



Our procedure on leakage

For household customers

Your water company

The area we supply is defined in our instrument of appointment and comprises three regions in the south east of England shown on the map below.



We are committed to delivering a high quality water service to all of our customers. We provide water to a population of more than 3.5 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 are committed to the efficient use of water and part of this involves actively seeking to reduce levels of leakage from the household supply pipe part of the water network.

Waste water services for these areas are provided by Thames Water, Anglian Water or Southern Water depending on where you live. If you are an Anglian or Thames Water customer, we bill you on their behalf.

Our commitment to reducing leakage

Leaking pipes can waste a lot of water, which is why we have to take them very seriously. We have over 16,500 km (over 10,000 miles) of pipe network that would stretch from London to Sydney. There is the potential for bursts and leaks to occur anywhere within this network.

Between 2015 and 2020 we made a commitment to reduce to leakage by 14% as this is a high priority for customers.

We estimate that around a third of our total network leakage occurs on our customers' supply pipes, on their side of the stop tap.

For more information on our work on leakage and advice on water efficiency visit www.affinitywater.co.uk/savewater

Who is responsible for leaking pipes?

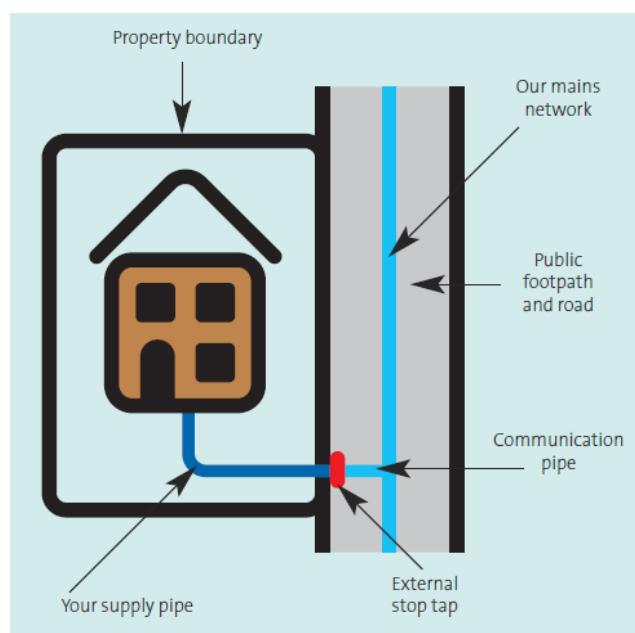
We are responsible for: all the pipes on the mains network (“mains pipes”), including repairing and replacing them when necessary.

You are responsible for: maintaining any water supply pipes. In some circumstances your supply pipe may cross a pathway, highway or private land and you are responsible for repairing and replacing the supply pipe when necessary.

Individual Supply Pipe

Most properties have an individual supply pipe. If your property has an individual supply pipe, you (or your landlord/management agent) are responsible for its upkeep. If you have a leak on your supply pipe, you are responsible for having the leak repaired.

Below is a diagram of a typical supply arrangement: this may differ depending on the location of your property and the location of our water main.



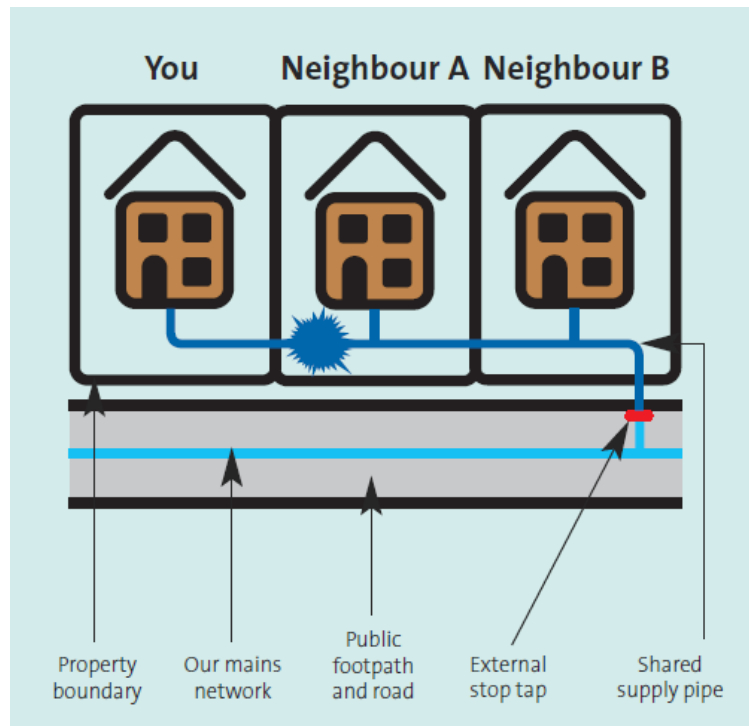
Shared Supply Pipe

Some properties share a supply pipe. You and your neighbours can check if your supply pipe is shared by turning off the stop tap in the street and seeing which properties are without water. Before doing this, you should alert everyone who might be affected.

If your home has a shared supply pipe, you share responsibility for its maintenance with your neighbours.

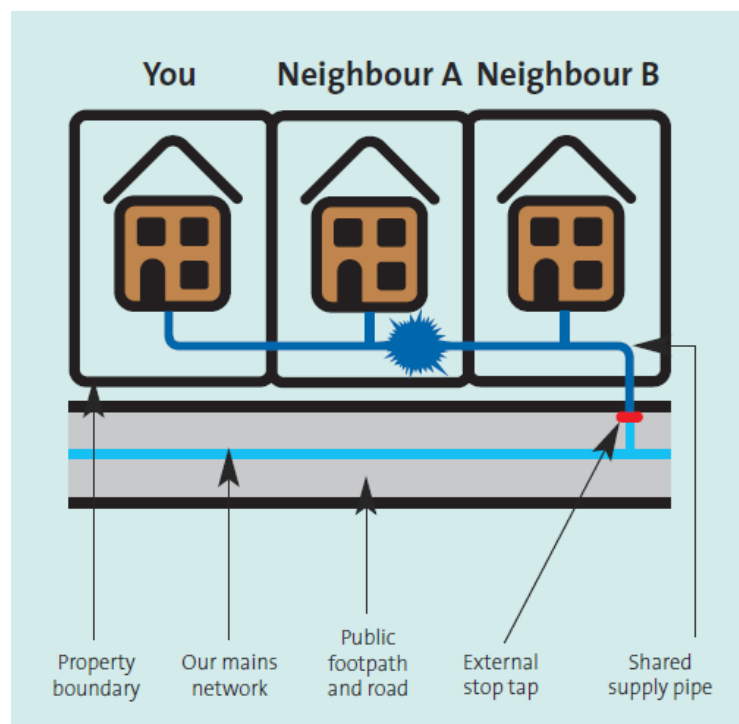
Example 1:

Only you are responsible for the leak



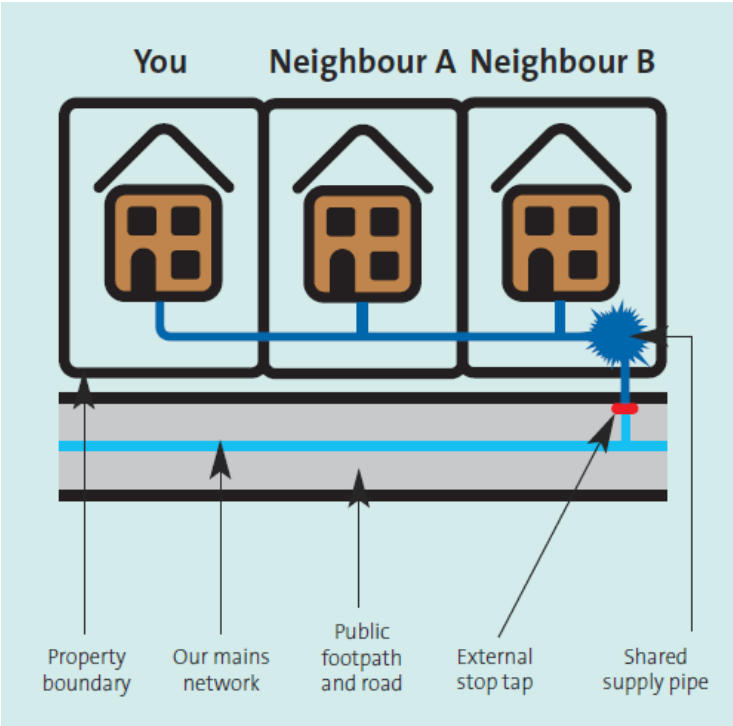
Example 2:

Both you and neighbour A are responsible for the leak



Example 3:

All three of you are responsible for the leak



Supply pipe leaks

The supply pipe is your responsibility to repair and although we have no legal obligation to maintain it we will 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

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

1. Leak Repair Scheme:

If there is a visible leak, we may decide to repair it free of charge under our Leak Repair Scheme. Where we have carried out a free repair under our Leak Repair Scheme, you may not be eligible for a leakage allowance.

2. Meter installations:

If we install a meter at your property for the first time and we find a visible 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 at the same time the meter is installed. If the leak cannot be repaired without additional excavation, we will notify you of the leak and request that you arrange for the repair works to be carried out at your expense.

If we have installed a meter as part of our Water Saving Programme (Central Region only), we will repair any leaks which occur within three months of installing the meter free of charge.

Where we have carried out a free leak repair as part of a meter installation, you may not be eligible for a leakage allowance.

3. Waste of Water Enforcement

If we have issued you with a formal Waste Water Notice and you have not carried out the repair works necessary to resolve the leak on your supply pipe, we will carry out the repair work ourselves as an enforced repair. If you refuse us access to carry out the enforced repair, we may apply to the Magistrates Court for a right of entry Warrant so we can gain access and carry out the repair works.

Where we have carried out an enforced leak repair, you will not be eligible for a leakage allowance. More information on our waste of water process is set out below.

Preventing waste of water

If a water pipe on your property is leaking, you must arrange to have it repaired as soon as possible. In addition to wasting water, if you have a water meter, you will be liable to pay for all water passing through the meter including water lost as a result of leakage from your supply pipe. Once a leak is discovered on your property, we will notify you and initially ask you to repair it within 30 days. This initial notice explains what needs to be done and is designed to give you time to obtain quotations and arrange repairs. In circumstances where there is a high volume of water being wasted, we may ask you to repair the leak within 8 days.

In extreme cases or where no action is taken in response to our initial notice, we have the power under Section 75 of the Water Industry Act 1991 to issue you with a formal Waste Water Notice giving you eight days for the repair work to be carried out. If you do not take action in response to our notices, we have powers to enforce a repair if you fail to act. This means that we will carry out the work ourselves and charge you the cost incurred plus our administration costs.

How to check for leaks

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 any grassed area or driveway during dry weather?
- Is one particular patch of the grassed area always green no matter how dry the weather has been?
- 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 (rather like when your tank or WC cistern is filling), when there is no water being used in the property?
- 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 in your property.

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, reading a meter is easy. You simply need to record the number of cubic metres registered on the meter. The white numbers on black show cubic metres. The white numbers on red show litres (these can be ignored when you read the meter). Your account is based on the number of whole cubic metres. One of the red dials on the meter measures tenths of a litre and will spin round rapidly when water is being used.

Allowances made for leakage

You may be eligible for a leakage allowance if you have a leak on your supply pipe and the following criteria are satisfied:

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

All allowances must be claimed in writing using the appropriate form which is available from our website. If approved, you will receive a revised bill within a few weeks.

It is entirely at our discretion whether or not to grant a leakage allowance:

- You may not be eligible to receive a leak allowance where we have carried out a free leak repair in relation to:
 - our Leak Repair Scheme
 - a meter installation
 - a waste of water enforcement
- We may not grant a leakage allowance where we have previously advised you or the former occupiers of your property that the supply pipe needs replacing but this had not been carried out.
- We do not 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 negligence by you or your agents or where you knew, or should have known, there was wastage of water or a leak and failed to repair it.

Where we agree to make an allowance, your charges will be re-assessed on the basis of past normal consumption. Where there is no record of previous consumption, the adjustment will be based on typical usage for a household of a similar type to your own and further adjusted if your actual use turns out to be significantly different. The adjustment will only apply for the period of abnormal use. The period of the adjustment will not exceed twelve months.

Adjustment for waste water charges

When we make an adjustment to the metered charges for water supply, a similar adjustment will be made to the measured waste water 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 will inform Southern Water of the adjustment made.

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,
- following installation of a meter, or
- where you have failed to repair a leak which you're responsible for.

We will undertake any 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.

The level of reinstatement following completion of the works will depend on the material excavated, for example:

- Where we have carried out works in your garden or in soft ground, we will reinstate the soil only and you will need to carry out any replanting yourself.
- If we have removed paving slabs, bricks, shingle or chippings, we will put back what we removed.
- Any hard surface that has been excavated will be reinstated with black tarmac or concrete.
- You will need to arrange for any special finishes to be reinstated at your expense.

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

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

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 and is now prohibited, we are aware that in the past some water pipes may have been used for electrical earthing. If you believe this may be the case, you will need to contact a qualified electrician to ensure that you have an adequate earth for your electricity supply. You are responsible for all costs associated with establishing if your pipe has been used for electrical earthing and for any necessary remedial work

Contact us

You can report a leak by:

completing our online form - <https://www.affinitywater.co.uk/report-a-leak.aspx>
or sending us a Tweet using the hashtag #leakspotters

Telephone

You can call our Leakspotters line on 0800 376 5325 (open 24 hours)

For emergencies, water quality or leak enquiries
Mon – Fri 7am to 8pm and Sat – Sun 8am to 8pm

Address (Registered Office)

Affinity Water Limited
Tamblin Way
Hatfield
Hertfordshire
AL10 9EZ

Easier reading:

This information can be supplied in large print, braille or audio on request.

Please visit www.affinitywater.co.uk/priorityservices or call us on 0345 357 2406.

Waste water, drainage enquiries and emergencies

Anglian Water: 0845 714 5145 www.anglianwater.co.uk

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

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

Consumer Council for Water (CCWater)

The Consumer Council for Water (CCWater) represents water and waste water consumers in England and Wales. They will take up your complaint if we have been unable to resolve it directly with you. You can find help, information and make a complaint on their website: www.ccwater.org.uk

Consumer Council for Water (London and South East)
First Floor
Victoria Square House
Victoria Square
Birmingham
B2 4AJ

Tel: 0300 034 2222 or email: enquiries@ccwater.org.uk