

Information Item

Date: October 11, 2022

To: Mayor, Mayor Pro Tempore, and Members of the City Council

From: Aaron King, Assistant City Manager
Courtney Driver, Utilities Director

Subject:
Presentation on Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Utilities Lead Compliance Program

Strategic Focus Area: Healthy Environment

Strategic Objective: No

Strategic Plan Action Item: No

Key Work Item: Yes



For more than 20 years, Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Utilities has met or surpassed all federal water quality standards. This includes testing for lead to ensure our water is safe to drink. We are happy to report that our water distribution system remains in full compliance with the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) current regulations.

However, lead water pipes may still be found in our system, particularly on private property within older homes and businesses. On December 16, 2021, a major revision of the EPA's Lead and Copper Rule (LCR) went into effect. The compliance deadline for this revision is October 16, 2024, with the primary goal of identifying and eliminating all lead in water systems across the country.

This is the most significant and impactful LCR revision since the rule was enacted in 1991. Shortly after this latest revision was published and the requirements were known, Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Utilities began development of a comprehensive Lead Compliance Program. The new regulations will require significant efforts and communication across several departments to manage data collection, sampling at schools and childcare facilities, public education and communication with our customers to assist with data collection efforts.

One requirement is to develop and maintain an inventory of customer service lines within the public right-of-way and on private property. Historically, our responsibility ended at the right-of-way, but this rule requires us to also inventory private service lines.

In the fall of 2022, WSFC Utilities will contact approximately 300 customers so our team can investigate and physically identify the pipe material on their property. This data will be used to develop a machine-learning tool that will identify the areas in our system most likely to contain lead components. The information will further be used to assist in developing our Lead Service Line Replacement Plan.