



## Lead and Copper Rule- Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

### 1. What is the Lead and Copper Rule?

The Lead and Copper Rule is a rule created by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) that requires sampling for Lead and Copper in our drinking water. We are allowed .015 Mg/l of lead in a sample and 1.3 mg/l of Copper. This rule requires the Town to take 30 random samples throughout the system every 3 years to ensure compliance with EPA and S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control (SCDHEC) Water Quality Standards. In December 2021, the EPA began to introduce new policies for lead and copper monitoring in water.

### 2. What does this mean for the Town of Fort Mill?

Standards for the new Lead and Copper regulations require the Town of Fort Mill, as well as all other public water systems, to create an inventory for every water service line in the Town limits, including public and private water lines. The Town has until Oct. 16, 2024 to complete the inventory to comply with state and federal regulations. During this time period, we will still be completing our 3-year sampling, but we will be required to visually inspect every service in the Town that was placed into service before the year 1988. In 1988, it became illegal to use lead in plumbing and all lines installed after this year will be exempt.

### 3. What type of work will I see happening throughout the Town?

During this phase of the new regulation, you may see Town employees at residences or businesses putting out door hangers and talking to residents about the service lines they have. Crews will also be inspecting meter boxes or digging around meter boxes and taking pictures to determine the type of service connected to the box.

### 4. Why is this project happening now and how long will it last?

In previous years the Town of Fort Mill was required to sample for lead and copper every three years. This requirement is still in place and the Town has met all regulatory requirements through SCDHEC and EPA. With the previous rule, the Town would sample and report all findings to each homeowner affected as required by SCDHEC. New regulations have now required the Town to inventory all lines throughout the system along with the regulatory sampling.

The EPA finalized its new regulations in April 2022 and public water systems have until October 16, 2024 to inventory their systems. The Town has contracted with an engineering firm to help complete this inventory. In the last few months, the Town has been working through files, maps and other information to help reduce the number of “unknown” samples. These “unknown” samples must be inventoried therefore requiring the Town to begin in-field evaluations of these services. The inventory portion will last up to 16 months.

**5. Why is my neighbor having their lines tested and not me?**

Both the EPA and SCDHEC regulations allow an average of water lines in a specific neighborhood to be calculated to minimize the amount of digging around these lines. If your home is in a neighborhood that was built by the same builder, the Town can take a collection of samples from the neighborhood. The Town can rule the entire neighborhood’s water lines as non-lead if it is determined that no lead was found in the samples. Further sampling could be collected at a later date.

**6. What is the cost to me as a homeowner?**

Currently, there is no cost to the homeowner. The Town of Fort Mill is collecting an inventory to submit to SCDHEC. Expenses during this inventory will be incurred by the Town of Fort Mill.

**7. When and how will you be digging in my yard?**

Town employees will provide homeowners with a notice a week in advance if digging is required on their property. Town employees will also knock on the door to notify homeowners before digging. During the evaluation, employees will be digging by shovel around the area of the meter box. The Town will do all it can to prevent major damages to landscape. After digging, the employees will place the dirt back into the hole and cover. Seed and straw will be also be placed where needed.

**8. Can I do the work myself or hire a contractor?**

Homeowners may dig in their yard to determine the material of their service line. A picture will need to be submitted to the Town of Fort Mill for verification. Another option is to take a picture of the service line coming into your house in your crawlspace or basement and submit to the Town. These alternatives could help eliminate the amount of area to dig in your yard. You may also provide proof that your line has been replaced if you have had a plumber run a new water line to your house.

**9. Are there any environmental/health issues I should know? Will this affect water quality?**

Through previous lead and copper sampling and bacteria sampling, the Town of Fort Mill has met all requirements through SCDHEC to provide safe drinking water. During this time there are no known health issues, but we are continuing to follow requirements set forth by the EPA and SCDHEC to maintain safe drinking water and prevent future contaminants from entering the system. Lead can affect water quality over time so we are working diligently to ensure that we can identify any and all lead service lines in the Town. If you suspect any water quality issues, please contact the Town of Fort Mill Utilities Department at (803) 547-7158.

Collecting the samples will not affect water quality. By completing this inventory, the Town can help ensure that there are no water quality issues caused by lead in the water system.