



Leaking Water Service Line

Answers to frequently asked questions

The Village of Oak Park
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How does the Village know there is a water leak?

The Village of Oak Park is constantly checking the municipal water system using equipment that can detect the sound of a leaking water pipe. When the equipment picks up the noise that indicates a leak in a service supply line, the shutoff valve in the parkway is closed to confirm the location. If the noise remains, the leak is the responsibility of the Village. If the noise stops after the shutoff valve is closed, the leak is on the owner's portion of the service line.

Why do I have to fix a leak?

The Village of Oak Park purchases water from the City of Chicago. Water lost through a leak increases the cost of water for all users in the community. Village ordinance requires a property owner to have a water service leak repaired or risk loss of water service until repairs are made.

Do I need a permit to fix a water leak?

Yes. A plumbing permit is required to repair a water service line. Permits applications may be submitted in person at Village Hall, 123 Madison St., or applied for online at www.oak-park.us/villageview. Permit fees typically are waived if the property owner presents the leak notification letter from the Village. If you have questions, contact the Permits Processing Division at 708.358.5430.

Will the Village recommend a plumber?

No, the Village cannot recommend contractors. However, all contractors are required to register with the Village. You can determine if a specific contractor is properly registered online at www.oak-park.us/villageview.

Do I need to let the Public Works Department know about the repair?

Yes. Contact the Public Works Department at 708.358.5700 between 7:30 a.m. and 4 p.m., Monday through Friday to advise of when the repairs are scheduled to be made by a bonded and licensed plumbing contractor. The Village will work with the contractor to help find the leak. Please note, only Village of Oak Park employees are authorized to turn the main shutoff valve.

Should I replace the entire service line?

Replacement of the entire service line is recommended, although the pipe material could determine the extent of the project. Iron pipes almost always will need to be replaced because of their tendency to corrode. Old service lines also could be made of lead, which is a major source of lead contamination in the water supply of older homes like those in Oak Park.

What material should be used to repair a leaking water service line?

A licensed plumbing contractor will know the materials required by Village code. In general, a water service line must be a continuous one-inch diameter minimum Type K copper tubing. Lines in larger buildings may need to be up to two inches in diameter, depending on the number of fixtures in the structure. A service line larger than two inches should be Class 52 ductile iron.

Does the Village offer any financial assistance?

The Village of Oak Park does have limited funds available for lead abatement. Residential customers who elect to replace the entire service line should contact the Public Works Department to determine if they may qualify for financial assistance.

Is the water safe to drink before the system is repaired?

The quality of the water cannot be assured once a leak becomes large enough to be detected. Pressure fluctuations within the building could cause mud and silt at the point of the leak to be washed back into the service line and contaminate the water in the house.

Should water be boiled before it is consumed?

Yes. If you receive a notice of a water leak, you should boil your water for at least five minutes before it is consumed. Public health officials also recommend discarding ice cubes or any stored liquids made from tap water that may have become contaminated as a result of the leak.

What about lead in a water service line?

Given the age of most homes in Oak Park, the water service line may contain lead. While complete replacement of a service line containing lead is recommended, the Village will allow a repair because of the significant cost of complete replacement. Please keep in mind that when pipes containing lead are disturbed such as during a repair, higher concentrations of lead may be present in the home's water supply for up to six months. Lead levels can increase while water is idle in pipes for long periods such as overnight. Homeowners are urged to run the tap for five minutes before use to flush stagnant water from the plumbing system. More information on lead in drinking water is posted online at www.epa.gov/lead.

**Questions? Call the Public Works Department
at 708.358.5700 or email publicworks@oak-park.us**