Affinity Water Limited

CODE OF PRACTICE ON LEAKAGE

LEAKAGE FROM DOMESTIC CUSTOMERS WATER SUPPLY PIPES

Dated: 10 July 2014

1 INTRODUCTION

Approver: Community Operations Regional Manager SE   Issue Date: 21/07/2014
The Company is committed to a policy of water efficiency and as part of this policy is actively seeking to reduce levels of leakage from the domestic supply pipe part of our water network.

This code of practice has been approved by Ofwat (the regulator of water and sewerage companies in England and Wales) and forms part of a suite of leaflets including our customer and debt codes of practice.

If you have a water meter installed it measures the amount of water delivered to your home and this is the volume you pay for.

The supply pipe, which is your responsibility, normally runs between the stop tap close to your property boundary and your first draw-off point, usually the cold-water tap at the kitchen sink. The section of the pipe between our water main and your boundary stop tap is our responsibility. We usually locate the meter at this stop tap. We own the meter and are responsible for looking after it.

**Please note:** In a small number of cases, the property owner may be responsible for the cost of maintaining the full length of the supply pipe up to the point at which it is connected to our main. This is likely to be where our water main is not laid in the same highway as your property. Also, the property owner is responsible for their supply pipe even if it crosses other privately or publicly owned land before entering.

The diagram on the next page illustrates these responsibilities:

If your pipe layout is different to this please contact us on 0345 357 2401 and we can provide further assistance.
GUIDANCE TO OWNERSHIP OF SUPPLY PIPES

INDIVIDUAL SUPPLY PIPE Number 1, 2 and 3
Red: Supply pipe belonging to property owner, Blue: Water main, Company responsibility
Black: Company stopcock
Yellow: If Company Meter Installed, Company responsible for meter installation only
Yellow: If Stopcock installed, property owner responsibility

SHARED SUPPLY PIPE RESPONSIBILITIES/OWNERSHIP Letters A, B and C

Red: Supply pipe belonging to property owner, Blue: Water main, Company responsibility
Yellow: If Company Meter Installed, Company responsible for meter installation only
Yellow: If Stopcock installed, property owner responsibility

The installation of water meters on separate branches does not alter overall responsibilities for the supply pipe.

FURTHER INFORMATION ON SUPPLY PIPE OWNERSHIP CAN BE FOUND AT WWW.OFWAT.GOV.UK

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GUIDANCE TO OWNERSHIP OF SUPPLY PIPES
SUPPLY PIPE RESPONSIBILITIES / OWNERSHIP LETTERS A and B
NO MAIN IN ROAD and SUPPLY PIPE IN FIELD

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2 **METER POSITION**

For new installations we will determine the exact position of the meter in accordance with regulations determined by the Government.

There are four possible installation positions:

(i) Internally
(ii) externally adjacent to the house wall, or
(iii) externally next to the stop tap
(iv) close to the property boundary (this is our preferred location).

We can discuss alternative positions with you; however there may be a charge for any meter installation positions that are different to those stated above.

If you already have a water meter and are uncertain about its location please contact us and we will locate it for you.

For our contact details see section 13.

3 **HOW TO CHECK FOR LEAKAGE**

To check for a leak, if you have a water meter installed, you will need to close the internal stop tap (this is often located near the kitchen sink or where the water supply pipe enters your property) and then look at the water meter which, if outside, will be located in a meter box that is sunk into the ground. We have a leaflet detailing how to read your meter, which is available on request (as per the contact details in Section 2). It may be necessary to leave the water turned off for up to 1 hour. If there are no leaks all the dials, including the small round indicator, will stop moving, any movement is indicative of losses from the pipe work and hence the presence of a leak.

![small round indicator](image)

Should you require any assistance please contact us and we will arrange to do the leakage test for you and provide you with 1 hours free time from one of our experienced Inspectors to attempt to locate your leak, after which, if appropriate, we will repair the visible leak at no charge (subject to the conditions shown in Section 7).
The meter is a valuable tool for detecting leakage and we will normally read your meter every 6 months. As detailed in Section 5 we will notify you if we suspect that you have a leak. If your pipe is leaking, or you suspect that you might have a leak on your water supply pipe please call us on the numbers shown in Section 2. We might be able to repair the pipe free of charge if the leak is visible. If we cannot, we will still be able to offer you advice. Further details of the repair scheme can be found in Section 7.

4 LEAKAGE CHECKS MADE WHEN A METER IS INSTALLED FOR THE FIRST TIME

We know from experience that a substantial amount of water escapes from unidentified leaks in the customer’s pipe work. When a meter is installed a check will be made to establish if there are any significant leaks in the pipe work.

If at the time the meter is installed a leak is detected in the supply pipe between the meter and your house, excluding sections of pipe work under any building, the visible leak will be repaired at our expense(subject to the conditions shown in Section 7). This will happen at the same time that the meter is installed. Any subsequent leaks will be subject to this leakage policy.

If the check reveals a leak underneath your house or other building you will be notified of the leak and asked to repair it at your own expense. If the leak is repaired within a reasonable period of time (normally 3 weeks from our confirmation of a leak) any water lost from the leak within this time will not count as consumption and will not be charged for.

5 UNDETECTED LEAKS

It is possible that during the normal meter reading cycle an abnormally high consumption will be identified, usually indicating an undetected leak on the supply pipe. Should we detect an increase in your consumption, when reading your meter, we will notify you in writing.

Free Leak Repair Scheme

If there is a leak on the supply pipe then the repair of this leak is your responsibility; however we offer a free repair service for the first visible leak a customer experiences at their property, subject to some restrictions. Please note each customer is only entitled to one free leak repair, regardless of any change of address. These restrictions relate to the location of the leak:

- we can only work on the section of buried pipe between our stop valve and the outside wall of your premises.
- we cannot carry out any repairs close to, under or in buildings or other structures. If your pipe runs through somebody else’s property you will have to arrange access for us to work on the pipe. We may require confirmation in writing from the third party.
- we will do our best to locate the leak, however, if the leak cannot be located you may have to engage your own plumber to find and repair the leak or you may opt to have your supply pipe renewed.

Please refer to Section 7 for full details of the services we provide.
Leaks can occur anywhere on the system. If your meter is fitted internally, the meter will not record any water escaping between the water main in the street and the meter. You can look for signs of leakage yourself, indicators being lush vegetation in dry periods, or damp areas on the ground. If you suspect you have a leak or you notice water escaping anywhere, call us on 0345 357 2407, 24 hours a day, to report it. We will tell you what you should do.

Most leaks occur because the pipe is badly corroded and it may be more economical to replace the pipe rather than repair it. For the benefit of our customers the Company offers a subsidised supply pipe renewal scheme. We will give our advice with regard to the best option of either repair or renewal bearing in mind the free repair service is a one off facility and subsequent leaks repairs will attract a charge. The decision on which way to proceed will always be yours and we will follow your decision. For further details see section 7.

The Company, if repairs are not carried out quickly, will notify the customer of their obligations through the serving of a waste notice. If the customer disregards the notice, the Company can carry out the repair and recover the costs from the customer, and in extreme cases turn off the water to prevent wastage or damage to property.

We always recommend that you use a reputable plumber for leaks in your own home; these are plumbers who are able to provide written certification on completion of their work that it complies with the requirements of the Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations 1999. We hold a list of approved plumbers, please contact us on 0845 782 3333 for more information or look on the Watersafe website. Watersafe is a dedicated online search facility bringing together thousands of qualified contractors employed by plumbing businesses from seven existing Approved Contractors’ Schemes across the UK. They aim to raise plumbing standard by helping customers find the nearest qualified plumbing and heating professionals.

To search for a plumbing business near go to [http://www.watersafe.org.uk](http://www.watersafe.org.uk)

6 **THE ADJUSTMENT OF CHARGES – METERED WATER SUPPLY**

In the circumstances stated above, following satisfactory repair of the leak (normally within a three week period from our confirmation of a leak), an adjustment will be made to the metered charges based on the historical pattern of use. No adjustment will be made to the metered charge where a leak has been caused through negligence by you or your agents, or where you know or should have known that there was a leak and failed to have it repaired.

We shall make an allowance for leakage on the first leak only, per customer, regardless of the property at which the leak may have occurred. Subsequent leaks will not qualify for an allowance; essentially each customer is entitled to one leak allowance against their metered water account irrespective of the property to which the account applies. In exceptional circumstances a further allowance may be considered.

No allowance will be made if:

- there is a further leak after an adjustment has been made for a previous leak,
- a leak has been caused by the negligence of the Customer or the Customers Representative,

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the Customer knew or should have known that there was a leak and failed to repair it
the leak occurred as a result of faulty pipes or fittings within your property.

Allowances will be calculated so that charges will be based on the Customers previous normal consumption patterns. A full 100% allowance will be given. Where there is no record of past consumption, the adjustment shall be based upon typical usage for a property of a similar type and the customer's measured charges shall be further adjusted if the customer's subsequent actual usage is significantly different.

Allowances will only be given in respect of the period of abnormal use and for no longer than 12 months. Once the adjustment has been made to your account an amended bill will be issued.

Allowances will be given for leaks underneath a property provided that they are repaired within a reasonable period, usually 3 weeks from notification of a leaks existence.

After the first leakage allowance has been finalised any water losses from subsequent leaks will normally be charged for.

MIXED USE PREMISES: where a single supply feeds a premise that is used for both domestic and commercial purposes the following guidelines will be used when considering the issuing of a leakage allowance:

- was the leak on the pipe work that fed only the domestic part of the premise?: Yes, then allowance given.
- was the leak on the pipe work that fed only the commercial part of the premise?: Yes, then allowance not given
- was the leak on the pipe work that fed both parts of the premise?: Yes, then allowance given

Please contact our Customer Accounts if you think you qualify for a leak allowance. Contact details can be found in section 13.

ADJUSTMENT OF SOUTHERN WATER'S SEWERAGE CHARGES:

Where we have made an adjustment for leakage for water supply we will inform Southern Water Services Limited, who provide the sewerage services in this area, of this fact and of the basis on which the adjustment has or will be made.

7 LEAKAGE SERVICES FOR CUSTOMERS

Customer leakage accounts for 25-30% of all leakage from the water supply network. Many customers are unaware of their responsibilities and can find it difficult to get leaks repaired quickly and at a reasonable cost.

We are committed to providing you with an efficient and cost effective leakage service and therefore we undertake to:

(i) notify customers immediately when we find, or suspect, a leak on their pipe

(ii) make our expert leakage technicians available to help customers find their leaks. This service is free for the first hour, however subsequent investigative work may be charged for. Additional time will be charged for, in accordance with our published Charges Scheme.
(iii) Provide a fixed repair service using our specialists. The cost for standard situations will normally be:

No charge for the first visible leak repair (where our records indicate that a leak repair has not been carried out previously for the customer in question);

Subsequent occasions: actual cost up to a maximum of £190 + VAT.

(iv) a subsidised supply pipe replacement service. The subsidised cost for standard situations will be £19 per metre + VAT (minimum charge: 10 meters + VAT) – subject to no unusual site conditions, up to a maximum of 100 metres.

Before we commence any works the cost of the job (if applicable) will be discussed and made clear to you, and you will be asked to sign a form agreeing to pay these costs. An example of the form that you will need to sign is included at the end of this code of practise.

If we cannot complete a repair for any reason, or if we suspect that there may be further leaks, we will let you know as soon as possible. We will also advise you about what you need to do next.

Provided that your pipework is sound we guarantee our repairs for two years. Should a further leak occur during this period we will ask you to sign a further repair form but will not charge if the leak proves to be on the original repair.

Please Note:
We will only provide advice regarding the choice between a repair or a renewal based on the ability to achieve an effective repair or the likelihood of further leaks.

Neither the repair or replacement services above are 24-hour emergency services. In the event of an urgent leak you will need to employ the services of a reputable plumber.

The above services do not cover leaking taps or pipes within the customer’s house, or under any other buildings

We will undertake our work in a safe manner and avoid unnecessary disruption. We ask your assistance in this by keeping well away from our work site and from items of equipment. After we have finished our work we will always fill in our excavations and leave the site safe and tidy. If we have to dig in areas which are paved, planted or which have any other special finishes you will need to arrange for the surface to be reinstated by your own builder at your expense.

We will 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 we are aware that in the past some water pipes may have been used for electrical earthing. You are responsible for all costs associated with establishing if your pipe has been used for electrical earthing and for any necessary remedial work.
8 **HOW TO NOTIFY US OF A LEAK**

If you wish to notify us of a leak, or are seeking advice, please ring 0345 357 2407, alternatively you can visit our website https://www.affinitywater.co.uk/ and click “Report a Leak”.

9 **UNMEASURED CUSTOMERS**

We provide the same level of service to our unmeasured customers, although we cannot monitor changes in consumption through meter readings. There will be no allowance made against an unmeasured water supply account. Should you suspect that you have a leak please contact us for assistance, using the contact details shown in Section 8.

10 **LIMITATION OF THIS CODE**

This Code of Practice on Leakage applies to domestic customers only.

This scheme only allows one free repair per customer, regardless of any change of address.

11 **COMPLAINTS**

The objective of the Company is to provide a first rate service for its customers.

Where service provided falls short of customers’ expectations they may complain.

If you wish to complain about any aspect of our operations please contact us, by phone or in writing. We will review your complaint in detail and give you a full and substantive response.

For further details please refer to our Complaints Leaflet. This is available upon request or can be found on our website. All contact details can be found on page 8 of this leaflet.

12 **THE CONSUMER COUNCIL FOR WATER (CCW)**

The CCW represents water and sewerage customers in England and Wales and is independent of both the water industry and its regulators. The Southern Committee investigates complaints and provides advice and information to all water and sewerage customers in the South East. The Committee meets in public 4 times a year and you are welcome to attend. For full details contact:

Consumer Council for Water - London & South East Region
1st Floor, Victoria Square House
Victoria Square
BIRMINGHAM
B2 4AJ

Telephone: 0121 345 1000
Fax: 0121 345 1001
Text Relay: dial the prefix 18001 before our telephone number.
Email: enquiries@ccwater.org.uk

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13 CONTACT DETAILS - If you wish to contact us please use one of the following methods:

**Telephone**
Metered bill enquiries: 0345 357 2402
Non-metered bill enquiries: 0345 357 2402
24 Hour Enquiries, Emergency and Leak Reporting: 0345 357 2407

**Email**
mybill@affinitywater.co.uk.

**Leaflet in large print available on request**
Affinity Water Limited
Tamblin Way, Hatfield, Herts, AL10 9EZ

www.affinitywater.co.uk
Leakage Services for Domestic Customers

To: ____________________________ Work Order No: ____________________________

Customer Ref No: ____________________________

Re: ____________________________

Following receipt of your request for us to provide you with a quotation to undertake work on the supply pipe at the above property, please find below our confirmation of the work to be carried out together with the associated costs:

☐ Carry out investigation for leak detection

First hour No Charge

Each additional hour of CSLT £55.88 + VAT

Each additional hour of repair team £115.20 + VAT

Estimate based on _____ hours @ £ _______ + VAT £ _______ + VAT

(Note hourly rate is sum of those ticked)

☐ Carry out repair to supply pipe (If visible)

First Occasion No Charge

Subsequent occasion £190.00 + VAT

Total cost of investigation plus repair £ _______ + VAT

☐ Carry out renewal of the supply pipe from the highway boundary to the property @ £19 per metre (minimum charge £190) + VAT

Estimate based on _______ metres £ _______ + VAT

Payment Options:

☐ Single payment on receipt of invoice

☐ 10 Monthly payments by standing order (Renewal Only)

NOTE:

If Domestic Customer – Are they a member of Homeserve? Yes / No

If yes, advise Customer to contact Homeserve to register their claim.

DO NOT PROCEED WITH THE REPAIR

Please ensure Customer is aware of our Reinstatement procedure with regards to Supply Pipe Repairs/Renewal (see Information on Page 3)

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I/We have read and understand the terms of your offer to undertake the above work on my supply pipe. I/We accept the fixed price quotation for this work and give permission for you to enter the property and to invoice me/us after the work has been completed.

Signed: ___________________________  Print Name: ___________________________

Address: ___________________________  Date: ___________________________

_______________________________  Tel No: ___________________________

Please Note:

If your pipe runs through somebody else’s property you will have to arrange access and authorisation for us to work on the pipe. Please ask your neighbour to sign below to confirm they are granting us permission to work on the pipe within their grounds.

I/We give permission for you to enter the property in order to undertake work on the Supply pipe for the address given overleaf:

Signed: ___________________________  Print Name: ___________________________

Address: ___________________________  Date: ___________________________

_______________________________  Tel No: ___________________________

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