

Water Leaks

Code of Practice

Open Water



Water is a precious resource, and it is in all our interests to ensure that we use it wisely.

Reducing water loss, repairing leaks on our mains and preventing bursts are a top priority for us. With our specialist teams working day and night to check for hidden leaks in our underground pipes.

However, some of the water lost comes from customers' own pipework. Fixing leaks has many benefits; it saves customers money on their bills, it's better for the environment and water leaking from pipes can damage roads and the foundations of buildings, so it's in everyone's interest to prevent and repair leaks quickly.

if you spot or suspect a leak please let us know by calling **0800 260 5051** between 8am and 6pm or **0800 260 5053** between 6pm and 8am.

This leaflet explains:

- what to do if you have a leak at your property
- who is responsible for fixing it
- and when you might be entitled to an allowance.



Who's responsible for fixing water leaks?

Our water mains and pipes

We're normally responsible for all pipework to the boundary of the street where our water main is laid. This includes:

- Water mains;
- Stop taps in the road or pavement;
- Pipework between the main and the boundary of the street, known as the communication pipe.

We look after our own water mains and our communication pipes, undertaking regular maintenance and repairs. We also have an extensive programme to replace old mains in poor condition to reduce the number of leaks and bursts.

Your water supply and internal pipes

You're responsible for:

- Your private supply pipe, which is the pipe that connects onto our communication pipe and runs into your home or business premises; and
- All of your internal pipework and fittings.

You're responsible for the entire length of the supply pipe from your property to the boundary of the street in which our main is laid (or to the main itself if our main isn't laid in the street), even though it may pass through other people's property or land.

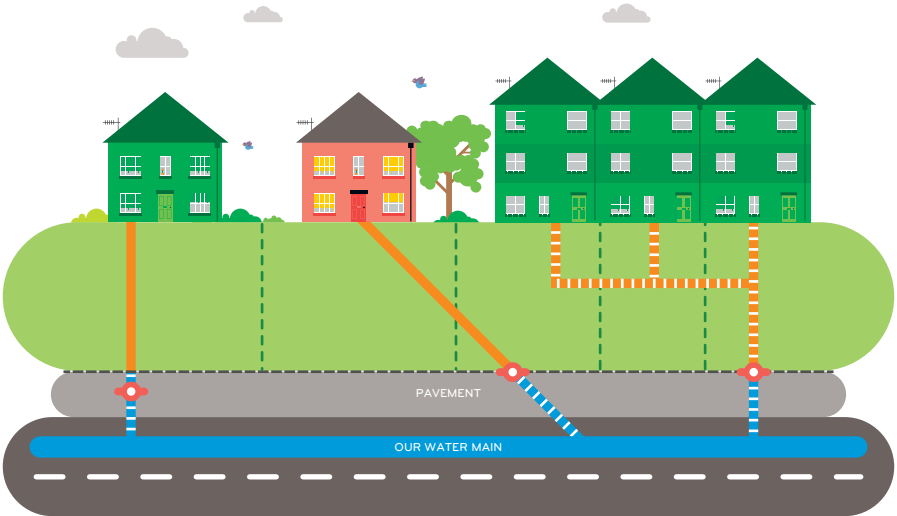
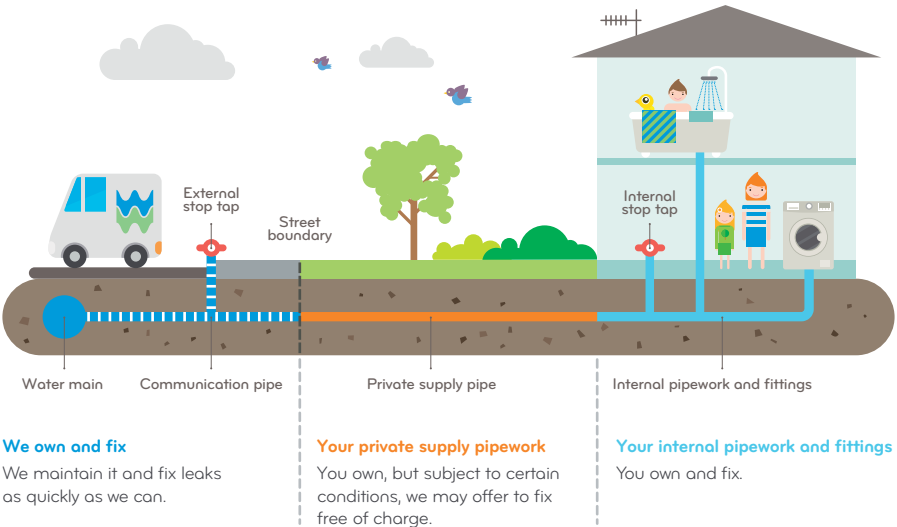
If your property is some distance from our water main it's likely you'll have a very long supply pipe and in some cases you may share responsibility for the supply pipe with neighbouring properties. If you have any queries about your pipework responsibility, please call us on **0800 260 5051**.

If you have reduced water pressure, see damp or waterlogged areas outside in dry weather, hear noisy pipework or receive an unusually high metered bill, you may have a leak.

You can find guidance at **dwrcymru.com** on how you can test for leaks.

We recommend you check that your insurance policy covers all your pipework and fittings.

Household



Our responsibility

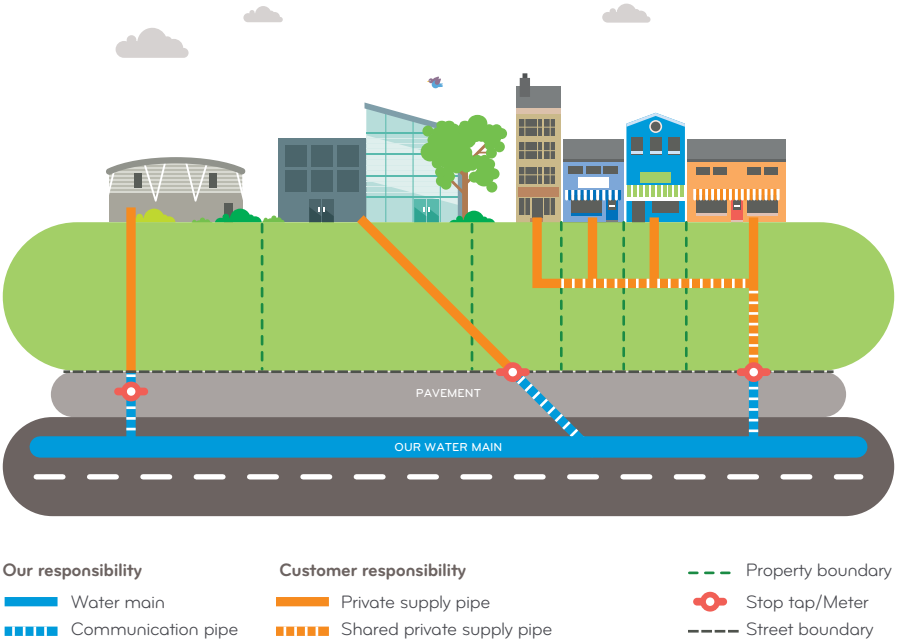
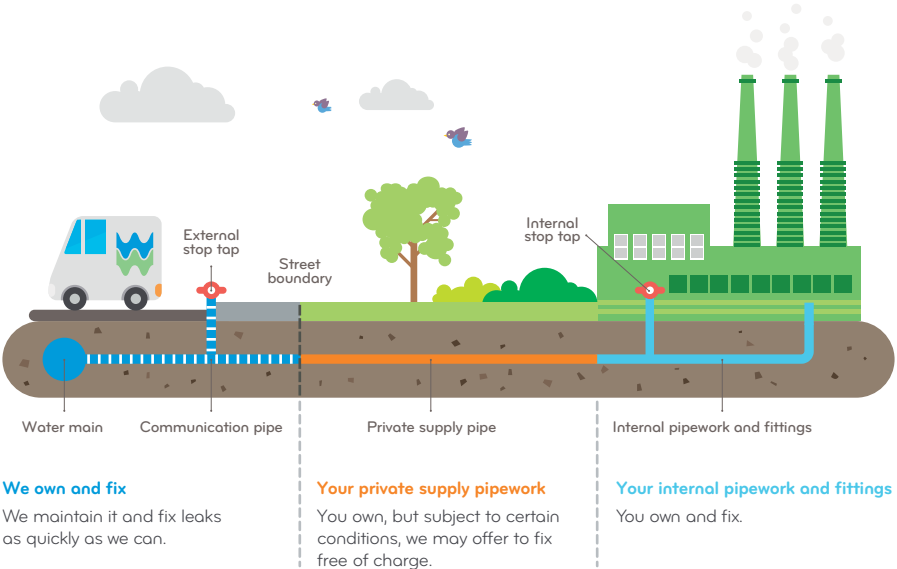
- Water main
- Communication pipe

Customer responsibility

- Private supply pipe
- Shared private supply pipe

- Property boundary
- Stop tap/Meter
- Street boundary

Non-Household





Finding leaks

On our water mains and pipes

We've an extensive 24 hour programme in place to detect leaks on our water mains and pipes. We also rely on you to let us know if you see a leak in the road, on a pavement or anywhere else.

We repair leaks on the water mains and pipes that belong to us as soon as we can and replace pipes in poor condition, as part of our ongoing maintenance programme. Although we make every effort to repair leaks quickly, we must ensure we work safely and we may need to gain permission from the Highway Authority before we can work on a footpath or road.

On your water supply pipe and internal pipes

If we suspect or find that you have a leak on your supply we'll tell you about it.

If you receive an unusually high metered bill, this may indicate that you have a leak.

If your property has a water meter, we recommend taking regular meter readings (if it is safe to do so).

If your meter is external you can also carry out a simple test to check for leakage on your supply pipe by following these instructions:

- Turn off your stop tap in the home (usually under the kitchen sink)
- Check the flow of water has stopped at the kitchen cold tap
- Read the meter (if it is safe to do so)
- Leave the stop tap shut and then read the meter again in half an hour.

The meter dial should not have moved, as you haven't been using any water.

If it has moved, there may be a leak between the meter and the stop tap in your house.

If you think there is a leak on your household supply pipe, internal pipes or if your meter is located inside your property, call us on **0800 260 5051**. We'll arrange to visit and let you know what we can do to help you get the leak fixed.

It's important that all leaks are repaired as quickly as possible.

Remember, you are responsible for making sure that the supply pipe is maintained and repaired if a leak occurs.



What happens if I have a leak?

It's your legal responsibility to fix any leaks on your water supply pipe and internal pipework and fittings within 30 calendar days of the date we notify you of the leak.

If this isn't done, we may refer the case to our Legal team who will contact you to take further action.

We offer differing levels of support depending on where your leak is:

Leaks on your water supply pipe

Although it is your responsibility to fix your leaking water supply pipe, we will help you as much as we can through the process.

For Household customers we will try our best to pinpoint the leak for you, as long as:

- The leak is on your external supply pipe
- We can establish where your supply pipe runs
- The leak is large enough to be pinpointed with our team's leakage detection equipment
- The leak is not on part of your supply pipe that is under your property, a wall, shed, garage or any type of structure.

For Non Household customers we may be able to assist in providing guidance on how to locate any leaks.

Unfortunately there may be times when we can't locate the leak for you. When this happens we will explain why and suggest what you need to do next.

If you have historically had problems with leaks on your water supply pipe, it may be that your pipe is in poor condition and in this case, we would strongly recommend you replace the pipe to avoid problems in the future.

Leak Support Scheme

Our Leak Support Scheme is only available for customers who own and occupy their property and is not available to properties that are rented to a third-party or business properties.

You may be entitled to support via our Leak Support Scheme which includes:

- A financial contribution towards a repair
- A financial contribution towards a new supply pipe, with a free reconnection or new connection to our main, if you are on a joint supply.

All payments are made on confirmation by Welsh Water that the leak has been repaired, and the supply is considered "leak free". This is a one-off payment per supply pipe, and we will require proof of payment, so please keep any relevant receipts and invoices.

For more information and advice on the financial contributions we can offer, visit **dwrcymru.com/support**. If the cause of the leak is a leaky loo, we may be able to assist through our Cartref programme.

Fittings inside your property

If we identify the waste of water from your internal pipework or fittings, we'll give you advice about getting the leak fixed. We'll also give or send you documentation with more information.

To find your nearest contractor or plumber that can help we recommend you visit either:

WaterSafe

watersafe.org.uk
0333 207 9030

Water Industry Approved Plumbers Scheme

wras.co.uk
01495 244 666

Household customers can also access our Leaky Loo scheme where we may be able to repair a leak on your toilet free of charge more information can be found at **dwrcymru.com**.



Allowances

If you have a water meter your bills will be based on the volume of water the meter records including any water wasted or lost through leaks from your pipework.

If the leak is our responsibility we will cancel any additional water and sewerage charges.

If the leak was your responsibility we may offer an allowance against your charges where you have had a leak.

When am I eligible for an allowance?

You are eligible for an allowance if:

- You are the owner/occupier, the landlord or the tenant who pays the bill.
- You have a water meter.
- You have repaired the leak within 30 calendar days of being notified of the leak where there is no further assistance we can offer.
- You let us know within 6 months of the date of repair.
- The leak wasn't caused through negligence.
- You haven't been given an allowance at the same property within the previous 2 years.
- We haven't referred the matter to our Legal team.
- The leak was on your external supply pipe and not on internal fittings.

If you don't meet the above criteria but think you should get an allowance, contact us and we'll consider your individual circumstances.

If eligible, what allowance will I get?

If you're a household customer, household customer in a non-household property used as a domestic dwelling only (e.g. farm with no livestock), microbusiness (10 or fewer employees) or a registered charity you will receive an allowance for both the water and sewerage charges for the water lost through the leak, this will also apply where we bill sewerage charges on behalf of another company.

If you're a non-household customer who does not meet the criteria above then you will receive an allowance for the sewerage charges for the water lost through the leak where water lost due to leakage has not returned to the sewer.

Any allowance will be backdated for a maximum of 12 months prior to the date the leak was repaired.

How is the allowance calculated?

We will reassess your charges on the basis of your normal water usage taking into account, if applicable any seasonal variations in use.

If we are unable to use your past usage to assess the allowance we may need to use readings following the leak repair.



Frequently asked questions

Why aren't I eligible for an allowance if I don't have a water meter?

You pay a set annual charge which isn't based on your actual water usage so the leak hasn't impacted your charges. However, it's really important to repair the leak to avoid us taking further action.

What happens if Welsh Water is responsible for the leak?

If the leak is our responsibility we will cancel any charges for the water lost as well as any related sewerage charges.

What happens if a leak is identified when my meter is installed?

When a meter is installed for the first time, undetected leaks may be identified. If a leak is found on the supply pipe during the meter fit, we will advise you of the options available to you. Metered charging will not start until the leak has been repaired. If a leak is identified on the first reading following the installation of the meter we will apply an appropriate allowance once the leak has been repaired.

What if my meter serves two or more properties?

If the leak is on a supply pipe that serves multiple properties, we will apportion the allowance against each property type. For example, if 75% of water used is at a household and non-household microbusiness and 25% at a larger non household property, a water and sewerage allowance will be awarded for 75% of the total "leakage" charges and a sewerage only allowance will be granted for the remaining 25%.

What if I'm not satisfied with my allowance?

If you think your allowance should be more than we have given you, please let us know using the details on our get in touch page and provide the reasoning for this. We'll carry out a further review and let you know our decision.



Using water wisely

We all need water, but there are some really simple ways to reduce the amount you use.

Household

Leaky loos

A leaky loo can flush hundreds of pounds down the drain each year. If your toilet bowl is constantly trickling with water then you may have a leak. Visit the link below to see how we may be able to help.

dwrcymru.com/cartref

Hose pipes

Fit a trigger gun to control the flow, otherwise you can use as much water in one hour as a family uses in a whole day.

Rainwater

Collect it in a water butt and use it to water your garden or wash the car.

Dripping taps

Fit new washers as soon as possible.

Showers and baths

Have a shower rather than a bath, as this will use much less water (unless you have a power shower).

Appliances

Wait until you have a full load before you use your washing machine or dishwasher, and if you're looking for a new one, choose a water-efficient model as you'll save both water and energy.

Non Household

Fix leaking taps and overflows

Check remotely located buildings and pipe work so that leaks don't go unnoticed.

Check that all water using devices, such as toilets, urinals and ball valves are working correctly.

Constant flushing of urinals and dripping taps can increase water consumption.

Use pipe insulation so that your pipes aren't at risk of freezing and splitting in cold weather.

Reduce water for toilet flushing

Insert displacement devices in the cistern.

Where dual-flush cisterns are installed, place a clearly visible notice to explain how to operate both flushes to prevent incorrect operation and wastage.

New toilets may have overflows or leaks that discharge directly into the pan which may not be noticed or reported. Identify toilets with internal overflows and regularly check for discharge.

Buy water efficient equipment

Specify low water consumption requirements for any new appliances or fittings or processes.

High pressure spray jetters can use less water than conventional hoses as they use pressure instead of a large volume of water to clean.

Review water usage once a year and produce plans to reduce consumption.

Educate all staff on water efficiency initiatives and get support from management.

Look at how to incorporate initiatives into your wider environmental policy.

Visit our website to find further tips to help you reduce the amount of water you use.

dwrcymru.com/savewater



The legal bit

You may not be aware that a water leak is classified as an offence under Section 73 of the Water Industry Act 1991 (WIA 1991). This means that if you don't get the leak fixed, we can prosecute you for allowing your water fittings to be, or remain, in a defective condition. The maximum fine is £1,000.

Here are the full details of Section 73:

"If any person who is the owner or occupier of any premises to which a supply of water is provided by a water undertaker intentionally or negligently causes or suffers any water fitting for which he is responsible to be or remain so out of order, so in need of repair or so constructed or adapted, or to be so used that water so supplied is or is likely to be wasted or, having regard to the purposes for which it is supplied, misused or unduly consumed that person shall be guilty of an offence and liable, on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level 3 on the standard scale".

Leaks don't just waste water; they can also damage properties and gardens. This is why it's important to get the leak fixed as quickly as possible and why we have to set a time limit on getting everything sorted. This is 30 calendar days from the date you were made aware of the leak.

If the leak isn't repaired within 30 calendar days, we will refer the matter to our Legal team who will take further action to address the waste of water. This could include: serving legal notice to repair leaks where possible and recharging the cost to you - section 75(2)(b) of the WIA 1991 gives us the authority to do this; prosecuting for the waste of water or any faulty water fittings; and, in the case of a shared supply, serve a legal notice insisting that the properties install separate supply pipes within a 3 month period.

In emergencies, for example where the leak is freezing across a public highway or causing damage to a property, we might need to disconnect your supply pipe.

We only do this when absolutely necessary and as a last resort. This is in accordance with Section 75(2)(a) of the WIA 1991.

It's important we let you know that as well as being classified as an offence under the WIA 1991, any water fittings which allow water to be wasted are in breach of the Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations 1999 which is also an offence and has a maximum fine of £1,000.

If any of the water fittings are found to be defective, we will serve you with an infringement notice giving you a set period in which to repair or replace them. If you fail to do so within the time limit you may be prosecuted. Sometimes we may need access to your property to inspect the pipes and fittings or carry out works. Hopefully this won't be a problem, but if access is not permitted to the property, we may need to apply for a Warrant of Entry from a Magistrates Court.

We really hope that we won't have to apply any of the above. However, we feel it is important that we let you know what could happen if you don't arrange for a leak at your property to be fixed.



Get in touch

Business Customer Team

Welsh Water's dedicated point of contact for Open Water customers



0800 260 5051

Monday-Friday – 8am-6pm



0800 260 5053

Out of hours emergency contact



bct@dwrcymru.com



dwrcymru.com/openwater



Business Customer Team
PO Box 3162 Cardiff
CF30 0FD