



Drinking Water Bureau

Customer Outreach Guide: Water Service Line

Lead and Copper Rule Revisions (LCRR)

Overview

All community and non-transient, non-community public water systems must develop a service line inventory that identifies the service line materials of the public water distribution system (“Systems”). The service line inventory shall be submitted to the New Mexico Environment Department, Drinking Water Bureau (“NMED”) by **October 16, 2024**.

Customer and private assistance to Systems is an important component in completing the service line inventory. NMED has created several customer communication templates that Systems can use for outreach to their customers. Systems may provide the three documents outlined below to customers via mail, email, or other methods.

It is recommended that in addition to these templates, water systems consider their own outreach to consumers including mail, water bills, social media, website posts, or informational door hangers & pamphlets.

Available Customer Communication Templates

NMED has created templates you can download, edit, and share with your customers:

Customer Outreach Letter (Attachment #1)	Provides a brief overview of the health effects of lead in drinking water and why customer service lien identification is important, contains a customer survey and weblinks for additional information. The template Word file can be edited to include your system contact information and any additional information you'd like to include.
Customer Self-Identify Drinking Water Service Line Survey (Attachment #2)	The survey is a guidance tool for customers to self-assess and verify the material of customer-owned service lines. The survey is then returned to the System. The template should be downloaded either as a Word file or a fillable PDF. Make sure to edit the document to include how to submit the completed survey and system contact information.
Survey guidance-Water Service Line Material Identification (Attachment #3)	Explains how to locate the drinking water service line and identify the line material. Make sure to include this document with the customer service line survey.



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Outreach Best Practices & Recommendations for Effective Communication

Convincing your customers to participate in the customer service line survey can be a challenge. Ongoing and transparent communication with your customers can help increase public participation with service line identification and increase consumers' confidence in their tap water. Below are some recommendations from American Water Works Association's Lead Communications Guide and Toolkit to help you effectively communicate with your customers.

- **Different Language Communities** – If significant portions of the population in your community speak languages other than English, the outreach materials must contain information in the appropriate language(s). Don't overlook any non-English media outlets for message dissemination.
- **Taking Initiative** – Plan your outreach efforts in advance, test them before any "crisis" exists, and evaluate them upon completion. Are you able to host a focus group with customers or internally to test the effectiveness of your outreach messaging?
- **Different Forms of Outreach** – Customers may be more receptive to communication through different formats. Additionally, consider your community's rates of literacy and web literacy. Can you provide outreach messaging through snail mail, email, website content, PDFs, door hangers, radio announcements, or phone calls?
- **Power of Partnership** – Collaborating with other organizations and individuals is often a smart communications strategy for water utilities. In times of crisis, community partners with established, trusted relationships with the audiences you need to reach will play a critical role in efficient message dissemination. Can you partner with the mayor's office, local schools, local clinics, civic groups like homeowner associations or community service organizations?
- **Incentives** – Are you able to offer an incentive for completing the survey? A small amount (\$5 to 10) off the customer's water bill, gift certificates to local or box stores, or entry into a raffle after submitting the survey can increase customer participation.
- **Outreach Representatives** – Is there someone you can designate to speak to customers, officials, and media? Having one person designated to represent your system to the public makes it easier to provide timely and consistent information.

Web Resources

- New Mexico Environmental Department: https://www.env.nm.gov/drinking_water/lead-and-copper-program/
- American Water Works Association's Lead Communications Webpage and Resources: <https://www.awwa.org/Resources-Tools/Resource-Topics/Contaminants-of-Concern/Lead/Lead-Communications/Consumer-Tool>
- American Water Works Association's Lead Communications Guide and Toolkit: <https://www.awwa.org/Portals/0/AWWA/Communications/2022LeadPageAssets/2022AWWA-LeadCommunicationsGuideAndToolkit.pdf>
- EPA Webpage - Engaging with the Community on Lead Service Lines: <https://www.epa.gov/ground-water-and-drinking-water/engaging-community-lead-service-lines>
- Lead Service Line Replacement Collaborative – Communicating about Lead Service Line Webpage: <https://www.lslr-collaborative.org/communicating-about-lsls.html>