

Approaches for Identifying Lead Service Lines: September 2018 U.S. GAO Drinking Water Report



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The United States Government Accountability Office (“GAO”) issued a September 2018 report titled:

Drinking Water – Approaches For Identifying Lead Service Lines Should Be Shared With All States (“Report”)

A focus of the *Report* is the concern that a significant source of lead in drinking water originates from corrosion of service lines connecting the water main to a house or building.

As noted in the *Report*, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (“EPA”) issuance of the Lead and Copper Rule pursuant to the Safe Drinking Water Act required water systems to conduct a “materials inventory” of lead service lines. The crisis in Flint, Michigan is stated to have motivated EPA to send a letter to all states in 2016 encouraging them to work with water systems to publically post the materials inventory. Also required to be posted was any additional updated maps or inventories of service lines.

The GAO *Report* addresses:

1. What is known about the number of existing lead service lines among states and water systems
2. States’ responses to EPA’s February 2016 request to work with water systems to publicize inventories of lead service lines and any steps the agency has taken to follow-up on such responses

The GAO states that it reviewed:

1. Existing studies of lead service lines
2. Websites of the 100 largest water systems
3. Interviewed EPA officials in headquarters in Regional offices

The GAO recommends in the *Report* that:

... EPA share information of successful approaches states and water systems use to identify and publicize locations of lead service lines with all states.

The GAO states that EPA agreed with the recommendation.

A copy of the *Report* can be found [here](#).