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Lead Pipes and Water Testing

The Repairing Standard requires landlords to ensure that from 1 March 2024 the water supply in their private rented properties is free of lead pipes, lead lined storage tanks and fittings from the boundary stopcock to the kitchen tap.

The property must be lead free from the boundary stopcock to the kitchen tap. In more modern properties, the use of lead pipes was banned in 1969.

If the property was built prior to 1969, you can carry out a visual inspection of the pipework between the boundary stopcock and the kitchen tap to check for lead piping. If you are unsure about how to do this, then a plumber may be able to do it. Any lead piping must be removed.
If it's not possible to do a visual inspection, then a Lead Water Test can be done by an accredited laboratory. Water should be tested at cold water outlets between the boundary stopcock and the kitchen tap where water is frequently used for human consumption (drinking/cooking).

Most testing providers will recommend no further action if the content is at or below the statutory maximum of 10 micrograms/litre (note that this maximum level will reduce to 5 micrograms/litre in 2036).

If at any stage during the above process lead pipework or lead levels above 10 micrograms/litre are identified, tenants must be informed and should be provided with advice on how to minimise their exposure to lead.

Removing lead pipework
For properties connected to the public water supply, Scottish Water will replace any sections of lead in its part of the service pipe between the water main in the street and the boundary stop valve, which it must do free of charge.
The landlord is responsible for locating and removing any lead pipes in the sections of pipework which are not the responsibility of Scottish Water. The water should then be re-sampled to confirm that all lead has been removed.
In jointly owned buildings part of the water supply may be jointly owned. If so quotes for pipe replacement work should be obtained and you should consult other owners to see if they are in agreement to the work taking place. An exemption to the Repairing Standard duties applies if work otherwise needed to comply with the standard cannot be carried out because an insufficient number of co-owners have consented to the work taking place (check your title deeds for this - most require a majority of owners to be in agreement for the work to go ahead).
Tenants must be informed and should be provided with advice on how to minimise their exposure to lead.