



OFFICE OF
THE BOARD OF

Water & Sewer Commissioners

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FAQs & Important Additional Information - Unknown Material Service Line Notification Letter

The Town of Somerset Water Department is aware that the lead and galvanized service line inventory letters received by many of our customers may have caused confusion and questions. **PLEASE NOTE: THE TOWN'S DRINKING WATER IS IN COMPLIANCE WITH MASSACHUSETTS REGULATIONS FOR LEAD CONTENT.** In response to many of the questions we have received, we have put together the following FAQs/facts sheet. Please read the following information and feel free to call the Water Department at 508-679-2731, should you have any additional questions or concerns.

1. **The Town of Somerset does not have a lead service problem as confirmed by our mandated testing program and reported in the annual Consumer Confidence Report** available at the Water Department as well as on the Water Department website www.townofsomerset.org/waterqualityreport
2. These drinking water notices were required to be sent out by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA) and the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) in keeping with their mandate to eliminate lead from drinking water. This can be accomplished by replacing services and in-house plumbing materials and fixtures that may contain lead-based materials. The Town of Somerset is not alone in having to perform a lead service inventory – **this is a nationwide US EPA mandate.**
3. The Town of Somerset has been sampling for lead since 1991 and has **NEVER** exceeded the US EPA or MassDEP lead drinking water compliance standards.
4. A study of the Town's records that was used to produce the lead service line inventory **DOES NOT** show any known lead services in the Town's water distribution system.
5. The Town does have galvanized iron water services. Galvanizing material (zinc) is used to deter rust from forming on iron and steel. It does not contain lead but may have absorbed it over time due to traces of lead that may be present in the environment. (See No. 2 above)
6. The Town's water distribution system is approaching 100 years old and needs replacement regardless of the materials used in the services. The Town has been replacing water mains and water services for several years and is currently doing so now through an ARPA grant. However, the replacement program will need to be expanded to replace all the services by the US EPA and MassDEP mandated deadline in 2036. The Town will be seeking grants from State and Federal agencies to help fund the replacement of galvanized iron services.
7. **The service line inventory is as complete and accurate as our records will allow. However, there are instances where no records exist. Even though our lead testing shows that we do not have a lead problem and that the probability is that "unknown" services do not contain lead, the US EPA and MassDEP requires that a notification be sent stating that unknown services may be presumed to contain lead.**
8. If you would like to have your water tested for lead, please refer to MassDEP's list of certified laboratories: <https://www.mass.gov/how-to/find-a-certified-laboratory-for-water-testing>. The cost for lead testing will not be paid by the Town.
9. The Town is responsible for determining the material upstream of your water service, meaning from your property line out to the water main in the street. Again, the current inventory does not show any lead services in Somerset; however, if the Town determines that a lead service line is upstream of your service we will contact you to discuss funding and replacement options. If you are planning on replacing the portion of the service line that you own, meaning from the property line into the house, please notify the Somerset Water Department at 508-679-2731.
10. Please note that the drinking water notifications do not suggest that customers should install water filtration systems to remove lead. Both notices do clearly state that the results of Somerset's lead testing program "...have never exceeded Massachusetts state compliance standards." The choice to install a water filtration system is up to the customer based upon what they believe to be in their best interests. The Town's position, based on historical lead results as determined by US EPA and MassDEP, and unless recommended by a doctor or other health care professional, is *not* to suggest the installation of lead-removal filtration systems. Any costs associated with installing a water filtration system will not be paid by the Town.