

Leakage

Code of Practice for Household Customers



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

We are committed to ensuring the efficient use of water and to reduce leakage. Reducing water loss, repairing leaks on our mains and preventing bursts are a top priority for us. We have specialist teams working day and night to check for hidden leaks in our underground pipes. Over the last 20 years we have succeeded in reducing the amount of water lost through leaks by 50%.

However, some of the water lost comes from customers' own pipework, and if customers have a leak and they are metered, they may be paying for water they haven't used. Fixing leaks has other benefits; 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. Efficient use of water also helps protect the environment and keeps bills low.

If you spot or suspect a leak please let us know by calling **0800 052 0130**; it's free of charge and open 24 hours a day.

This leaflet is for you if your property is household or has mixed use (part household/part business). It explains what to do if you have a leak at your property, who is responsible for fixing it and, if you have a meter, when you might be entitled to an allowance for water lost through leakage.



Responsibility for water pipes

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:

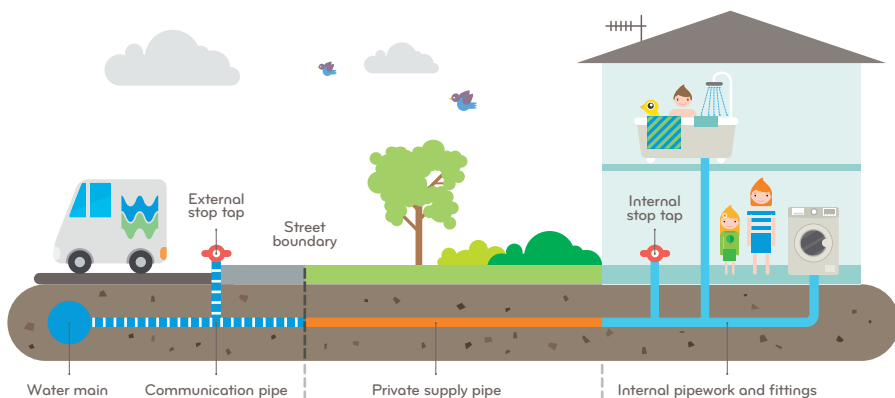
- Water mains;
- Stop taps in the road or pavement;
- Pipework between the main and the boundary of the street, known as the communication pipe.

These are usually displayed on maps of our pipes which you can see free of charge at our Linea Offices, Fortran Road, St Mellons, Cardiff CF3 0LT.

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.

It is important to know which pipes you are responsible for and which we look after.

If you have any queries about your pipework responsibility, please call us on **0800 052 0130**.



We own and fix

We maintain it and fix leaks as quickly as we can.

Your private supply pipework

You own, but subject to certain conditions, we may offer to fix free of charge.

Your internal pipework and fittings

You own and fix.

Your water supply and internal pipes

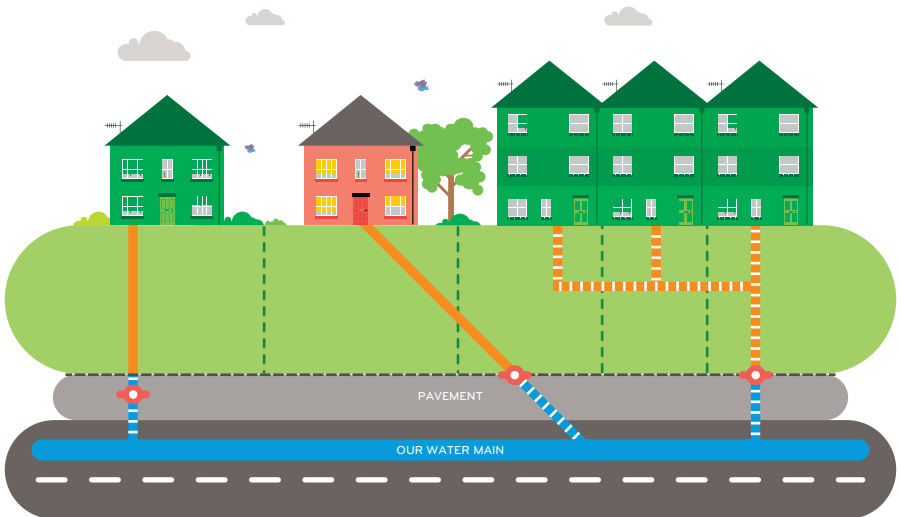
You're responsible for:

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

If you live in a house that is some distance from our water main, it's likely you'll have a very long supply pipe.

Please remember, you're responsible for the entire length of the supply pipe from your house 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.

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



Our responsibility

- Water main
- Communication pipe

Customer responsibility

- Private supply pipe
- Shared private supply pipe

Property boundary

- Stop tap/Meter
- Street boundary



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.

On your water supply pipe and internal pipes

When looking for leaks, we may find a leak on one of your external pipes. If we do we'll tell you about it and we may be able to help get the leak repaired to stop the waste of water.

If you experience reduced water pressure or flow at your cold kitchen tap, you see damp or waterlogged areas in your garden even during spells of dry weather, hear noisy pipework, or receive an unusually high metered bill, you may have a leak.

If your property has a water meter, take regular meter readings (if it is safe to do so) and look for any significant and unexpected increase in your use of water that may indicate a possible leak.

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

- Turn off your stop tap in the home (usually under the kitchen sink)
- Make sure no cisterns are filling or taps are being used
- Check the flow of water has stopped at the kitchen cold tap
- Read the meter
- 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 052 0130**. 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.



Fixing leaks

On our water mains and pipes

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

You can visit **[dwrcymru.com](https://www.dwrcymru.com)** 24 hours a day to check current incidents and anything that may be happening in your area.

On your water supply pipes

Even though it's your responsibility to fix a leaking water supply pipe, we sometimes offer to replace your supply pipe free of charge so we can stop the waste of water. This applies to any household property owner and household properties with a shared/common supply pipe (not blocks of flats).

It includes external supply pipes that serve more than one household and in general we may be able to help if:

- The leak is on your external supply pipe.
- Your supply pipe is no more than 100 metres in length and 32mm in diameter.
- The leaking supply pipe is no more than 1.35 metres deep.
- The leak is not under any form of structure or building.

If we can't replace the pipe we may be able to carry out a repair instead.

It's important for you to know that:

- If we can't locate the leak after our second visit you will have to appoint a plumber or contractor of your choice to investigate further.
- We offer one free replacement or repair once every three years.
- Our work is guaranteed for up to a year and is unlikely to fail. If the repair does fail, we will in most cases carry out the repair again. If the pipe leaks in a different place then we will probably recommend that you replace the pipe at your cost.

— If we have to dig underneath your footpath or driveway, we'll restore the surface so that it's safe for you to use. Please understand, that we're unable to undertake specialist work, for example relay block or crazy paving. In these instances, you'll need to make your own arrangements to restore your surface to its original condition at your own cost.

If you decide not to take up our free offer of repair or replacement and make your own arrangements, you'll be responsible for paying all costs.

If you arrange for your own contractor to do the work, this must be done within 30 calendar days of the date we confirmed the leak. If this isn't done, we'll refer the case to our Legal team who will contact you to outline your legal responsibilities and take further action to address the waste of water. Please take time to read the legal notice on page 11.

On fittings inside your home

If you're the owner of the property you're responsible for fixing any leakage or wastage from the pipework or fittings inside your property.

Under Section 73 of the Water Industry Act 1991 it's a criminal offence to waste water. This includes any intentional cause or negligence for water supplied by us to be wasted or misused.

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 a leakage pack which outlines your legal responsibilities and asks you to complete the repair within 30 calendar days.

Of course we would prefer that all leaks are repaired to avoid legal action, so it's important you understand your legal responsibilities as outlined on page 11.

To find your nearest contractor/plumber we recommend you visit either:

WaterSafe

Web: watersafe.org.uk
Call: 0333 207 9030

Water Industry Approved Plumbers Scheme

Web: wras.co.uk
Call: 01495 248 540



Allowances

If you don't have a water meter

As you pay a set annual charge for all your water usage, we don't need to adjust your charges for any water lost through a leaking supply pipe, as your annual bill remains the same. However, it's really important to repair the leak to avoid us taking further action.

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 charges for the water lost as well as any related sewerage charges.

If the leak is your responsibility, we will give the same leakage allowance to the person who pays the bill.

There may be certain conditions that apply and we will discuss these with the bill payer.

If the leak was caused by negligence then no allowance will be given.

Installing a meter

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, and it can be repaired without any additional

excavation, we will repair it immediately. If it is not possible to repair the leak without additional excavation, we will advise you of the options available to you. Metered charging will not start until the leak has been repaired.

Accuracy of meters

Our water meters are manufactured and tested to British Standard specification. However, if you think your water meter isn't accurate, please visit dwrcymru.com to let us know. We will investigate and if necessary replace the meter. The new meter will then be used to charge you for your water use from the date it was fitted. We will discuss bill adjustments with you as appropriate.

We can arrange for an independent company to test your old meter and there is a charge of £70 for this.

If the meter is found to be inaccurate we will refund this cost. However, we recommend that you first refer to our document 'Where does your water go?'

Claiming leakage allowances

If you have a water meter and are the owner/occupier, the landlord or the tenant who pays the bill, you'll be eligible for a leak allowance once your supply pipe has been repaired or replaced, as long as:

- It's repaired within 30 calendar days of the leak being confirmed.
- You make a claim for an allowance 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 3 years.
- We haven't referred the matter to our Legal team because the leak was not repaired within 30 calendar days.
- The leak was on your external supply pipe and not on internal fittings.

The allowance is applied per customer per property in a 3 year period. This means that if you're granted an allowance at your current address, it doesn't prevent you from claiming an allowance for your new property if you move home. Similarly, if we've replaced or repaired your supply pipe and it leaks within the guaranteed period, we'll make an additional allowance if you claim.

If you don't meet the above criteria for an allowance but feel there are exceptional circumstances, please get in touch and we'll consider your claim on its own merits.

Calculating leakage allowances

Where we agree to give an allowance, we'll reassess your water charges on the basis of your normal water consumption. This only applies to household customers. If you also pay sewerage charges and we adjust your water charges because of a leak we

will make a similar adjustment to your sewerage charges. This will also apply where we bill sewerage charges on behalf of another company.

If your property has its own water supply and meter, calculation of an allowance is straightforward. The adjustment of your water and sewerage charges will be based on comparing how much water you used in the past with the amount of water recorded by the meter during the time you had a leak.

The allowance applied to your charges will be the difference between the two amounts. If there's no record of past use, an adjustment will be made based on typical water use for a similar household property. This calculation will be based on your property size and number of occupants.

Where the leak is on your supply pipe delivering water to both commercial and domestic areas of your property, for example a shop with a flat above, a water allowance will be granted on the domestic (household) element of the bill only.

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

If, after we have adjusted your bill, you don't feel the allowance truly reflects the difference between the amounts of water you normally use and the amount recorded due to the leak, please let us know. We'll carry out a further review and let you know our decision.



Using water wisely

On average you'll use over 1,000 litres of water every week, but there are some really simple ways to reduce your water use.

Here are some easy ways to keep that amount as low as possible.

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 then use it to water your garden or to 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).

Household 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.

Visit our Water Efficiency page to find further tips to help you reduce the amount of water you use. You will also be able to choose from our range of high quality water saving products to help you reduce your household water use.

dwcymru.com/waterefficiency



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.

Details of Section 73 are provided below if you wish to read them:

"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. Section 75(2)(b) of the WIA 1991 gives us the authority to do this.

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; 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 also in breach of the Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations 1999 which has a maximum fine of £1,000.

Sometimes we may need access to your property to inspect the pipes and fittings. 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. 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.

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 about the legal bits and what could happen if you don't arrange for a leak at your property to be fixed.



Get in touch



dwrcymru.com

It's easier to do most things online — pay your bill, sign up for online billing, change your details or to check what's going on in your area.



Clean water

0800 052 0130 (24 hour)

Spot a leaking pipe?

0800 281 432



Waste water

0800 085 3968 (24 hour)



Money

Pay your bill

0800 028 5209

(24 hour automated payment line)

Question about your account?

0800 052 0145

(Monday-Friday 8am-8pm, Saturday 8.30am-1.30pm)

Hearing or speech difficulties

Phone us on 18001 followed
by the relevant number

Are you a landlord?

If you let out a property where services are supplied by us, there are new Welsh Government regulations that apply to you. You must:

- tell us when there is a change of tenancy at any of your properties within 21 days of the change.
- provide full tenancy details including full name, address, date of birth (where you hold it) and the dates any new tenants have been occupying the property.

You can give us this information:

- through our website **dwrcymru.com**
- online at **landlordtap.com**
- by calling us on **0800 052 5842**

If you don't let us know these details, you could become responsible for charges.

Bogus callers

All of our staff carry an identity card. If you're in any doubt about the identity of a caller, call our helpline on **0800 281 141**.

If the person becomes in any way pushy, then call the police immediately.

For the latest news:



@dwrcymru



/dwrcymruwelshwater