

What to do if you spot a leak

Household customers



Bournemouth
Water

What to do when you spot a leak

We're very grateful to all our customers who tell us about leaks on our water network. With just over 1,800 miles of water pipes to look after, your help means that we can locate and fix leaks faster. Thank you.

This leaflet outlines which pipework we're responsible for fixing, and which pipes lie in your care. It also explains how to spot a leak, what to do and how we'll support you.



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Responsibility for pipework

Typically, you'll be responsible for all the pipework inside your home and the underground supply pipe to the point where it reaches your street boundary. The water main itself, and the communication pipe leading from the main up until your street boundary is our responsibility.

Sometimes the main isn't laid in the street that borders your property. In these instances, you're responsible for all underground pipework to the boundary of the street where the water main is laid.

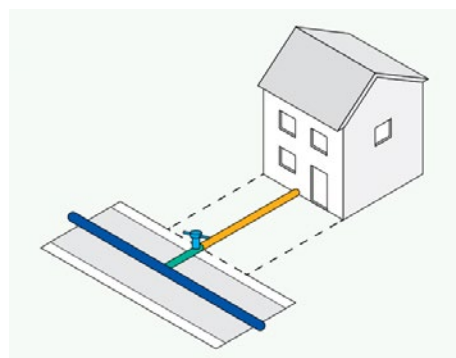
If you live in a house set back quite far from the street, or from the water main, you'll have a very long supply pipe. You're responsible for all of it, even if it passes through other people's property.

Your home may also share its supply pipe with others. In this case, you, and the neighbours you share it with, have joint responsibility for the sections of pipe you share. You alone have responsibility for the section of pipe that feeds into your property only.

It can be tricky to figure out who's responsible for what, so if you need some guidance, please call our Services Team on 01202 590059 or visit our website: bournemouthwater.co.uk/pipes

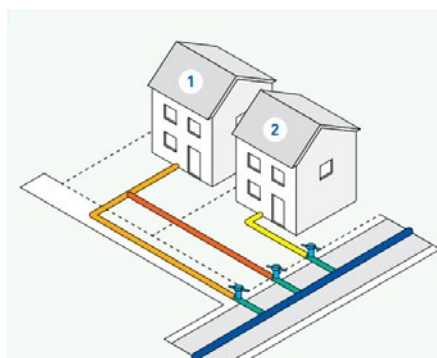
Reporting a leak

To let us know about a leak, wherever you've found it, please call our Services Team on 0800 587 8979 or visit: bournemouthwater.co.uk/leaks



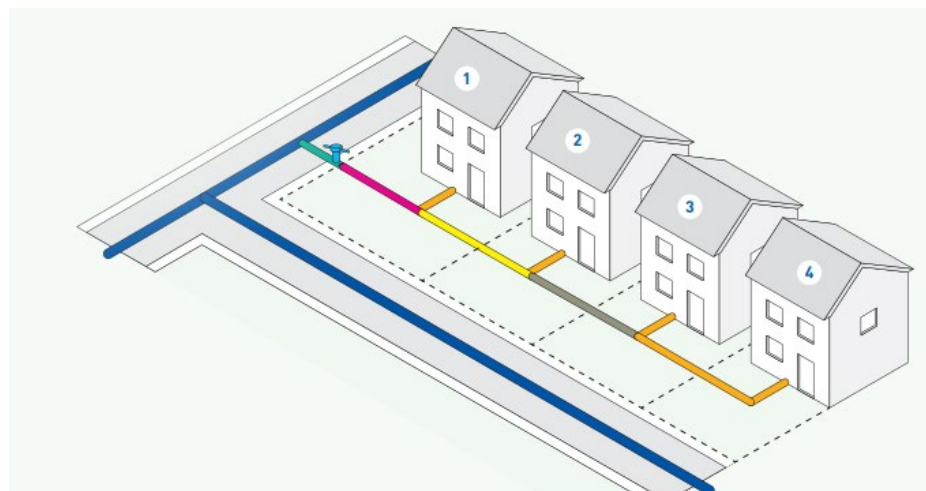
Key:

- Water main [our responsibility]
- Communication pipe [our responsibility]
- Supply pipe (homeowner's responsibility)
- Stop tap or stop tap and water meter [our responsibility]
- - - Premises boundary



Key:

- Water main [our responsibility]
- Communication pipe [our responsibility]
- Supply pipe (homeowner 2 responsibility)
- Supply pipe (homeowner 1 responsibility)
- Alternative scenario supply pipe (homeowner 1 responsibility if applicable)
- Stop tap or stop tap and water meter [our responsibility]
- - - Premises boundary



General key:

- Water main [our responsibility]
- Communication pipe [our responsibility]
- Stop tap or stop tap and water meter [our responsibility]
- - - Premises boundary

Homeowner responsibilities:

- Individual supply pipes (homeowners 1-4 individually responsible)
- Joint supply pipes (homeowners 1-4 responsible)
- Joint supply pipe (homeowners 2-4 responsible)
- Joint supply pipe (homeowners 3-4 responsible)

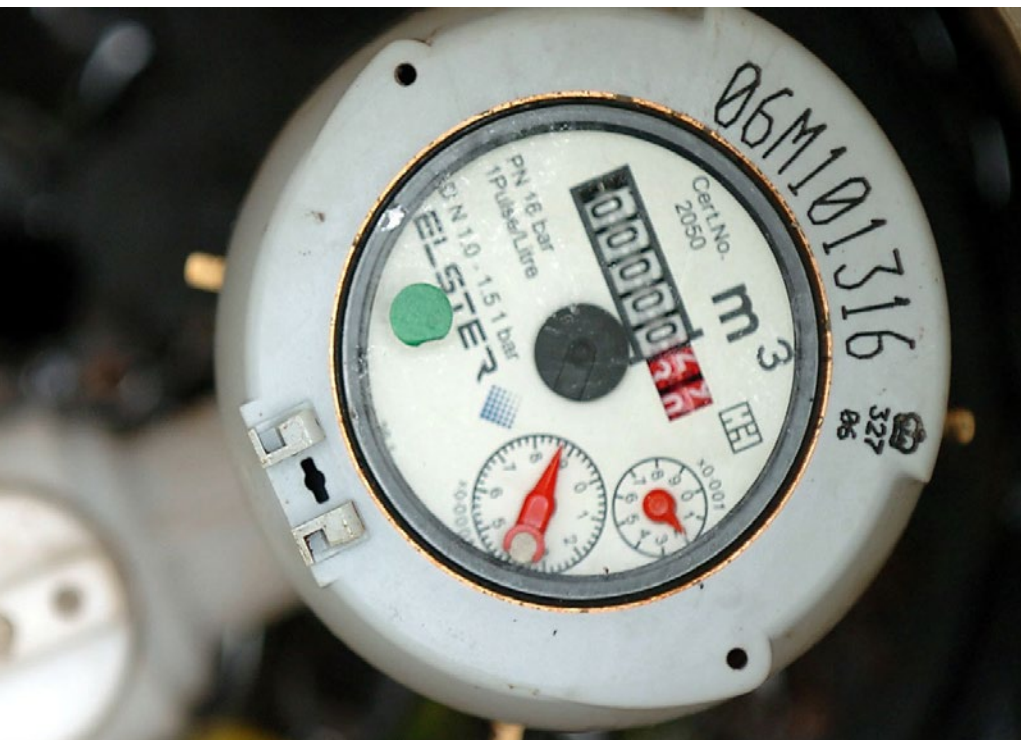
Possible signs of a leak

When a leak is underground it might not be so obvious above ground.

Patches of lush vegetation during dry spells

Higher than normal meter readings

A bill showing higher than normal water use



Is it a leak?

To confirm if you have a leak

1. Read your meter and take note of the reading (all digits)
2. Turn off all water-using appliances in your house for a couple of hours
3. Check the meter again – if the dials have moved, you probably have a leak.

Note: If you have an internal storage tank, there may be water still coming into your property as it's filling. To check, take several meter readings throughout the test – the dial should stop moving once the water tank is full. If it continues to move, and you know the tank is full, you probably have a leak.

Inside or outside?

1. Read your meter and take note of the reading
2. Turn off all water-using appliances
3. Turn off your internal stop tap (usually located beneath the kitchen sink)
4. Check the meter again – if the dials still move, the leak is probably on your underground supply pipe.

What to do when a leak is your responsibility

Repair or replace?

We strongly recommend that you consider replacing your supply pipe if it begins to leak.

It may be more practical and cost-effective to do this because some older pipes can be in pretty poor condition.

This means repairing one leak may disturb the pipe and cause it to leak somewhere else. Galvanised iron or black alkathene plastic pipes are most at risk of springing multiple leaks like this.

By who?

The property owner is responsible for fixing leaks on your supply pipe and private plumbing.

We recommend you use plumbers approved by the Water Regulations Advisory Scheme (WRAS) and WaterSafe. They'll know all the approved materials for fixing and replacing pipes. Visit: [bournemouthwater.co.uk/find-a-plumber](https://www.bournemouthwater.co.uk/find-a-plumber)

By when?

If the leak is on your supply pipe, we usually allow 28 days for it to be repaired.

In some circumstances, we issue a 10-day notice to have a leak repaired.

What happens if you don't repair it

We're working hard to reduce leakage across our region.

Not only does this mean we can meet our targets set by Ofwat, but repairing leaks means your bills can stay as low as possible. At the end of the day, water escaping from a leak is a costly loss of a valuable resource.

So, if we know that there's a leak on your pipework, we'll ask you to repair it and usually allow 28 days for you to do so.

If you do not, and haven't contacted us to explain why, we may have to do one, or more, of the following:

- Carry out the repair ourselves and charge you for the service
- Serve legal notice requiring the repair to be completed
- In cases where the escaping water may cause damage to property or danger to others, we can turn off the supply until the repair is carried out.

Tenants

If there's a leak anywhere on your property, please let your landlord know straight away. They should be responsible for fixing it.

How we'll help if you have a leak

Leak Allowances (Metered customers only)

If you have a leak, your meter will register the higher usage of water. Usually, our meter readers will spot that and alert you to the fact that there could be a leak. It's your responsibility to look into it once they have suggested this.

The higher read will also mean you receive a higher-than-normal bill, and you'll be paying for water that you haven't used, because it's being wasted through the leak in your pipe.

That's why we've set up a leak allowance so that you don't pay any more than usual for your water. We'll pass the details of the lost water and of any adjustment made to Wessex Water or Southern Water, depending on which of these companies provides your sewerage service, and they'll make similar adjustments to your sewerage bill.

After the leak has been repaired, we will need a meter reading to establish how much water has been lost to the leak. If we already know how much water you usually use, we will use historic usage to calculate the excess charges. Additional reads may be needed if we do not have this, to assess your normal usage.

To qualify for this allowance, you must stop the leak by repairing or replacing the pipework within 28 days of the leak being confirmed.

Full replacement

We'll contribute up to £240 towards the cost.

Repeated leaks

We will only give you one leak allowance at a given property in any five-year period.

We won't grant the allowance where:

- The leak isn't on your supply pipe
- The leak is caused by negligence or deliberate damage by you, your family or agents
- You should have known there was a leak and failed to repair it within 28 days.

To apply for an allowance

Please call us on 01202 590059 or contact us online, within 10 days of receiving notification from us that there may be a leak on your supply pipe.

Or, if you get it repaired privately, please get in touch no later than 15 days after the repair is made.

bournemouthwater.co.uk/leak-allowance

Phone

01202 590059

to talk about your account.

SignLive

Register at: signlive.co.uk/login

Relay

Contact us via Relay UK through the app or by dialling 18001 before the helpline number.

Social Media

WhatsApp
Facebook
Twitter
Webchat

Post

Bournemouth Water
PO Box 4762
Worthing
BN11 9NT

Website

For more information,
please visit:
[bournemouthwater.co.uk/
your-account](https://bournemouthwater.co.uk/your-account)



This document is one of a series setting out key information for customers about our services, including charges and the support we offer during an incident.

To see other documents with key information, use the QR code or the link below.

bournemouthwater.co.uk/important-information



This leaflet is available in other languages, large print, and braille.