

AffinityWater

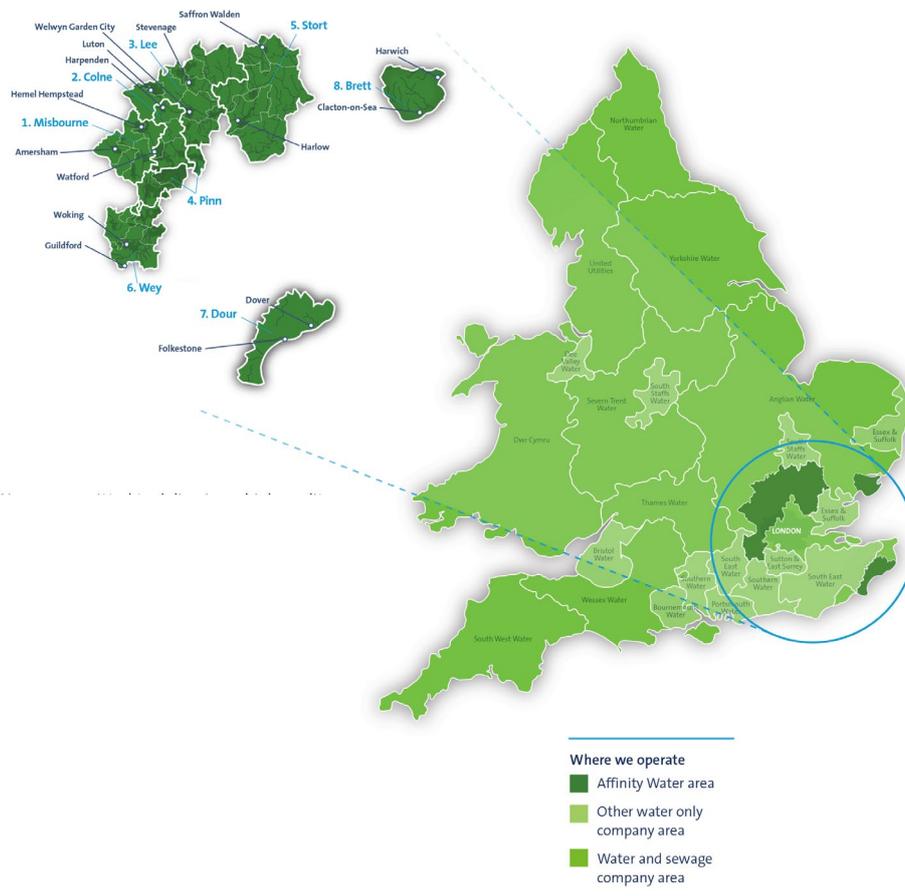
Leakage Information

How we deal with leaks and the responsibility of leaks on supply pipes



Your water company

Our water supply area consists of three regions in the south-east of England, as shown on the map below.



We're committed to delivering a high quality water service to all of our customers. We provide water to a population of more than 3.8 million people in parts of Bedfordshire, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Surrey, the London Boroughs of Harrow and Hillingdon and parts of the London Boroughs of Barnet, Brent, Ealing and Enfield. We also supply water to the Tendring peninsula in Essex and the Folkestone and Dover areas of Kent.

We're committed to the efficient use of water, and part of this involves actively seeking to reduce levels of leakage from customer supply pipes.

Wastewater services for the above areas are provided by Thames Water, Anglian Water or Southern Water, depending on where you live. If you're an Anglian or Thames Water customer, we bill you on their behalf.

Our commitment to reducing leakage

Clean water is a precious and finite resource, and the areas we serve have been designated as under serious water stress by the Government. There's increasing pressure from a rising population, increased demand for water and the challenges of climate change.

A leaking pipe can waste a lot of water, which is why we always take it very seriously.

As a water company, we have an obligation to make sure we maintain and improve our water pipes to ensure that we can supply water to customers within our supply area.

We have over 16,500 km (10,000 miles) of pipe network that would stretch from London to Sydney. There's the potential for bursts and leaks to occur anywhere within this network.

Between 2020 and 2025, we have made a commitment to reduce leakage by 20%, and we know this is really important to our customers. We estimate that around a third of our total network leakage occurs on our customers' supply pipes.

If you think you have a leak, visit affinitywater.co.uk/leaks

Types of water pipes

Different types of water pipes each play an important part in making sure you're supplied with clean water. Here's a quick summary:

Water mains

are large pipes owned by us that distribute water around our network and supply clean water to our customers.

Service pipes

are connected to our water mains and supply water from that main to your property.

(We often use the terms "communication pipe" and "supply pipe". These relate to different sections of the service pipe.)

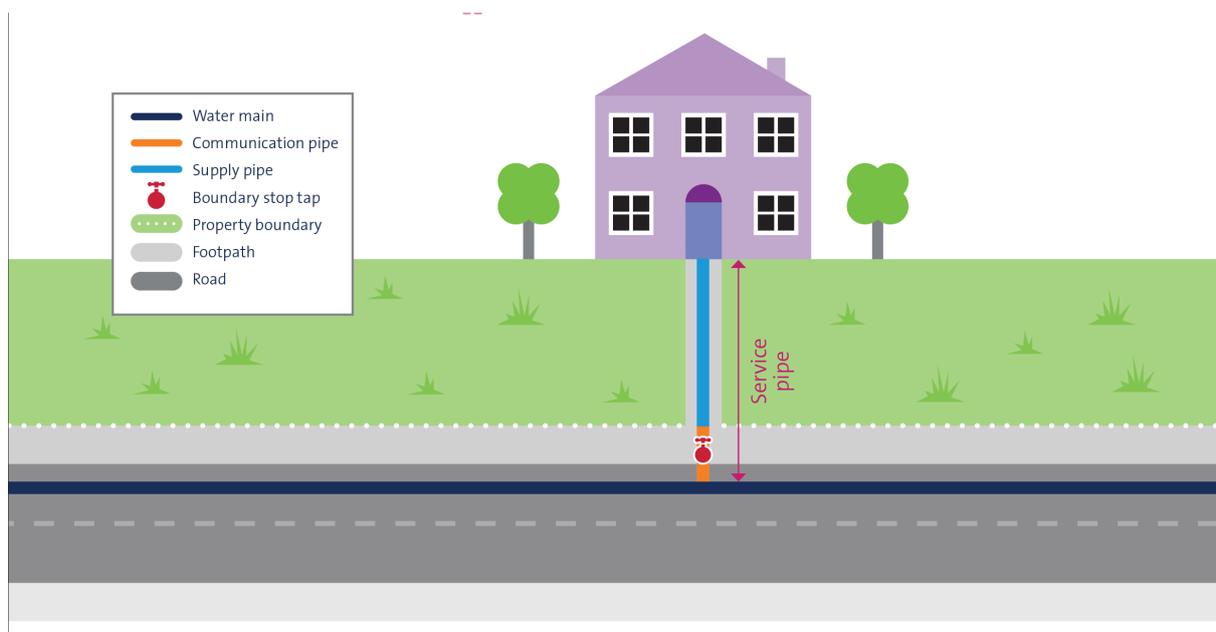
Communication pipes

carries clean water from our water mains to the boundary stoptap/boundary of your property where it connects to your supply pipe (in most cases).

Supply pipes

are the smaller pipes that carry clean water from the communication pipe into your property. In some circumstances, your supply pipe may be situated in a pathway, highway/road, or private land.

This is an example of a general pipe layout. Please refer to your own property plans for the layout of your pipework. If you don't have this, check your house deeds or with your local council.



Apparatus on pipes

External stoptaps

or stopcocks are apparatus belonging to us which are installed on each service pipe to control the water flow using a valve mechanism. Stoptaps are usually installed on the service pipe in the footpath; however, they may be installed in private property, such as a garden or driveway. The stoptap must be positioned as near as reasonably practicable to the boundary of the street. We have a legal power to fit and maintain a stoptap to any service pipe (including a supply pipe) at our expense.

Meters

are also a type of apparatus belonging to us and are usually (but not always) fitted in the same location as the external stoptap. The position of the meter does not determine pipe ownership or responsibility. Our Metering Policy sets out our legal position relating to the installation of meters visit affinitywater.co.uk/metering for more information.

Who's responsible for which pipe?

We own and are responsible for:

All the pipes and apparatus on the mains network ("mains pipes") and for repairing and replacing them when necessary. This includes the communication pipe, which connects your supply pipe to our mains pipe. We have maps showing where these mains pipes are located across our whole supply area.

You own and are responsible for:

Maintaining the supply pipe, including the plumbing and water fittings inside your property. We don't have maps showing where supply pipes are located, as we're not responsible for supply pipes.

Your supply pipe is usually up to the boundary of your property, however in some circumstances, your supply pipe may cross a pathway, highway/road, or private land, and you're responsible for locating, repairing, and replacing the supply pipe when necessary.

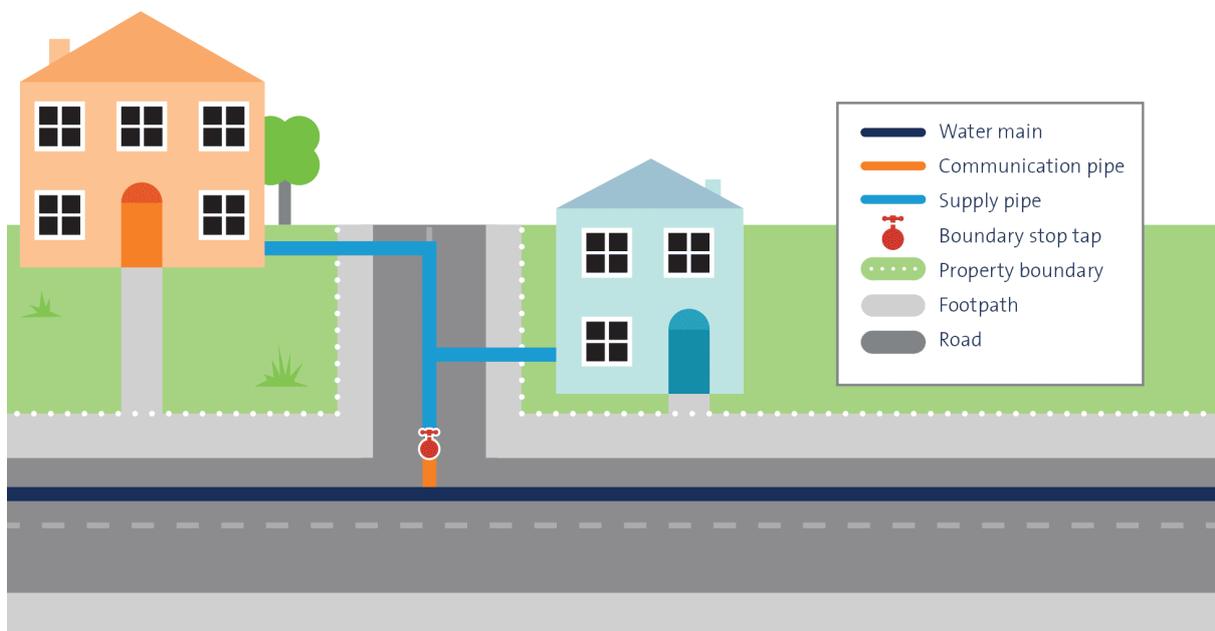
The following pages illustrate who's responsible for the pipework in different property scenarios.

Pipes in the street

The majority of our pipes are located in the streets. A street can be a highway, road, lane, footway, alley, passage, or any square or court.

We generally own and are responsible for the pipes laid in the street, except for where a supply pipe is laid in a different street to where the water main is laid.

We can inspect, maintain, adjust, repair, or alter any pipe laid in any street. If we carry out maintenance, repair, or renewal works to a supply pipe in a street where no water main is laid, we're entitled to recover costs reasonably incurred by us from the occupier of the premises supplied. We have the discretion not to recover the cost of our works, for example, under our Leak Repair Scheme. This is determined on a case-by-case basis.



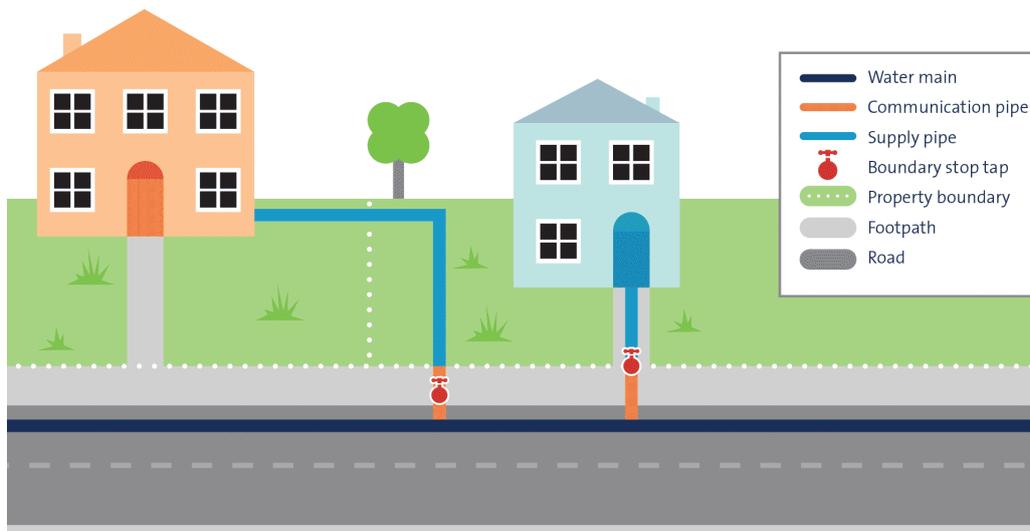
For example;

where a property is situated in a street where there's no water main laid but there's a supply pipe laid in that street, we're responsible for the pipework up to the street boundary of the street where the mains pipe is laid.

This scenario is often (but not always) found in privately owned roads. In these situations, we may have originally laid the pipe and carried out maintenance work on the pipe (which we may or may not have charged for), but we do not own the pipe.

Pipes in the neighbouring land

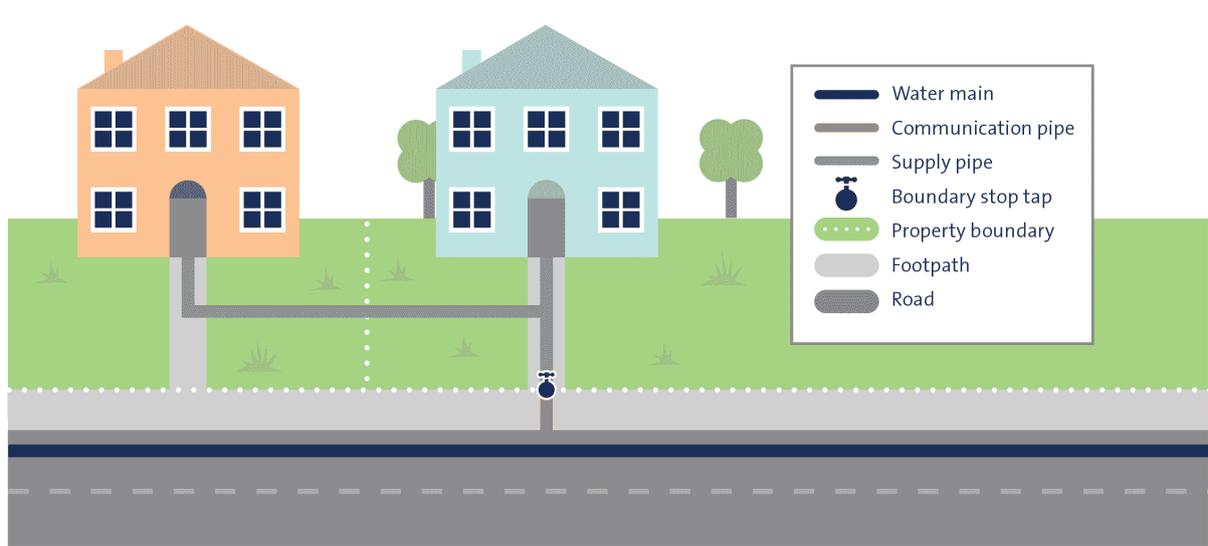
Your supply pipe may cross your neighbour's land, but you're usually responsible for the maintenance of your supply pipe. You'll need to get consent from your neighbour for any repair and maintenance works that need to be carried out on the section of supply pipe laid in your neighbour's land.



Shared supply pipes

If you share your supply pipe with your neighbours (known as a joint, shared, or common supply pipe), you're solely responsible for the maintenance of the section of pipe that supplies only your property, and you're jointly responsible with your neighbour(s) for the maintenance of the section of pipe that supplies you and your neighbour(s) property

These are typical examples of a shared supply pipe layout:

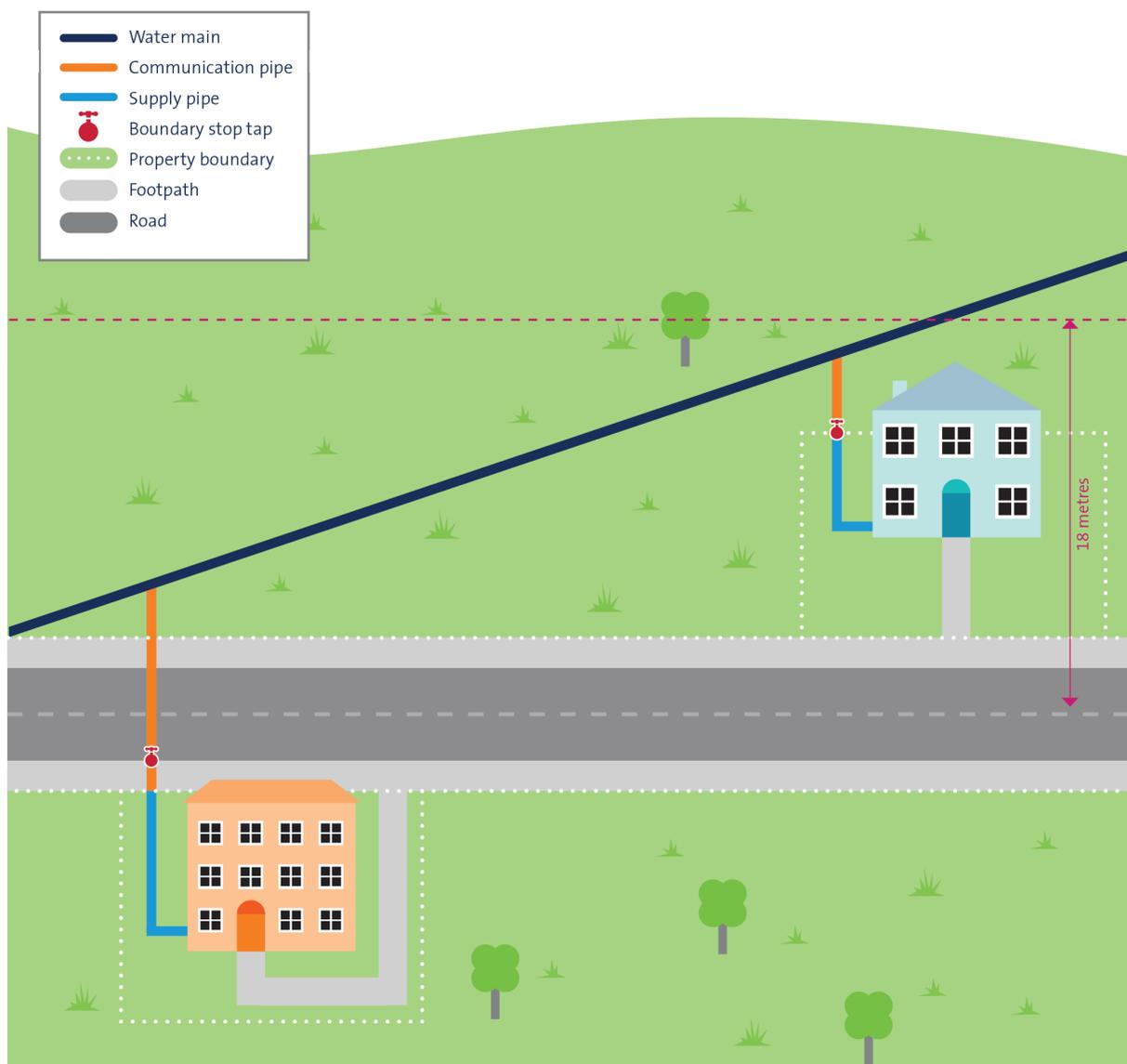


Pipes in private land

Sometimes our water mains have been laid in private land within 18 metres of the middle of the street.

If your property is situated in land between the water main and the street, then we consider this land to be a street where the water main is no more than 18 metres from the centre of the street.

In these circumstances, we're responsible for the pipework up to the property boundary within the 'street' or the street boundary. We can carry out repair and maintenance works on the pipe in the 'street' and we're responsible for the cost of such works.

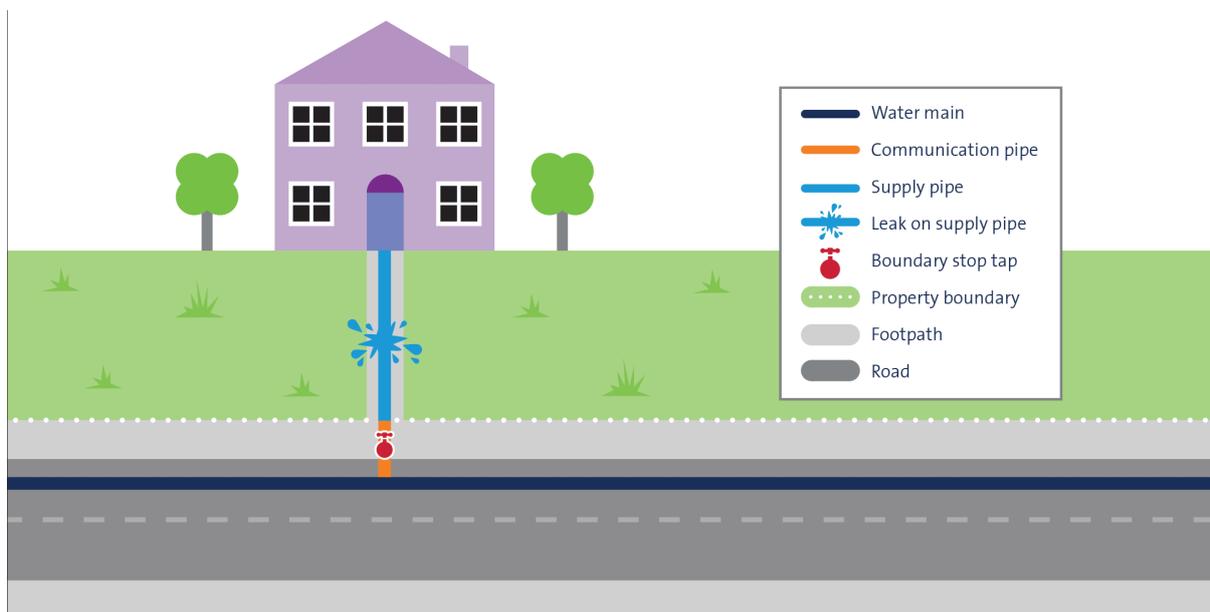


Who's responsible for the leak?

The following diagrams explain who's responsible for repairing the leak in different property scenarios:

Properties with an individual supply pipe

If your property has an individual supply pipe, you (or your landlord) are responsible for maintaining and repairing it.

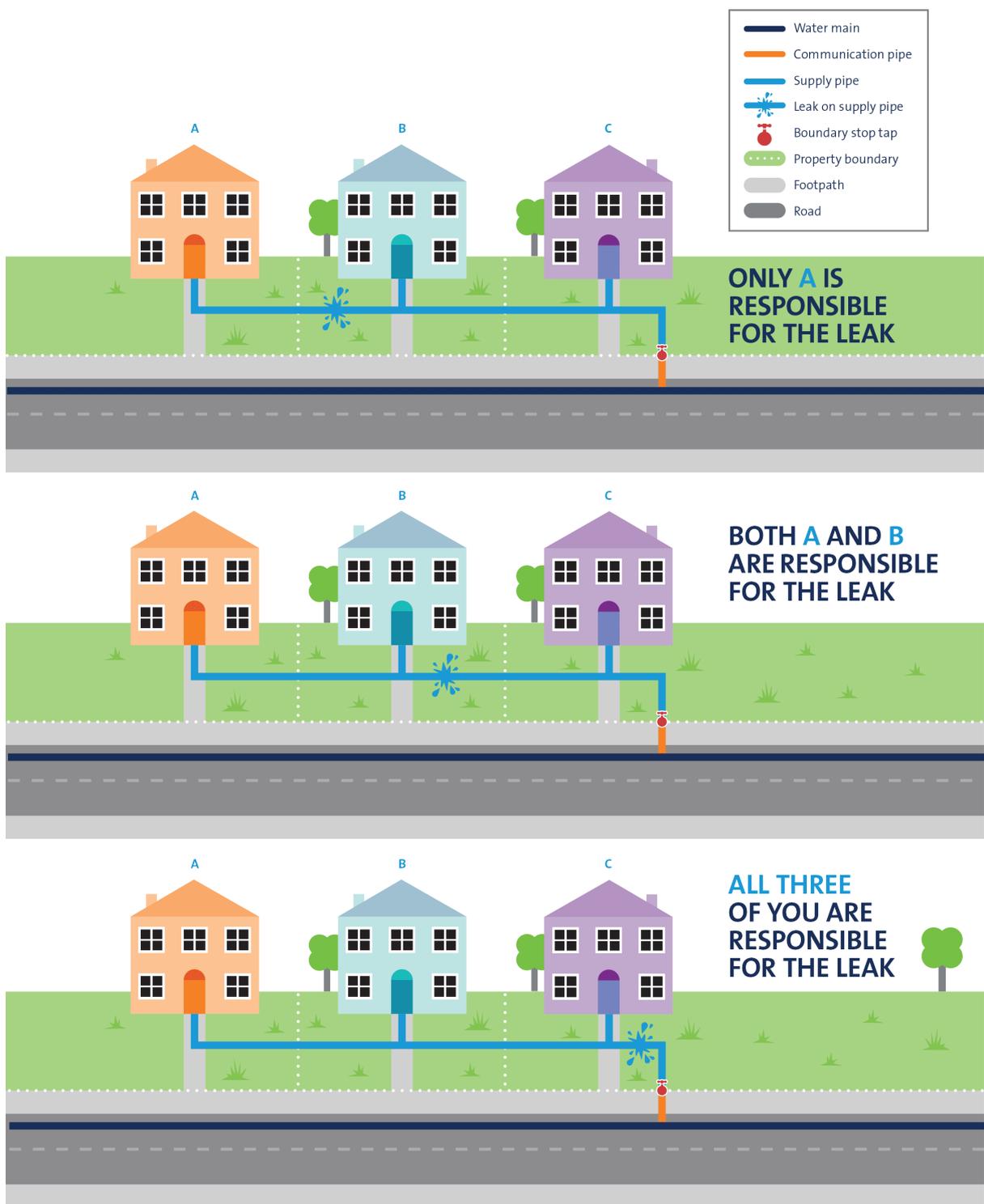


Properties with a joint or shared supply pipe

If your property has a joint or shared supply pipe, you share ownership and responsibility with your neighbour(s) for its maintenance.

If a leak occurs on a joint or shared supply pipe, all the properties beyond the point of the leak are jointly responsible for repairing the pipe, regardless of whose property the leak is actually on.

The cost of any repairs needs to be agreed between everyone who's affected by the leak and you'll need to get permission to access the property where the leak is located.



You can check if your supply pipe is shared with your neighbours by turning off the stoptap in the street and seeing which properties are without water. Before doing this, you should check with everyone who might be affected first.

How to check for leaks on your property

There are a number of simple checks that might indicate that you have a leak on your pipe:

- Do you have a damp patch on the ground?
- Is there a particularly lush looking patch of grass or plants, especially during dry weather?
- Can you hear water running down a drain when no water is being used in your property?
- Can you hear water hissing or the sound of running water, i.e., if you see or hear water running down the back of your toilet pan when you haven't flushed?
- If you have a meter, take a meter reading to see if consumption is being recorded by the meter when the water supply is turned off from the internal stoptap.

How to read your meter

We recommend that you read your meter regularly (monthly) and it is useful to keep a record of these readings. This will alert you if your consumption increases unexpectedly. Although water meters can vary in size and shape. You simply need to record the number of cubic metres registered on the meter:

1. If you have a meter, turn off all the taps in your property – and wait 10 minutes for toilet cisterns and other tanks to finish filling.
2. Next, find your water meter and check that its unique serial number matches the one on your bill. Your water meter is usually located either close to the boundary of your property, in your front garden, or in the footpath immediately in front of your property. Sometimes it's located inside your property, in which case it's usually under the kitchen sink or near the stoptap. If you can't find it, please call us on 0345 357 2401.
3. For meters that are outside, lift the lid using a wide screwdriver if necessary, remove the polystyrene frost cover (if one has been fitted) and pull up the inner meter lid to view the meter face. There may be a little rain water which has gathered in the chamber, however, if water is present in the chamber after a prolonged dry spell, this may indicate a leak.
4. To take a reading, look at the meter face, which is about the size of a tin of baked beans. Firstly, read the numbers that indicate how many cubic metres of water you have used. The numbers you're looking for will be white on a black background or black on a white background. Now read

the dials that are red and white. These indicate how many litres of water you have used. The red and white dials will move quickly when water is being used. There are normally three or four of these dials, although sometimes the fourth one is located separately on the meter face (it indicates how many tenths of a litre you use).

5. Read your meter again one hour later. If it has moved forward, you may have a leak.

For more help, visit affinitywater.co.uk/read-your-meter.

Supply pipe leaks

The supply pipe is your responsibility to repair, and although we have no legal obligation to maintain it, we may do the following:

- Notify you as soon as we find or suspect a leak on your supply pipe
- Provide you with written notice of our findings if your supply pipe is, or is believed to be leaking, setting out the next steps which you should follow.
- If the leak is believed to be on the supply pipe serving a business or commercial property, we will also send a copy of the written notice to your Retailer.

In some circumstances, we can carry out leak repair works on your behalf. These are summarised below:

Leak Repair Scheme:

If you're a household customer and we identify a supply pipe leak on your property, we may repair it free of charge under our Leak Repair Scheme (see below).

Meter installations:

If you're a household customer and we install a meter at your property for the first time and we find a leak on the supply pipe between the meter and your property (excluding any pipework underneath your property), the leak will be repaired by us free of charge, provided it can be repaired without additional excavation.

If the leak cannot be repaired without additional excavation, we'll notify you of the leak and request that you arrange for the repair works to be carried out at your expense.

If we've installed a meter as part of our Universal Metering Programme (applicable to our Central Region household customers only), we'll check for any leaks on your supply pipe when we install the water meter. If we do find a leak or believe that you

may have a leak on your supply pipe, we will inform you and may offer you a free leak repair.

Carrying out leak repair works on your behalf

We may carry out leak repair works on your supply pipe in the following situations:

- as part of our Leak Repair Scheme (for household customers),
- following the installation of a meter (for household customers), or
- where you have failed to repair a leak, and we propose to enforce a repair which you're responsible.

The works:

Where we want to carry out works on a supply pipe, we'll normally give you no less than seven days written notice, unless it's an emergency. We'll undertake any work in a safe manner and do our best to keep disruption to a minimum.

We ask for your help by keeping well away from our work site and from items of equipment.

Please note:

The pipe must be in good condition. If it is in poor condition, we will not repair it (we may make an emergency repair at our discretion) and will recommend replacement.

- If we can't complete a repair for any reason or if we suspect that there may be further leaks, we'll let you know as soon as possible and give you advice on what to do.
- For leaks on the supply pipe, we can only work on the pipe up to your property boundary.
- We can't carry out repairs close to, under, or in buildings or other structures, or anything with special finishes (such as bespoke or non-standard construction materials), or in rear gardens or side passages where access is difficult. If your pipe runs through a neighbour's property, you'll need to get written confirmation from them that we can work on the pipe.
- We'll do our best to locate the leak, but if we can't find it with a single excavation, you'll have to arrange for your own WaterSafe approved plumber to find and repair it, or replace it.
- Our repair or replacement services do not provide 24-hour emergency assistance, so if you have an urgent leak on your supply pipe, you should contact a WaterSafe approved plumber.
- If you're a tenant, you must tell your Landlord/Council/Managing Agent immediately if you spot a leak.

Allowances made for leakage

If you're a household customer and have a meter, you may be eligible for a leakage allowance, subject to the following criteria:

- Neither you nor anyone else living in your property have received a leakage allowance from us before in respect of the property you currently live in, and;
- You've repaired the leak by the date specified in the Waste of Water Notice, or if no notice has been issued, you've repaired the leak within one month of when the leak was first discovered.

If you're eligible for a leakage allowance, we'll credit your account for part or all of the cost of the water wasted due to the leak and we'll let you know how we've calculated this amount. We'll let you know that your bill has been amended and by how much. Once the leak is completely repaired, you can fill out our online form at www.affinitywater.co.uk/leakage-allowance or contact us on 0345 3503672.

We don't offer leakage allowance to Non-Household properties

Where you may not be eligible for a leakage allowance

- If we have previously advised you or the former occupiers of your property that the supply pipe needs replacing but this has not been carried out.
- We don't usually make allowances for leaks from pipework or fittings beyond your internal stopcock, except where, in our opinion, you could not reasonably have known about it.
- No allowance will be made if a leak has been caused by your negligence or where you knew, or should have known, there was a leak and failed to repair it.

Where we agree to make an allowance, your charges will be re-assessed on the basis of your past normal water use. Where there's no record of previous water use, the adjustment will be based on the typical usage for a household of a similar type to your own and further adjusted if your actual water use turns out to be very different. The adjustment will only apply for the period of abnormal use up to a maximum of 12 months.

Where we have identified that our faulty apparatus (such as a meter or stoptap) has caused leakage of water to be recorded by the meter, we'll repair our faulty apparatus and grant you a leakage allowance.

Adjustment for wastewater charges

When we make an adjustment to the metered charges for water supply, a similar adjustment will be made to the measured wastewater charges if appropriate. As we bill on behalf of Thames Water and Anglian Water, the adjustment (if applicable) will be applied automatically to your account. For customers in our South East Region, we'll inform Southern Water of the adjustment made.

Preventing waste of water

Waste of Water Notice

If we have reason to believe that water supplied to your property is being or is likely to be wasted, we have the power under Section 75(2)(b) of the Water Industry Act 1991 to serve you with notice requiring you to have the necessary repairs carried out by a specified date.

If the work isn't completed by the date specified in the notice, we may arrange for the repair works to be undertaken by our contractors and we may recover all costs from you including our administration charges. If you refuse us entry when we attempt to carry out the repair, we may charge you for the wasted visit and if you continue to refuse us access to carry out the repairs, we may apply to the Magistrates Court for a Right of Entry Warrant to access your property in order to repair the leak.

If the issue is deemed to be an emergency, e.g. there's a serious risk of flooding or to public health, we may turn off the supply to the property. This is to prevent any potential damage to properties, injury to people, wastage of water, or contamination of the water supply. We'll inform you of the steps that need to be taken before your supply can be restored. We may also disconnect your supply if your property appears to be unoccupied and no work to repair the leak has taken place.

If the leak has been identified at a property used for business purposes (non-household), any notices we send to you, we'll also send a copy to your Retailer.

Waste of Water Enforcement:

Whether you're a household or non-household customer, if we've issued you with a formal Wastewater Notice and you've not carried out the repair works necessary to resolve the leak on your supply pipe, we'll carry out the repair work ourselves as an enforced repair and we may recover all costs from you including our administration charges.

If you refuse us entry when we attempt to carry out the repair, we may charge you for the wasted visit and if you continue to refuse us access to carry out the repairs,

we may apply to the Magistrates Court for a Right of Entry Warrant to access your property in order to repair the leak.

The reinstatement

The level of reinstatement (how we return the surface to normal) following completion of the works will depend on the material excavated, for example:

- Where we've carried out works in your garden or in soft ground, we'll reinstate the soil only, and you'll need to carry out any replanting yourself.
- If we've removed paving slabs, bricks, shingle, or chippings, we'll put back what we removed.
- Where we've excavated an area of black tarmac or concrete, we'll reinstate only the excavated area. The reinstated area may appear a different shade from the surrounding area due to the natural fading of the surrounding tarmac or concrete.
- You'll need to arrange for any special finishes, such as bespoke or non-standard construction materials, to be reinstated at your expense. These include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - Resin bound/bounded surface
 - Printed/patterned concrete
 - Coloured material

Reinstatement may occur anytime within a two-week period following the completion of the works. This is because weather conditions can affect the excavated material, which will impact the standard of the reinstatement. We will always leave the site safe and tidy, and we will clear everything away once the reinstatement has been completed.

We pride ourselves on doing a good job, but if you discover that our repair works have become defective, we'll carry out further works to rectify the defect, free of charge. This is applicable up to one year from the date we carried out the initial repair works and only applies to defects relating to the initial leak repair works.

We'll repair your pipe in the most appropriate way. Most modern repairs are carried out using plastic pipe and fittings, which may interfere with electrical earthing. Although electrical earthing to water pipes has never been permitted and is now prohibited, we're aware that in the past some water pipes may have been used for electrical earthing. If you believe this may be the case, you'll need to contact a qualified electrician to ensure that you have an adequate earth for your electricity supply. You're responsible for all costs associated with establishing if your pipe has been used for electrical earthing and for any necessary remedial work.

If your property is used for business purposes (non-household), we'll also notify your Retailer in advance of any leak repair works we plan to carry out on your property.

Compensation for damage caused by works

We have a duty to do as little damage as possible and to pay compensation for any loss caused or damage done in carrying out the works. You have a right to make a compensation claim if you believe you have sustained loss or damage as a result of our works. If you'd like to make a claim, please email claimsteam@affinitywater.co.uk.

Should I repair or replace?

A repair is sometimes the best option if the leak is small and your supply pipe is in good condition. If the pipe is over 30 years old, made of lead, or in bad condition, we would recommend that you consider getting it replaced. For information about lead pipe see www.affinitywater.co.uk/lead.

For household customers, if you choose to replace your supply pipe, you may be eligible for a contribution of £100 if the work has been completed in line with The Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations 1999. We also recommend that you check your home insurance policy to see whether you're covered for pipe repair or replacement works and to discuss the next steps with your insurance provider.

If you share a supply pipe with your neighbours and you and your neighbours decide to replace the shared supply pipe, you must gain approval from everyone whose property is served by it. It's not possible to add more properties to the existing shared supply. The costs associated with repairing or replacing the shared supply pipe will be the joint liability of all owners of the properties that are supplied by it. If you decide to separate your shared supply pipe, you'll need to get in touch with our Developer Experience team; see affinitywater.co.uk/developing for more information.

You only need to replace the length of pipework for which you're jointly and/or severally responsible; this may be to the external stoptap or the boundary of your premises. Pages 5-11 illustrates who's responsible for the pipework in different property scenarios.

Home owners, be stranger aware!

There are many bogus callers out there who are experts at conning homeowners. They may claim to be 'from the water board', but really, they intend to steal cash and property.

Our advice to you is to be vigilant at all times. If someone calls at your door and tells you they are from the water board or a water company, don't let them in unless they are in uniform and can show you an Affinity Water identity card. If you're in any doubt, just ask them to wait outside while you call our Customer Services team on 0345 357 2407.

For peace of mind, you might like to register a password with us to be used by the Affinity Water representative visiting your property. You can arrange this visting www.affinitywater.co.uk/priority-services.

Easier reading

To receive this booklet in large print, audio or Braille, please email hello@affinitywater.co.uk or call 0345 357 2401.

Wastewater, drainage enquiries and emergencies for household customers:

Anglian Water: 0345 791 9155 www.anglianwater.co.uk

Thames Water: 0800 316 9800 www.thameswater.co.uk

Southern Water: 0330 303 0368 www.southernwater.co.uk

Complaints

Whether you have a household or non-household property, if you have a complaint relating to Affinity Water's water supply system (i.e. our reservoirs, treatment works, pipes and mains) then you can contact us directly on 0345 357 2407

We operate a complaints procedure which has been agreed with the industry regulator, Ofwat. We aim to answer all written complaints within 10 working days. Further information and a copy of the procedure are available from our website at affinitywater.co.uk/complaints and on request.

You may ask the Consumer Council for Water (CCW), the independent voice for water consumer in England and Wales, to take up your complaint on your behalf, if we have been unable to resolve it directly with you.

Following the CCW's efforts to resolve your complaint, you have the right to refer your complaint to the Dispute Resolution Ombudsman (DRO), if CCW are unable to resolve on your behalf.

You can only make an application to DRO once you have exhausted our complaints procedure AND have been told by CCW that you're eligible to apply. DRO will then provide an independent binding decision on the complaint.

Consumer Council for Water

23 Stephenson Street,
Birmingham,
B2 4BH
0300 034 2222
www.ccwater.org.uk
enquiries@ccwater.org.uk

Water Services Regulation Authority (OFWAT)

Centre City Tower
7 Hill Street
Birmingham
B5 4UA
0300 034 2222
www.ofwat.gov.uk
mailbox@ofwat.gsi.gov.uk

Who can I contact for further information?

If you're a household customer of Affinity Water, you can report a leak:

- online - [affinitywater.co.uk/leakspotters](https://www.affinitywater.co.uk/leakspotters)
- via our social media channels, [Facebook](#), [X \(Twitter\)](#)
- calling our Leakspotters line on 0345 357 2407 (open 24 hours)

If you have a business or commercial property (non-household) then you should contact your Retailer for any service or non-emergency queries relating to your supply of water. You'll find their contact details on your bill/invoice.

Getting in touch with us

We're your local community water company and always happy to help whenever you need us.

www.affinitywater.co.uk

Have you got a leak?

If you have a leak on your supply pipe, please contact our Customer Supply team:

customersupplyteam@affinitywater.co.uk

0345 357 2409

Leakspotters

0800 376 5325

Calls to 0800 numbers are free to call from UK landlines and from mobile phones.

[affinitywater.co.uk/leakspotters](https://www.affinitywater.co.uk/leakspotters)

Need a plumber

www.watersafe.org.uk



Emergency cover through HomeServe

[affinitywater.co.uk/homeserve](https://www.affinitywater.co.uk/homeserve)



Operational enquiries

Water supply, water quality and emergencies or request a water quality report
0345 357 2407

Mon - Fri 7am to 8pm Sat - Sun 8am to 8pm. Outside these hours we operate an emergency service.

Billing enquiries**Account, billing and moving home**

0345 357 2401

Mon - Fri 8am to 8pm, Sat 8am-2pm. We have a translation service available on request – just let us know.

24 hour debit/credit card payment line

0345 357 2400 All telephone calls are recorded for training and monitoring purposes.

Drop us a line by writing to us at:

Affinity Water Limited,
Tamblin Way
Hatfield
Hertfordshire
AL10 9EZ

Wastewater and drainage

Check your bill online for your wastewater provider

Anglian Water 03457 145 145 www.anglianwater.co.uk

Thames Water 0800 316 9800 www.thameswater.co.uk

Southern Water 0330 303 0368 www.southernwater.co.uk

or visit affinitywater.co.uk/wastewater

To receive this leaflet in large print, audio or Braille, please call 0345 357 2406