



When your water supply has a leak

Code of practice for non-household
properties

By 2050, we'll need an extra 250 million litres of water every day to support our growing population. Leaks waste thousands of litres of this resource that we all work so hard to protect. That's why being proactive about spotting and fixing leaks is a vital part of our work.

By making every drop count, we can safeguard our supply and the environment around us for generations to come.

This guide is for any non-household customer. We'll explain:

- Who's responsible for the water pipes in and around your property
- Ways you can spot leaks for yourself
- Action to take if you think you've found a leak
- Ways we may be able to help you
- The leakage allowance we'll offer if you have a metered water supply

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1. Responsibility for water pipes

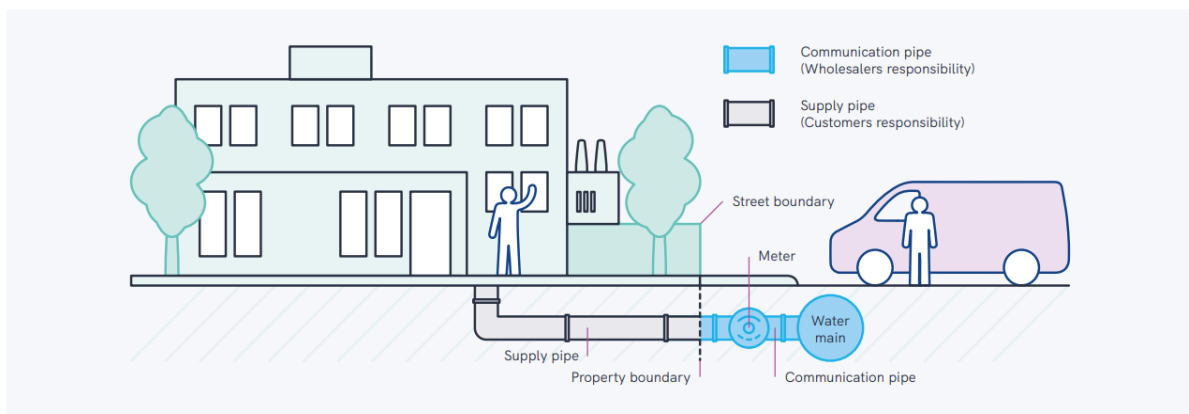
Our water mains and pipes

We're responsible for the mains, which carry water around the region, and for the 'communication pipe' – the one linking your water supply pipe to our water main.

We look after our water mains and pipes with regular maintenance and repairs where they're needed. We're also working through a programme to reduce the number of leaks and bursts by replacing old mains in poor condition.

Your water supply pipe and internal plumbing

The diagram below shows the usual water main and pipe set-up for a property.



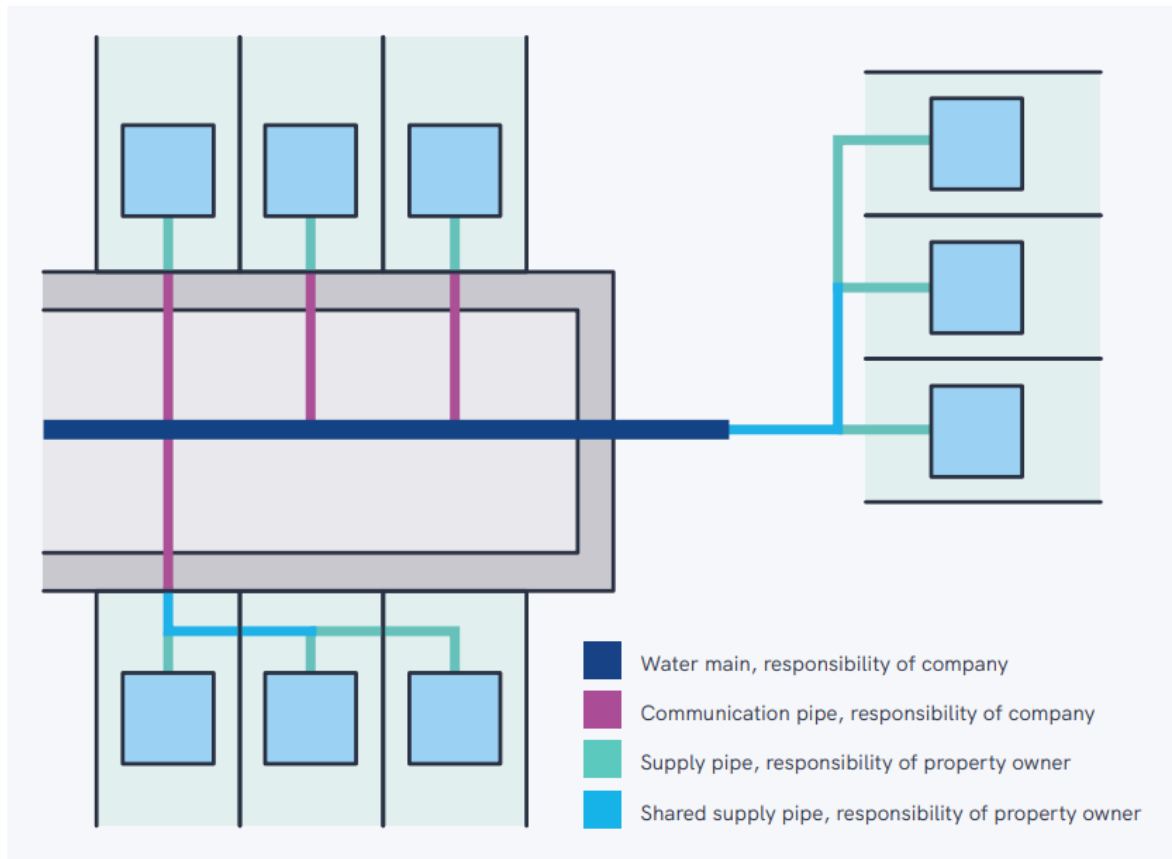
Source: MOSL RWG Leak Allowances Customer Guidance

As a general rule, you're responsible for the water supply pipe that runs from the boundary of your property into your building, as well as all your internal pipes and fittings.

If your supply pipe crosses land belonging to someone else you're responsible for the pipe up to the point that it connects to our communication pipe or water main in the public highway.

Sometimes a single supply pipe serves two or more properties – a 'shared supply'. This is more common when buildings are close together, in a side-by-side layout, such as on a terraced street. It means you and your neighbours have joint responsibility for maintaining the shared part of the pipe.

The diagram below shows the usual water main and pipe set-up for a shared supply.



Source: MOSL RWG Leak Allowances Customer Guidance

If you have a meter, any leaks on the meter and the connections from the pipe to the meter are our responsibility to repair unless there is evidence of wilful damage.

2. Finding leaks

On our water mains and pipes

We're always working to improve our round-the-clock programme to detect bursts on our pipes and water mains. But it's a huge undertaking, so it can make all the difference when a customer lets us know they've spotted a leak.

We're grateful to everyone who reports leaks and bursts. If you find one – in the road, or on a pavement – you can let us know any time by visiting thameswater.co.uk/leak

On your water supply pipe and internal plumbing and fittings

We sometimes discover leaks on customers' pipes while we're performing local leak detection activities. If this happens at your property, we'll let you know right away.

However, when it comes to leaks, the sooner they can be found, the better. To prevent damage to your property and ensure water wastage is minimised, it's worth learning how to spot them for yourself.

Spotting a leak

Some tell-tale signs you have a leak are:

- Reduced water flow or pressure at your cold water tap
- Waterlogged or damp areas on your site, even during dry weather
- Noisy pipes
- An unusually high metered bill

If you have a meter

If you're worried, taking regular readings from your meter can help you determine whether you have a leak. Significant or unexpected increases in your water use may indicate a leak.

With a smart meter, working with your retailer you can track your water use daily. It's quick and easy to spot unexpected changes in your water use.

If you have a standard meter (not a smart meter) and want to test for a leak, follow these steps:

- Turn off your internal stop valve (usually near your cold water tap). Make sure no cisterns are filling and no taps are on.
- Read your water meter.
- Leave the stop valve shut for half an hour, then take another meter reading.

The reading should be the same both times. If it's gone up, there may be a leak between the meter and the stop valve in your property.

Lets save water together, if you think there is a leak on one of our assets you can report it to us [online](#). With your help, our teams can get out to investigate leaks and ensure they are fixed sooner.

It's important that all leaks are repaired as quickly as possible. The next section explains what to do if you find one, as well as ways we might be able to help you.

3. Fixing leaks

On our water mains and pipes

We repair leaks on the water mains and pipes that belong to us as soon as we can, as well as replacing pipes in poor condition as part of our ongoing investment programme. Although we make every effort to make repairs quickly, we normally need permission from the highway authority before we can dig up a footpath or road – which can add considerable time to our process.

On your water supply pipe

If we identify a leak on your supply pipe, or if you've found one yourself, it's your responsibility to get it fixed as quickly as you can.

Supply pipe leaks can cause serious damage to your property or a neighbour's. And if you have a water meter, the cost of all water lost will appear on your bill – so it's vital you take action as soon as you discover a leak or we report one to you.

There are a few options available to help you get a leak fixed:

1. If you have a specific emergency policy, it's likely your leak will be covered.
2. Check your business insurance – lots of policies include support for leaks on your supply pipe.
3. If you need a hand fixing the leak you can contact your retailer or to find a plumber check our list of those we approve: thameswater.co.uk/approvedplumbers

You'll need to arrange to get your leak fixed within six weeks of us confirming it. Minimising water wastage is really important to protect our supply and the environment, so it's essential you act quickly once you've identified a leak.

If it hasn't been fixed within six weeks, we may send you a legal notice under Section 75 of the Water Industry Act 1991 explaining that we'll need to fix the leak in accordance with our statutory duties. We may look to recover reasonable costs from you if we have to take these steps.

In an emergency, or where a leak may be causing damage, we may need to turn off your supply until the leak has been repaired.

Fittings inside your property

You're responsible for fixing any leaks and dealing with any wastage from the pipework, fixtures or fittings inside your property. It's a criminal offence to intentionally or negligently cause water to be wasted through a leaking pipe. If you intentionally or negligently waste water we've supplied, you can face a fine.

We want to help prevent this, so if we discover water wastage from your internal plumbing, fixtures or fittings, we'll let you know right away and give you advice about getting the leak fixed.

4. Your leak allowance

If you have a water meter, it's important to remember that it records all water passing through it, including any lost through leaking pipes. Your bills will include the water wasted through the leak, as well as the water you've actually used.

We want to make sure you're not left out of pocket, which is why we'll cover the extra cost of your leak on your bill, so long as you submit a claim to us via your retailer and:

- The leak is repaired within six weeks of it being confirmed
- You make your allowance claim within six months of the date of repair
- The leaked water (in part or entirely) did not return to the public sewer
- The leak wasn't caused by negligence
- We or your water wholesaler haven't had to issue you a Section 75 enforcement notice

If approved, we'll credit your retailer with any money that would have been added to your bill as a result of your leak.

If you don't meet the above criteria but feel you have exceptional circumstances, please let your retailer know, and we'll consider your leak allowance claim on its individual merits.

If you qualify, we can provide you with a leak allowance for leaks on your water supply pipe once in 12 months, unless the occupier of the property has changed in the last 24 months.

Calculating a leak allowance

If your property has its own water supply and meter, calculating your allowance is straightforward. We'll compare how much water you've used in the past, during a comparable period, against the amount recorded by your meter while you had the leak. We require two meter reads approximately 10 days apart from the date that the leak was fixed. We'll calculate the difference in cost and use this as the amount of the allowance we'll credit to your retailer.

If we don't have a record of past use, we will use the post leak consumption as a basis for the pre leak consumption.

If you qualify for the allowance and the leak was our responsibility to fix the allowance will be paid for the full period of the leak. If the leak is on your pipework, we will provide an allowance for a maximum of 365 days.

If, after we've adjusted your bill, you don't feel the allowance accurately reflects the difference between the amount of water you'd have normally used and the amount recorded by your meter because of the leak, please let your retailer know within 10 days and we can review the allowance and let your retailer know our decision.

