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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Lehigh County Authority Seeks Public Input to Locate Lead Pipes

Regulatory changes require new lead pipe reporting.

Allentown, PA – July 26, 2022 – Lehigh County Authority (LCA) is asking all customers to complete an online survey to provide data on the water service line coming into their homes. The data submitted by customers will help LCA meet new regulatory requirements and apply for infrastructure funding to remove lead from the water system.

In December 2021, EPA announced revisions to its lead and copper rule, originally established in 1991. The updates require all water service providers across the country to build a complete inventory of lead pipes in their systems. The inventory must include all lateral pipes connected from public water mains, a section of which is owned by the property owner. LCA has not historically kept information on the customer portion because it is privately owned.

All customers who receive LCA water are asked to complete the survey as soon as possible, providing information on pipe material and other basic details about their property. No matter what pipe material customers find in their home, whether copper, lead, plastic, or galvanized steel, we need to know.

“The water LCA provides to our customers from our sources, the creeks, springs, and wells, is lead-free. But many older homes still have lead pipes. When water sits in those pipes, lead gets into the water, which has health impacts when consumed over time,” said Liesel Gross, Chief Executive Officer of LCA. “There is an urgency to gather the information from customers now so LCA can be proactive and go after infrastructure grant funding that is coming available later this year. We will use the data to develop future projects to remove lead from the system. No matter what type of pipe material you find in your home, please tell us.”

LCA expects the customer survey to show lead pipes are more prevalent in the City of Allentown based on when the homes were built. Lead pipes, as well as plumbing fixtures and solder containing lead, were frequently used in construction up until about 1955.

Allentown Mayor Matt Tuerk is supporting the LCA effort, encouraging the public to participate in this important project. According to Mayor Tuerk, “I live in an old home, and I had no idea what kind of pipes I had in my basement. Lead pipes can have a terrible impact on the health of your family, so it’s important for us all to know what’s in our basements and take precautions to avoid lead exposure. Our City has 46,000 residents that can complete the LCA survey. Please help Allentown, your community, by completing the survey and getting lead out of the City and Lehigh County.”

Customers who find their property has lead pipes, or who are unable to determine the pipe material, should take steps immediately to reduce potential lead exposure. Exposure has health impacts, especially for more vulnerable groups like children or people with health conditions.

Ways to reduce lead exposure include:

- **Daily Rinsing:** Run cold water from your tap for at least three minutes. After that you will have fresh lead-free water from the LCA water main that is safe for drinking, cooking, making baby formula, feeding your pets, making ice, or watering vegetable gardens.

Water Saving Tip: You can also bring in fresh water from the LCA water main by taking a shower, washing dishes, using the clothes washer, or flushing the toilets before drawing water for cooking or drinking.

- **Cleaning Faucet Aerators:** As water stands in your home's plumbing, lead from the soldered joints and old lead pipes can get into your water. Other debris can build up on the aerator too. It's important to regularly clean faucet aerators and screens to remove any debris from them.

When To Clear Your Aerator: Clean all aerators once a month for six months, then twice a year, spring, and fall. You should also replace aerators if they appear worn. You can buy them at your local hardware or home improvement store.

The best way to reduce lead exposure is to remove and replace lead pipes, although it can be expensive. As with most larger home improvements, it's a good idea to secure multiple estimates before selecting the best option. Customers who are concerned about lead in drinking water can have their water tested by a certified laboratory of their choosing.

There is currently no requirement for private property owners to replace lead pipes, but those residing in the home should take steps to reduce exposure to lead in drinking water.

LCA will provide additional public information and customer correspondence in the future regarding our efforts to locate lead service lines in our water system. We appreciate everyone taking the time to submit a survey response, no matter what type of pipes are in your home.

The survey, along with tools and resources about lead pipes and how to test pipe material can be found on the LCA website. <https://www.lehighcountyauthority.org/>.

Customers who need help with how to test pipe material or do not have access to the online survey and resources should contact LCA Customer Care at 610-437-7517 (City Division) or 610-253-1444 (Suburban Division).

About [Lehigh County Authority](#): Lehigh County Authority (LCA) is a public water and wastewater utility committed to protecting public health and the environment by providing high-quality, safe, and reliable water and wastewater services, serving a population of approximately 200,000 people. A nonprofit, public agency, LCA was founded in 1966 by the County of Lehigh and is governed by a nine-member board of directors appointed by the County.