



What to do if you spot a leak

Household customers

What to do when you spot a leak

We're very grateful to all our customers who tell us about leaks on our water network. With just under 10,000 miles of water pipes to look after, your help means that we can locate and fix leaks faster. Thank you.

This leaflet outlines which pipework we're responsible for fixing, and which pipes lie in your care. It also explains how to spot a leak, what to do and how we'll support you.



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Responsibility for pipework

Typically, you'll be responsible for all the pipework inside your home and the underground supply pipe to the point where it reaches your street boundary. The water main itself, and the communication pipe leading from the main up until your street boundary is our responsibility.

Sometimes the main isn't laid in the street that borders your property. In these instances, you're responsible for all underground pipework to the boundary of the street where the water main is laid.

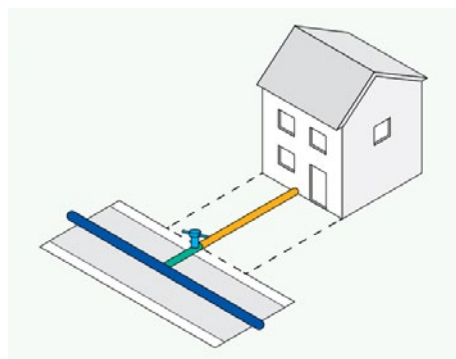
If you live in a house set back quite far from the street, or from the water main, you'll have a very long supply pipe. You're responsible for all of it, even if it passes through other people's property.

Your home may also share its supply pipe with others. In this case, you, and the neighbours you share it with, have joint responsibility for the sections of pipe you share. You alone have responsibility for the section of pipe that feeds into your property only.

It can be tricky to figure out who's responsible for what, so if you need some guidance, please call our Services Team on 0344 346 2020 or visit our website: www.southwestwater.co.uk/pipes

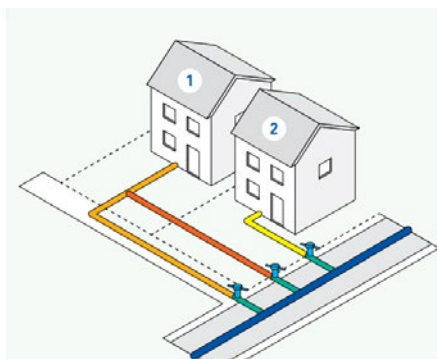
Reporting a leak

To let us know about a leak, wherever you've found it, please call our Services Team on 0344 346 2020 or visit: southwestwater.co.uk/leaks



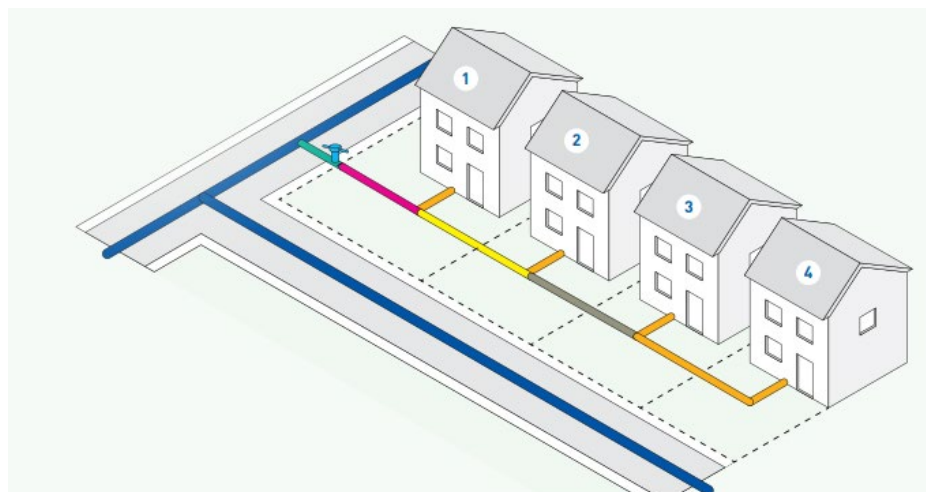
Key:

- Water main [our responsibility]
- Communication pipe [our responsibility]
- Supply pipe (homeowner's responsibility)
- Stop tap or stop tap and water meter [our responsibility]
- Premises boundary



Key:

- Water main [our responsibility]
- Communication pipe [our responsibility]
- Supply pipe (homeowner 2 responsibility)
- Supply pipe (homeowner 1 responsibility)
- Alternative scenario supply pipe (homeowner 1 responsibility if applicable)
- Stop tap or stop tap and water meter [our responsibility]
- Premises boundary



General key:

- Water main [our responsibility]
- Communication pipe [our responsibility]
- Stop tap or stop tap and water meter [our responsibility]
- Premises boundary

Homeowner responsibilities:

- Individual supply pipes (homeowners 1-4 individually responsible)
- Joint supply pipes (homeowners 1-4 responsible)
- Joint supply pipe (homeowners 2-4 responsible)
- Joint supply pipe (homeowners 3-4 responsible)

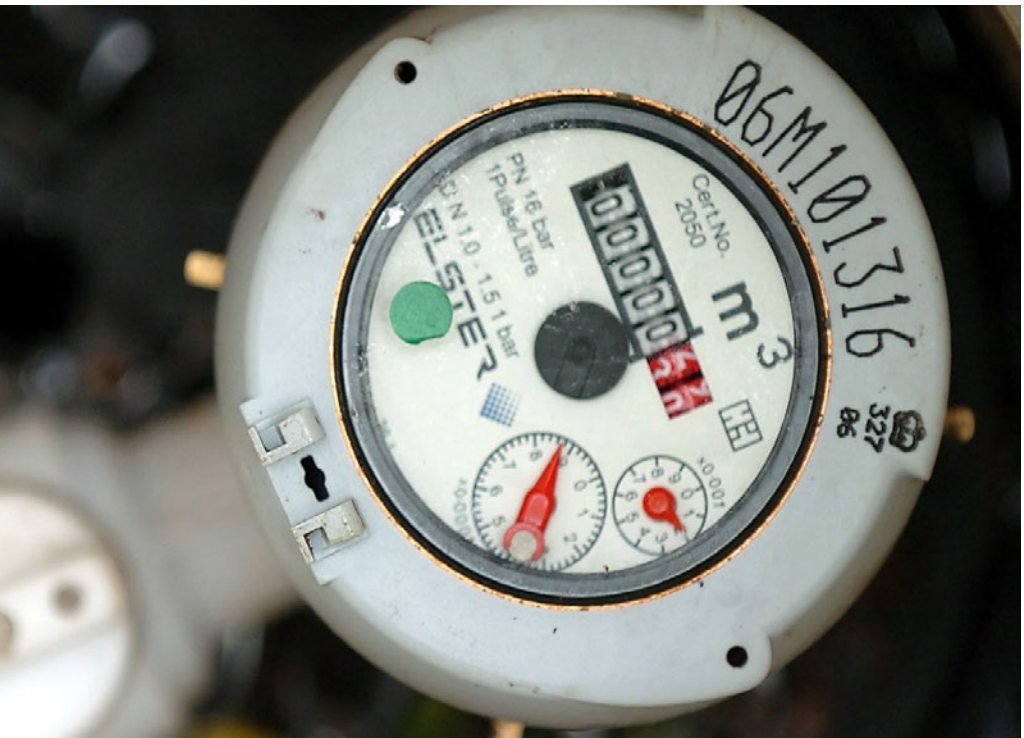
Possible signs of a leak

When a leak is underground it might not be so obvious above ground.

Patches of lush vegetation during dry spells

Higher than normal meter readings

A bill showing higher than normal water use



Is it a leak?

To confirm if you have a leak

1. Read your meter and take note of the reading (all digits)
2. Turn off all water-using appliances in your house for a couple of hours
3. Check the meter again – if the dials have moved, you probably have a leak.

Note: If you have an internal storage tank, there may be water still coming into your property as it's filling. To check, take several meter readings throughout the test – the dial should stop moving once the water tank is full. If it continues to move, and you know the tank is full, you probably have a leak.

Inside or outside?

1. Read your meter and take note of the reading
2. Turn off all water-using appliances
3. Turn off your internal stop tap (usually located beneath the kitchen sink)
4. Check the meter again – if the dials still move, the leak is probably on your underground supply pipe.

What to do when a leak is your responsibility

Repair or replace?

We strongly recommend that you consider replacing your supply pipe if it begins to leak.

It may be more practical and cost-effective to do this because some older pipes can be in pretty poor condition.

This means repairing one leak may disturb the pipe and cause it to leak somewhere else. Galvanised iron or black alkathene plastic pipes are most at risk of springing multiple leaks like this.

By who?

We recommend you use plumbers approved by the Water Regulations Advisory Scheme (WRAS) and WaterSafe. They'll know all the approved materials for fixing and replacing pipes.

You can find links to these websites at:

[www.southwestwater.co.uk/
find-a-plumber](http://www.southwestwater.co.uk/find-a-plumber)

By when?

If the leak is on your supply pipe, we usually allow 30 days for it to be repaired.

In some circumstances, we issue a 10-day notice to have a leak repaired.

What happens if you don't repair it

We're working hard to reduce leakage across our region.

Not only does this mean we can meet our targets set by Ofwat, but repairing leaks means your bills can stay as low as possible. At the end of the day, water escaping from a leak is a costly loss of a valuable resource.

So, if we know that there's a leak on your pipework, we'll ask you to repair it and usually allow 30 days for you to do so.

If you do not, and haven't contacted us to explain why, we may have to do one, or more, of the following:

- Carry out the repair ourselves and charge you for the service
- Serve legal notice requiring the repair to be completed
- In cases where the escaping water may cause damage to property or danger to others, we can turn off the supply until the repair is carried out.

Tenants

If there's a leak anywhere on your property, please let your landlord know straight away. They should be responsible for fixing it.

How we'll help if you have a leak

Contributions towards the cost of repair and replacement

Any help we give you is under the condition that you repair/replace your pipework within 30 days of becoming aware of the leak. We'll also ask you to send us an invoice for any work carried out.

Repair/partial replacement of pipe

We'll contribute up to £100 towards the cost.

Full replacement

We'll contribute up to £250 towards the cost.

Important: These contributions are 'once only', meaning we won't provide a contribution towards a replacement if we've previously contributed towards the cost of a repair. We'll only contribute once during your ownership of the property.

If the leak is on a joint supply pipe, we'll make an appropriate contribution to all households who have had to pay towards the repair.

Remember

If the leak is inside your home, we don't get involved. We won't be able to help you or cover any costs of the repair/replacement, nor will you be entitled to a leak allowance.

Leak Allowances (Metered customers only)

If you have a leak, your meter will register the higher usage of water. Usually, our meter readers will spot that and alert you to the fact that there could be a leak. It's your responsibility to look into it once they have suggested this.

The higher read will also mean you receive a higher-than-normal bill, and you'll be paying for water that you haven't used, because it's being wasted through the leak in your pipe.

That's why we've set up a leak allowance for both water and sewerage charges so that you don't pay any more than usual.

To qualify for this allowance, you must stop the leak by repairing or replacing the pipework within 30 days of our contact with you, or within 30 days of receiving the bill that shows the higher-than-normal usage, whichever comes first.

We'll then provide an allowance for the water lost between the last two scheduled meter readings and adjust your water charges based on your normal consumption. Sometimes, there's no record of your previous consumption, so in that case, we'll take a meter reading after the leak is fixed and base an allowance on the amount recorded.

We won't grant the allowance where:

- The leak isn't on your supply pipe
- The leak is caused by negligence or deliberate damage by you, your family or agents
- You failed to repair the leak within 30 days of receiving a bill or notice from us.



To apply for a leak allowance

Please call our Services Team on 03333 219098, or apply online at: southwestwater.co.uk/leak-allowance

Repeated leaks

Usually, we only grant this allowance for your first leak on the supply pipe. If you have a second leak, you'll need to explain how you've been regularly checking for leakage, and show you spotted and repaired the leak as early as you could. Only then will we consider granting you a second allowance.

We won't give any customer more than two leak allowances at the same property.

Finding a leak when we install a meter

When we install a meter, we check for leaks on your supply pipe at the same time. If we find a leak on the section of pipe we've exposed to install the meter, we'll repair it free of charge. If we detect a leak on a section of the supply pipe that isn't exposed, you'll be responsible for getting it repaired.

Contact us

Phone

0344 346 1010

to talk about your billing or account

0344 346 2020

about your water supply or wastewater services

SignLive

Register at: signlive.co.uk/login

Relay

Contact us via Relay UK through
the app or by dialling 18001 before
the helpline number

Social Media

WhatsApp
Facebook
Twitter
Webchat

Post

South West Water
PO Box 4762
Worthing
BN11 9NT

Website

For more information,
please visit:
[southwestwater.co.uk/
your-account](https://southwestwater.co.uk/your-account)



This document is one of a series setting out key information for customers about our services, including charges and the support we offer during an incident.

To see other documents with key information, use the QR code or the link below.

southwestwater.co.uk/important-information



This leaflet is available in other languages, large print, and braille.