner ranges between $5,000 and $10,000. The City will help offset 90 percent of the replacement costs through funding from the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection and New Jersey Infrastructure Bank. While the final cost will depend on state funding received for the program, the cost to residents will not exceed $1,000, pending available funding.

**Who is at risk of being impacted by lead in the water?**
Research shows the largest contributor to elevated blood lead levels in children is lead-based paint in homes built before 1978. Lead services lines may also pose a risk to children and pregnant women. To minimize risk, the City recommends that residents participate in the Lead Service Line Replacement Program.

The City has taken significant steps toward minimizing risks for residents by:

- Installed a new corrosion control treatment system that experts expect will reduce lead levels by the end of this year
- Developed a partnership with the State of New Jersey to replace residential lead service lines for impacted homeowners where the cost to the homeowner will be no more than $1,000, pending additional funding
- Opened distribution centers and executing a comprehensive door-to-door canvassing campaign across the city to deploy filters
- Offering free water testing to homeowners and free blood testing for children under the age of 6
- Distributed over 38,000 water filters and over 31,000 replacement cartridges to impacted homeowners, free-of-charge

**Where can I find out more information?**

*Members of the Press:*
Members of the press can contact the Press Office at PressOffice@ci.newark.nj.us or 973-733-8004 for more information.

*Key Contact Information for Residents:*

- **How to obtain and install filters:** residents can visit www.newarkleadserviceline.com for more information
- **To request an inspection or free water testing:** residents can contact the Department of Water & Sewer Utilities at 973-733-6303 or waterandsewer@ci.newark.nj.us
- **Residents in the Pequannock service area with lead services lines can pick up water at the following locations:**
  - The City of Newark Department of Health and Wellness – 110 William Street
  - Bo Porter Sports Complex – 378 Lyons Avenue
  - Boylan Street Recreation Center – 916 South Orange Avenue
  - Vince Lombardi Center – 201 Bloomfield Avenue
    - Bottled water was made available starting at 3:00pm on Monday, August 12. On August 13 and for the remainder of the week, pick up hours are 11:00am-7:00pm at the recreation centers listed above and 8:30am-4:30pm at the Department of Health and Wellness
- **Water filters can be obtained at:**
  - Boylan Recreation Center – 916 South Orange Avenue
  - John F. Kennedy Recreation Center – 211 West Kinney Street
  - Vince Lombardi Center of Hope – 201 Bloomfield Avenue
  - St. Peter's Recreation Center – 378 Lyons Avenue
  - Hayes Park West Recreation – 179 Boyd Street
  - Water & Sewer Facility – 239 Central Avenue
  - Health Department – 110 William Street

- **Information about testing children for lead** can be found at: https://www.state.nj.us/health/childhoodlead/testing.shtml
- **For more information about the health effects of lead, residents call:** 1(800) 222-1222 (available 24/7)
- **To have your child tested for lead, contact:** 973-733-5310 (available 24/7)