

SMCMUA letterhead

August 2, 21

Customer Name

Customer Account #

Customer Address

Re: **IMPORTANT INFORMATION** Capital Improvement Program: 45-Day Notice of Main Construction, Connecting Pipe Replacement, and Meter Pits Installation

Dear **Customer Name:**

The Southeast Morris County Municipal Utilities Authority (SMCMUA) is making capital improvements in your neighborhood to upgrade aging infrastructure. **Please read this time-sensitive letter to understand actions that you may need to take for this project.** If you are a tenant, please share this information with the property owner as soon as possible .

Learn more at our upcoming **public information session:** 8/24/21 at the Morristown Municipal Building

As part of this project, the SMCMUA will be replacing the water main at the front of your property and the service pipe which is the SMCMUA owned pipe that runs between its main and your property's curb line. In addition, the SMCMUA will install a new water meter and meter pit at the curb line. We will also remove the old water meter from inside your building or home. An inspection program, detailed below, will give you a chance to replace potentially contaminated pipes during construction. The work will improve your water supply quality and reliability.

We expect to begin installing the new service pipe within 45 days after the above referenced date. We will work to minimize your inconveniences during construction. The new meter pits will include a check valve. If you do not have an expansion tank (required by current plumbing code), your hot water heater may leak as a result of these needed improvements.

The SMCMUA will give all affected residents and tenants water pitchers and filters after their service pipes are connected to the new meter pit. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency recommends using the filters for a period of six months after construction activities end.

The attached figure of a typical residential property shows which water piping system components are owned by SMCMUA, and which components are owned by you, the property owner. Frequently asked questions and their answers are also attached for more information. The public information session tentatively scheduled for August 24, 2021 at the Morristown Municipal Building at 7:00 PM will be an opportunity to ask questions.

The SMCMUA has contracted with Cullen Plumbing, a local licensed plumber, to inspect the plumbing in your home or business to determine if it contains lead or if it is constructed of galvanized materials. This **inspection is to be done at no cost to you**. The results of this inspection will then be sent to you when completed.

Cullen Plumbing may have already, or will, contact you directly to schedule a good time for the inspection. We ask that you schedule an appointment within 14 days of the notification, if not sooner. Cullen Plumbing will make three (3) attempts to contact you. If they do not get a response, they will not be able to inspect your pipes.

Before the end of the year, the SMCMUA contractor will install a new pit for your meter near the curb in front of your building. If they find a lead or galvanized connector pipe when the meter pit is installed, the SMCMUA will send a letter to the owner within five business days offering to have its contractor replace the service pipe at a discounted price to you. The owner may elect to accept this discounted cost to replace the lead or galvanized materials by written notice to the SMCMUA. Owner responses should be received within fourteen days from receipt of the notice. If the owner elects not to accept this cost, please return the notice and indicate that you do not wish to participate by checking the appropriate box. As a final note, it is recommended that any connector pipe be replaced due to possible health concerns, but it is not mandatory at this time.

We want to keep you informed of urgent news about this project and other important water alerts. To get reliable updates, please visit our website and update your account contact information via the web form, or email your most updated contact information to customerservice@smcmua.org. The account contact information will be used as the point of contact for SMCMUA to contact directly.

If a different point of contact is preferred, please send their name, phone number, and e-mail address to customerservice@smcmua.org. We also recommend that you and those

living in your building/home sign up for project and water alerts using our Smart 911™ notification process. You can sign up on our website by clicking on the **Register for Water Alerts** icon as shown below.



If you have any questions about the project, or the associated service line replacement, please contact SMCMUA Customer Service at 973-326-6880 or customerservice@smcmua.org.

A safe and reliable water supply system is essential to the health and welfare of our community. Thank you for taking the time to read this important information about the SMCMUA's water main replacement project.

As a final reminder, please:

- **Schedule your Cullen Plumbing inspection as soon as contacted (if you have not already done so)**
- **Review the Frequently Asked Questions attachment**
- **Visit the Project Hub**
- **Update your account contact information and provide a**

Sincerely,

Jeff Elam, P.E.
Chief Engineer

cc: D. Lacreta, Customer Service and Billing Manager
S. Saifuddin, PE, Principal Engineer
R. Smith, EIT, Engineering Associate

ATTACHMENT 1

Frequently Asked Questions

What is SMCMUA going to do?

The SMCMUA will replace the water main at many locations throughout the Morristown area towards the end of 2021. As part of this project, we will be replacing the water main at the front of your property and the service pipe that the SMCMUA owns and will install a new water meter and meter pit at the curb line. We will also remove the old water meter from inside your building or home. The SMCMUA will contact property owners to schedule the meter removal.

Placing the meter pit outside of your building allows the SMCMUA to complete the work on your water meter setup in the future without the need of making an appointment or entering your building or home.

The new meter pit will include a check valve. If the property owner does not have an expansion tank, required by current plumbing code, your hot water heater may leak once the check valve is installed.

The SMCMUA owns the water main and the service pipe up to the curb stop and the property owner owns the connecting pipe from the curb stop into the house. Therefore, it is the property owner's responsibility to maintain and replace their connecting pipe.

What are the connecting pipes made of?

Because of the age of the water system and lack of plumbing records we do not know what materials may have been used in each property's connection pipe. This is why we have to conduct the visual inspections inside your building or home. **Because these pipes can be up to 140 years old, it is possible that the construction materials could contain lead.** Examples of lead plumbing include lead pipe, lead goosenecks, and galvanized pipe that has a lead-containing zinc coating or that has been exposed to lead.

Why is SMCMUA conducting a plumbing inspection?

SMCMUA needs to know if your connecting pipe contains lead or if it is constructed out of galvanized materials.

- SMCMUA's licensed plumbing contractor, Cullen Plumbing, will inspect the portion of your connecting pipe that is visible on the inside of the building or home at no cost to you. If the plumbing inspection indicates that the section of the connecting pipe **inside the building or home** contains lead or is constructed of galvanized materials, then you as the owner can request SMCMUA to have our contractor replace the **full** connecting pipe as part of the main replacement project.

This replacement **WILL result in a cost to you as the owner of the property**; however, since the SMCMUA's contractor will be already mobilized for this work, the actual costs to you will likely be considerably less than if done separately. The SMCMUA will provide a cost for the replacement following the inspection and our Customer Service Division will then work with you to arrange a payment plan, if needed. Cullen Plumbing will make three (3) attempts to contact you, if no response is received then the inspection will not be completed.

- If **NO** lead or galvanized pipe are found inside the building or home, there is still a chance that lead or galvanized pipe may be identified at the time the contractor, REIVAX, is connecting the new meter in the meter pit to the buried portion of the your connecting pipe near the curb. If lead or galvanized materials are identified at this time, then the owner can **pre-authorize** SMCMUA to have the contractor replace the **entire length of** connecting pipe as part of the main replacement project.

In this case, the cost of the replacement work will be the owner's responsibility and will likely cost considerably less if performed by the SMCMUA's contractor than if separately scheduled and arranged by the owner. The SMCMUA will provide a cost before the work is commenced and our Customer Service Division can work with you to setup a payment plan, if needed.

How much will it cost to replace my connecting pipe?

SMCMUA's contractor will provide a cost proposal for replacing your connecting pipe in the event lead or galvanized materials are identified. No replacement work will be done unless and until approved by you.

Will I have to sign a contract to have the contractor replace my connecting pipe?

Yes, the SMCMUA will send an Agreement Form to the Property Owner. The form will outline what the contractor will do, the cost to the property owners, and any other property owner responsibilities. If you are a tenant, you will need to provide the agreement form to the property owner for authorization.

If you agree to have your connecting pipe replaced, the services included in the price are limited to:

- Excavation to install a new pipe where the old pipe will be left in place and will not be removed
- Restoration of grade line including reseeding of affected area, pavement and concrete restoration. The property owner will be responsible for watering the affected area once seeded.
- Items EXCLUDED from this cost that will not be provided by SMCMUA or SMCMUA's contractor and that will be provided by, and at the sole cost of, the property owner include:
 - Restoration of any retaining walls, pavers, etc.
 - Replacement of any landscaping such as lighting, plants, bushes, trees, etc.
 - Repair of interior walls and fixtures that may be damaged when installing the new pipe from the building edge to the existing meter.

Why is it so important to identify the water main service pipe and connecting pipe construction materials?

Lead is hazardous to human health, especially children. If the piping materials contain **lead**, either as the pure metal or as a coating or lead solder, the **lead** can enter the water and expose residents, tenants and or business patrons of the building to **lead** when the water is consumed. Removing the **lead** source, like lead plumbing, is the best way to lower the health risk of **lead** exposure.

For more information on lead in drinking water and public health concerns, check out the New Jersey Department of Health's Fact Sheet:
https://www.nj.gov/health/ceohs/documents/dw_lead_factsheet.pdf

If your connecting pipe from the curb stop to the water meter is determined to be constructed of **lead** material or **galvanized materials**, we strongly urge you to replace the connecting pipe – which you own – to reduce **lead** exposure. Galvanized pipe is a proven source of **lead**.

As part of the water main replacement project, our contractor will install a new service pipe from the new water main to the new water meter pit within the public right of way. If only this portion of the service line is replaced and the old **lead** or **galvanized pipe** remains in your section of the connecting pipe (between the curb stop and your water meter), there is an increased risk of lead exposure from the construction activities. This is why we strongly urge you to replace your connecting pipe in the event any lead or galvanized materials are identified.

Will water filters be provided?

SMCMUA will be providing water pitchers and filters to affected residents and tenants for use following connection of their service pipe to the new meter pit. Use of the water filter is recommended whether you replace the owner service pipe or not. Because the planned work on the water main, service pipe and your connecting pipe can stir up lead-containing solids, USEPA recommends using the filters for a period of six (6) months after these construction activities are completed. Flushing the tap and then installing a water filter, can help reduce your exposure to potential lead-containing solids that may be stirred up during the project. More information and instructions will be provided with the filters.

Why is a filter not required during normal water supply services?

The SMCMUA is in compliance with the USEPA's Lead and Copper Rule so filters are not required during normal operations.

What if the water pressure is different following the work??

SMCMUA will provide instructions on what you will need to do after the service pipe is connected to the water system, but in general you will be asked to flush all of your plumbing lines and fixtures inside your home.

Why is the water pressure different and how can I fix it?

If you experience a significant difference in water pressure after connecting to SMCMUA's new meter pit, please contact Customer Service so that we can schedule a service call.

Are there actions I can take to help maintain my water quality in my home on a regular basis?

- Flush your tap before using if the water has become stagnant
- Use only cold water for drinking and cooking
- Routinely clean faucet aerators and replace as needed
- Replace water filters as recommended by the manufacturer
- Install lead free plumbing and plumbing fixtures