

1. Overview

We have updated the way we support our customers with leaks on their private pipework. The supply pipe (between the property boundary and your house) and internal pipework are legally the responsibility of the property owner, as are any repairs. However, the policy below aims to give a suitable solution, considering both the volume (size) of the leak and our customers' needs. This policy covers all household customers including private landlords and shared/joint supplies (see 4.). We now include a promise to support our vulnerable customers by using 'Our Principles' (see 8.c.) and a targeted approach to help us with our commitment to reducing leakage.

2. Volume based approach

When we find a leak on your supply pipe, or on any internal pipework and fittings, the volume of water being lost is measured and labelled with one of the categories below. We identify and measure the leak using specialised leak detection equipment. By categorising into the 3 types of leak below, ensures we are supporting customers who have significant leaks, which could impact the safety of their surroundings, whilst also keeping track of leaks which are a lesser risk. This also helps us to prioritise repairs to keep the overall water volume we lose through leaks as low as possible.

a. Low volume - less than 400 litres per hour

Affinity Water will write to customers, to let them know a repair is needed and offering support. We will monitor the leak and revisit in 6 months. If the leak is not repaired after 12 months, Affinity Water may need to manage the case through the Waste of Water Notice process (see 5.a.), dependent on the leak volume.

b. Medium Volume – between 400 & 999 litres per hour

These customer side leaks are managed using the Waste of Water process (detail in 5.a)

c. High volume leaks – over 1000 litres per hour

For large volume customer side leaks, we will attempt to carry out a free repair or replace the pipe where it is practical to do so on the supply pipe (not on internal pipework or fittings). This means we will carry out one repair free of charge unless we come across engineering difficulties such as specialist driveway surfaces, or leaks that are located under buildings. In cases where we can't repair or locate the leak, we will let you know as soon as possible and advise you what to do next, this may mean you need to engage your own plumber to carry out the work at your own cost.

Affinity Water will provide affected customers an overview of the work that needs doing and gain appropriate permission before beginning works on private land or property.

Once a leak is identified we will schedule and carry out a free supply pipe repair as soon as we can. The repair will not be treated as an emergency repair. Affinity Water will prioritise repairs based on the impact and severity of the leak.

3. Reinstatement

We will always leave the reinstatement safe state of repair, and wherever possible we will resurface with the same material that was there before free of charge, unless this is a specialist material (e.g. Coloured Resin would not be covered). Whilst we make every effort to make reinstatement as close to the existing surface as possible, we cannot guarantee a perfect match (e.g. different colouring, aging etc.), and over time the reinstatement may also change due to usage and weathering for which we do not accept liability. By giving consent for us to proceed with work, you agree to these terms, and if we are not able to gain your consent, we may seek to enforce the repair to your supply pipe through the Waste of Water process (detailed in 6.a). You can find further details on reinstatement in our [Leakage Booklet](#).

4. Joint/shared supplies

If a leak occurs on a joint/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. Any repair needs to be agreed between everyone who is affected by the leak and you will need to get permission to access the property where the leak is located if required to repair the leak. Further explanation of joint/shared supplies can be found in our [Leakage Booklet](#).

5. Water Saving Programme

If you are a household customer, and we have installed a water meter as part of our Water Saving Programme, if we discover a leak on the supply pipe between the water meter and your house within three months of the water meter being installed we will undertake a free repair on the leak on the supply pipe between the meter and your house (excluding any pipework underneath or inside your house). The same conditions regarding reinstatement as set out in section 3 above will apply.

6. Vulnerable customers

Through our Customer Experience Policy, Affinity Water are committed to providing additional support to any customers with communication, access, financial, physical or mental health needs, including both temporary & permanent needs. This means we will attempt to repair the supply pipe free of charge (excluding any pipework underneath or within your house) to any customer that we identify, or that has previously identified themselves as vulnerable. Please contact us if you wish to discuss further.

7. Enhanced policy adjustment

During times of 'Drought' or other priorities, Affinity Water reserves the right to redefine the High, Medium and Low volume categories of leak. For example, 'high volume' may be adjusted from leaks greater than 1000 litres per hour to leaks greater than 500 litres per hour. We also reserve the right to carry out free repairs outside this policy on a case by case basis.* Allowing us to offer free repairs to a greater number of customers.

*If the leak is visible, we reserve the right to carry out a one-off excavation at the visible point of the leak and attempt to repair, regardless of the size of the leak. We'll do our best to locate the leak, but if we can't find it with a single excavation, or we can't carry out the repair because of proximity to buildings or access difficulties, you'll need to engage a plumber at your own cost to find and repair/replace it. More details can be found in our [Leakage Booklet](#).

8. Appendices

a. Waste of Water Process

- i. Informal Notice* is a letter sent to the consumer of water making them aware of the presence of a leak either internally or within the supply pipe and requests that a repair is complete within 21 days for single supply or 28 days if on a shared supply
- ii. Formal Notice* is a letter sent if the leak is still unrepaired, letting the consumer of water know of a further 8 days (single supply) or 14 days (shared supply) before the business will use its power under the Water Industry Act 1991 to enforce a repair.
- iii. Enforcement notice:* this is sent in the event of there being no repair following the above informal & formal notices. Using our powers under section 75(9)(a) & (b) of the Water Industry Act 1991 to carry out repairs. This tells the consumer of water that we will attend the property to carry out a repair, which can be charged (including admin costs) to the consumer of water. This notice requests permission to access to the property.
- iv. Warrant:* if we are not granted permission to access at enforcement level (iii), Affinity Water is entitled to seek a warrant of entry from the magistrate's court.

b. Vulnerable customers

- i.* Our Customer Experience Policy states that when a customer needs additional support, we will provide an inclusive safe access to our services which is fair and reasonable without putting them at a disadvantage due to vulnerable circumstances.
- ii.* Further guidance on vulnerability triggers can be found within Ofwat 'Vulnerability Focus Report 2016'

c. Our Principles

