

How to Identify a Lead Water Service Pipe

Step 1

Locate the water service line entering the building.

This is typically found in the basement. A valve and the water meter are installed on the pipe after the point of entry.

Identify a test area on the pipe between the point where it enters the building and the valve. If the pipe is covered or wrapped, expose a small area of metal.

Step 2

Scratch the surface of the pipe.

Use the flat edge of a screwdriver to scratch through any corrosion that may have built up on the outside of the pipe.

Step 3

Compare your pipe to the chart below.

Each type of pipe will produce a different type of scratch, react differently to the magnet, and produce a unique sound when tapped with a metal coin.

Tools needed:

- Flathead screwdriver
- Refrigerator magnet
- Coin



**TEST
AREA**



Lead Pipe

Scratch Test

If the scraped area is shiny and silver, the pipe is lead.

Magnet Test

A magnet will not stick to a lead pipe.

Tapping Test

Tapping a lead pipe with a coin will produce a dull noise.



Copper Pipe

Scratch Test

If the scraped area is copper in color, like a penny, the pipe is copper.

Magnet Test

A magnet will not stick to a copper pipe.

Tapping Test

Tapping a copper pipe with a coin will produce a metallic ringing noise.



Galvanized Pipe

Scratch Test

If the scraped area remains a dull gray, the pipe is galvanized steel.

Magnet Test

A magnet sticks to a galvanized pipe.

Tapping Test

Tapping a galvanized pipe with a coin will produce a metallic ringing noise.