



**Scottish  
Water**

Trusted to serve Scotland



Lead shared water  
supply pipe guidance

This leaflet contains information about Lead shared water supply pipes and what you can do to replace them.

In Scotland, lead does not occur naturally in significant concentrations in our water supplies. The problem arises when drinking water comes into contact with lead supply pipes, lead tanks, lead solder joints on copper pipes, or inferior quality brass fittings and taps, particularly for longer periods (e.g. overnight).

You may have received this leaflet as water samples taken from a property in your building have indicated the presence of lead in your water supply. This could be due to lead pipes or fittings. When we discover lead pipes on our network, we will replace them. However, property owners are responsible for water supply pipes within the boundary of their property. As your domestic building has been identified as potentially having a shared water supply pipe, we recommend any pipework within your property boundary is checked by a licensed plumber to determine if the pipes are made of lead, and if so, you should arrange to have them replaced.

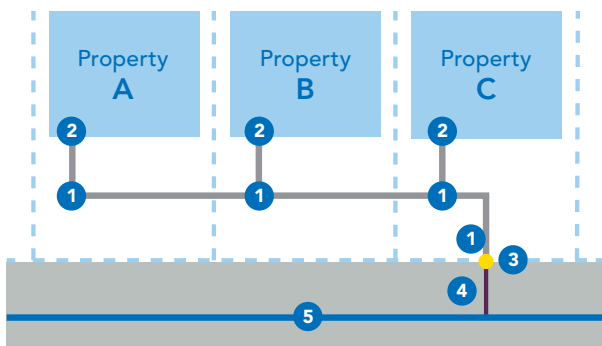
You should speak to your neighbours prior to carrying out any work. Details of the shared pipework may be included in the title deeds for the property. If you are a tenant, you should speak to the homeowner/landlord of the property.

Please note as a water supply pipe is the responsibility of the homeowner/s, we are unable to identify if properties have a shared supply pipe without further work taking place.



## What is a shared water supply pipe?

A property can have an individual water supply pipe, or it can have a shared water supply pipe (one pipe feeding more than one property). Many older properties, particularly terraced houses, are supplied by a shared water supply pipe. This pipe provides water to a number of houses from one single connection from the water main. Homeowners are responsible for a shared water supply pipe as shown in the typical example below.



	Responsibility
1 The shared water supply pipe	Homeowners
2 Stop valve	Homeowners
3 Stopcock/meter	Scottish Water
4 The communication pipe	Scottish Water
5 The water main	Scottish Water

## Why lead can be a problem

Exposure to significant quantities of lead can be harmful to health especially for unborn babies and young children. For this reason it is important that lead levels in drinking water are kept down to the lowest levels, particularly for those at special risk.

Scottish Water must meet strict regulatory standards on the level of lead in drinking water. The maximum limit (PCV – Prescribed Concentration or Value) for lead in drinking water is 10 microgrammes per litre (ug/l).

Scottish Water will undertake a site investigation if sample results indicate lead levels above 5ug/l and will replace the communication pipe if the investigation confirms the presence of lead fittings or pipework on the communications pipe.

With shared lead water supply pipes, we recommend that you flush your pipes, by running the cold water tap in your kitchen for at least 2 minutes, before you use water for drinking or cooking purposes. This may help to reduce the lead content in your water supply. This flushing should be increased if water has been lying unused for an extended period.

## How we can help

If you have concerns about the concentration of lead in your water supply, please contact us and we can arrange to take a sample.

If you do identify you are on a shared water supply pipe and wish to replace it, you will be required to provide a new, independent water supply pipe. In these instances, we may be able to provide a new connection to the water main free of charge.

## Contacting a plumber

We would always recommend the use of licensed plumbers. To find a licensed plumber in your area visit [www.watersafe.org.uk](http://www.watersafe.org.uk)

## Grants

You may be able to obtain a grant for part of this lead replacement work from your local council. For specific information on your local council and up to date details of funds available, please contact your local council's Environmental Health Department.

For further information about lead pipes, please visit [www.scottishwater.co.uk/lead](http://www.scottishwater.co.uk/lead)



### How did we do?

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Visit [www.scottishwater.co.uk/gem](http://www.scottishwater.co.uk/gem) or call our Customer Helpline on **0800 0778778** to make your nomination.



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We record all calls for quality and training purposes.