



# Customer Care for Water Supply Interruptions and Flooding Incidents

Policy no. POL086



## Purpose

This policy document explains the commitments we make to our customers if they're impacted by a water supply interruption or water flooding incident.

Incidents are problems on our network that affect multiple customers. They can include a significant drop in water pressure or water being cut off completely, due to a burst main, pumps failing, flooding, or unexpected changes to planned work. An incident can affect customers in different ways, and it's our responsibility to make sure every situation is dealt with appropriately.

To help us respond correctly, we categorise each incident as 'minor' or 'major'. Regardless of an incident's category, we strive to provide all customers affected with the utmost care and consideration.

It's important to be aware that problems can occur that aren't due to incidents on our network. In many cases, we won't be the right people to help you, such as when you have a leak on your property or a fault with your internal stop tap. But if you're experiencing an issue that's not our responsibility, we'll be happy to help you work out where to go for assistance. To understand which pipes are ours, which pipes are yours and who to call if you have a problem, please visit [thameswater.co.uk/leaks](https://thameswater.co.uk/leaks)

This policy applies to household customers only, for non-household please refer to the Wholesale Service Offering, visit [thameswater.co.uk/serviceoffering](https://thameswater.co.uk/serviceoffering)

## Key principles

- **Support:** we'll support our customers during an incident and until things have returned to normal
- **Proactive:** we'll provide updates to customers, sharing details on the support available (such as bottled water locations) and our progress as our network returns to normal
- **Personal:** we'll take care of our vulnerable customers during an incident, making sure their needs are met and prioritised
- **Effortless:** we'll make sure we're easy to deal with, so customers don't waste their time and energy

## Minor incidents

Minor incidents tend to affect a small number of properties and most of the time they don't cause any flooding or property damage.

### Our commitments:

#### **Onsite response:**

Once we're aware of the incident, we'll send a network service technician to investigate the issue within four hours. We'll do our very best to resolve the issue and restore your water, as quickly as we can.

**Contact and support:**

Our customer care agents are available 24 hours a day to give you the most up-to-date information we have on the incident. You can contact them on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), or by calling **0800 316 9800** (when you call, you can also sign up for SMS/text updates).

**Returning to normal:**

If we can't put your supply back to normal within 12 hours, we'll arrange for an alternative (such as bottled water) and let you know how to access it. We understand the inconvenience of a water supply interruption and will always try to provide alternative water sooner, to minimise the impact on you.

If within 12 hours your supply hasn't been returned to normal, you could be eligible for a payment. We have a Customer Guarantee Scheme, which explains our commitments to you, including in cases of water supply interruption, and what we'll do if we don't meet them – find out more by visiting [thameswater.co.uk/customerguarantee](https://thameswater.co.uk/customerguarantee). If you're eligible, we'll automatically credit your water account – you don't need to make a claim.

**Home damage and claims:**

If you experience property damage and wish to make a claim, please call our contact centre on **0800 316 9800**. Our staff will put you in touch with our dedicated claims team, who will take you through our claims process. If you call outside of our opening hours, we'll ring you back as soon as we can on the next working day.

## Major incidents

Major incidents tend to affect many of our customers and can include flooding and/or loss of water and may cause significant property damage. They may see us having to put in traffic management measures and co-ordinating with agencies like the fire brigade and the police.

### Our commitments:

**Onsite response:**

Once we're aware of the incident, we'll complete a risk assessment and mobilise our incident response immediately. We'll do all we can to resolve the issue and restore your water, including mobilising a full incident response team if appropriate.

**Contact and support:**

We'll dispatch customer representatives within one hour of becoming aware of the incident – they'll be available to answer your questions and provide support on arrival.

We'll update our website regularly with the latest news, so you can easily access essential information and updates on our progress. If you need to contact us, our customer care agents are available 24 hours a day and can give you the most up-to-date information we have on the incident. You can contact them on [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#).

When an incident is affecting a large number of our customers, our customer contact centre tends to receive many calls and it may take us longer to answer. If you do need to speak to us, call **0800 316 9800** (when you call, you can also sign up for SMS/text updates).

### **Returning to normal:**

Repairs for major incidents can be very complex for many reasons – for instance, the complexities of undertaking repair work in congested streets or isolated locations. We always aim to re-route water supplies in all circumstances; however, it might not be possible to re-route water to your property as quickly as we'd like, and issues may take a bit longer to resolve. But we'll do everything we can to restore your water supply within 12 hours.

We know how inconvenient it can be to have no water. So we'll arrange for an alternative supply (such as bottled water) for you if we can't get your water back to normal within 12 hours at most. If we can provide this sooner, we will.

Customers signed up to our priority services register, eg those with a medical need for extra water, will be given priority.

### **Home damage and claims:**

Where internal flooding has been confirmed, Floodcall will be in the area as soon as possible, usually within two hours. Loss adjusters will also attend if necessary. If you experience property damage due to mains water supply flooding, our loss adjustors, Sedgwick, and our claims team at Willis Towers Watson will discuss this with you.

If you've experience major internal flooding, the loss adjusters will:

- Assess the damage to your property.
- Let you know what to expect over the next few days and weeks.
- Make arrangements for emergency works – such as pumping out water and installing drying equipment.
- Arrange alternative accommodation if needed – should the level of flooding mean you need to move out.
- Leave a booklet with further information on the insurance process and next steps.

If you're not already in discussions with a loss adjuster, please call our contact centre on [0800 316 9800](tel:08003169800) and our staff will put you in touch with our dedicated claims team. If you call outside of our opening hours, we'll ring you back the next working day.

If we fail to return your water supply, in line with the commitments in our Customer Guarantee Scheme, you may be eligible for a payment – find out more by visiting [thameswater.co.uk/customerguarantee](https://thameswater.co.uk/customerguarantee). If you're eligible, we'll automatically credit your water account – you don't need to make a claim.

**If you experience sewer flooding**, please call our customer care team on [0800 316 9800](tel:08003169800). It requires a different response to the incidents outlined above, and we treat cases with the highest priority. More information about can be found at [thameswater.co.uk/help/emergencies/flooding](https://thameswater.co.uk/help/emergencies/flooding)

### **Our commitment to priority services customers**

If we have an incident, such as flooding from a burst water main or an unplanned interruption to your water supply, it's important we know in advance about anyone who may need extra support or advice from us. We have a priority services register to help us make sure we can provide the extra care they need.

You may be eligible to join our priority services register if you're of pension age, have mobility concerns or issues with your sight, are on dialysis or are hard of hearing – or if any of these apply to a member of your household. Please visit [thameswater.co.uk/extracare](https://thameswater.co.uk/extracare) to sign up or find out more.

Please bear in mind, it can take up to five working days for you to appear on our register once we've received your registration.

If you've already registered as a priority services customer, this is the service you can expect from us in an incident:

**Proactive communications:** If we have to undertake work on our network in your area due to an incident, we will take steps to proactively contact customers in most need of support. In large incidents, there may be a necessity for us to prioritise our approach and will always ensure that, if you're on dialysis or medically dependent on water, we will get to you first. We'll do this as soon as possible, but timescales will depend on the scale of the issue.

**Bottled water:** If needed, we'll send a customer representative or courier to your home to deliver bottled water, prioritising those on dialysis or medically dependent on water.

## Our commitment to non-household customers

We're also committed to supporting sensitive non-household customers in the event of an incident or issue with their supply.

We'll support non-household customers in compliance with Part E of the Wholesale Retail Code; Operational Terms. Full details of how we manage incidents can be found in our Wholesale Service Offering at [thameswater.co.uk/serviceoffering](https://thameswater.co.uk/serviceoffering)

If we fail to return your water supply, in line with the commitments in the Guaranteed Standards Scheme, you may be eligible for a payment, this is paid by the retailer.

## Summary

Commitment	Minor Incident	Major Incident
<b>Onsite response</b>	We'll send a network service technician within four hours of our becoming aware of the incident.	Once we're aware of the incident, we'll complete a risk assessment and mobilise our incident response immediately.
<b>Contact and support</b>	Our customer care agents are available 24/7 to provide the most up-to-date information on the incident. Contact them on <a href="#">Facebook</a> , <a href="#">Twitter</a> , or call <b>0800 316 9800</b> (you can sign up for SMS/text updates on the call).	We'll dispatch customer representatives within one hour of becoming aware of the incident – they'll be available to answer your questions and provide support on arrival. You can also find the latest updates on our website.  Our customer care agents are available 24/7 for up-to-date information on the incident. Contact them on <a href="#">Facebook</a> , <a href="#">Twitter</a> , or call <b>0800 316 9800</b> (you can sign up for SMS/text updates on the call).
<b>Returning to normal service level</b>	We aim to have your water back on within 12 hours.	We aim to have your water back on within 12 hours.
<b>Home damage and claims</b>	Contact our claims team on <b>0800 316 9800</b> .	Contact our claims team on <b>0800 316 9800</b> . Loss adjustors will be on site as soon as possible, usually within two hours.
<b>Working with other authorities</b>	A multi-authority response isn't usually needed.	We'll make sure there's a co-ordinated response, working with the fire brigade, police, and transport authorities as needed.

## Who this policy applies to

This policy applies to Thames Water household customers.

## Responsibilities

All operational employees and contractors must ensure their actions align with this policy and speak up if something is non-compliant.

Line managers must communicate the details of this policy to employees and contractors, promoting a compliant working environment.

Executives must conduct all business in line with this policy and our core business values.

## Contacting us

For questions, comments or feedback relating to this policy, you can contact us through [thameswater.co.uk/contact-us](https://thameswater.co.uk/contact-us)

If you have any concern about any issues relating to our customer care performance or management arrangements, you can contact the policy sponsor(s).

For concerns regarding dishonest or unethical behaviour, please contact us on any of the following:



If you are an employee of Thames Water, you can also speak with your Line Manager.

### Useful references

- Thames Water Customer Guarantee Scheme pdf - 'Our guarantees to you'  
[thameswater.co.uk/customerguarantee](https://thameswater.co.uk/customerguarantee)
- Wholesale Service Offering  
[thameswater.co.uk/serviceoffering](https://thameswater.co.uk/serviceoffering)

**Policy Exec Sponsors: Kelly Macfarlane (Customer Experience Director) and Steve Spencer (Operations Director), approved on 28/10/2020**