

Leakage Code of Practice

For Household and Non-household Customers

MAY
2010

If you spot a leak, please ring us on 0800 281 432



Dŵr Cymru
Welsh Water

www.dwrcymru.com

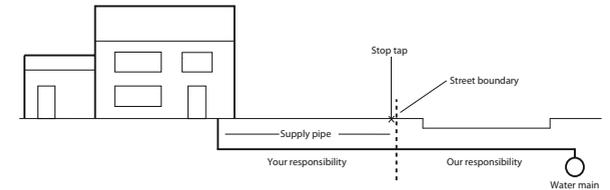
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Why should we reduce leakage?

Some may say that in Wales, we are fortunate to have high levels of rainfall, meaning that water is in plentiful supply. This is usually the case and our customers can normally count on their water supply being available day or night, whenever they turn on the tap. Water, however, remains a valuable resource and costs a lot of money to take from rivers, store in reservoirs, treat and deliver to you.

We produce around 1000 million litres of drinking water every day. A quarter of this is used by industry and businesses whilst households use about half. The remainder is lost through leakage.

About 80% of leakage occurs on our pipes and in common with the rest of the water industry, we are working hard to reduce the amount of water lost in this way to an economic level. The economic level is determined by a balance between the cost of reducing leakage and the cost of the water saved. So far, our work has met all the regulator's tough, mandatory objectives on leakage levels.



The remaining 20% of leakage occurs on the pipes, which are owned by, or are the responsibility of our customers. The diagram above illustrates where a leak would be the responsibility of the customer.

The diagram above outlines the usual arrangement for pipe work. However, there are instances, such as in older properties, where the supply pipe from our water main may service a number of properties. Where the pipe supplies more than one property, referred to as a common supply or joint supply, the responsibility to maintain it is shared by all the customers who receive water from this pipe.

You can help reduce the amount of water lost through leaks by checking for leaking pipes and reporting them to us. Fixing leaks also has other benefits; water leaking from pipes can damage roads and

foundations of buildings, so it is in everyone's interest to prevent and repair leaks. Furthermore, if you have a water meter, then you may be paying for leaking water, which you are not using.

What we do about leaks

We regularly check and repair all our mains water pipes. Our leakage technicians listen to parts of the pipe work and can hear if water is leaking from the system. We look after and repair both the mains water pipes and the smaller pipe that connects your supply pipe to it (known as a communication pipe). If we find that the leak is on your supply pipe, we will let you know and advise you how best to repair it. You may qualify for a free repair or replacement of up to 15 metres of pipe. Further details about this scheme can be found later in this Code. If you think we have a leak on our pipes, or you suspect you have a leak on your pipes,

please telephone us on **0800 281 432** for further help and information. This line is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Also our publication "Where does your water go?" may help, which can be downloaded online at www.dwrcymru.com, or is available by contacting our publications line **0800 052 0138**.

What to do if you have a leak

You are responsible for maintaining and repairing the supply pipe that runs from the external stop tap into your premises. If your underground supply pipe leaks, it can waste as much water in five days as an average family uses in a year.

Not all leaking pipes are obvious. Some can leak unnoticed underground. We recommend that during periods of dry weather you check your drives and paths for unexplained damp spots, and examine your gardens for areas of unusually lush vegetation - all are typical signs of a leaking water pipe. If a leak is on your pipe work, it is usually your responsibility to repair it. The pipe must be repaired even if you do not

qualify for our free repair or replacement scheme.

We have a legal right to insist that you repair any leaks on your supply pipe, and may give you a formal notice called a "waste notice". If you do not repair the leak within the time period stated, usually 14 days, we may do the repair work and may charge you for it. We would do this to prevent water being wasted or to prevent the risk of contamination of the water supply. If we send you a waste notice and you are not sure what to do, please call us for help and advice on **0800 052 0130**. This line is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. We can also turn off the supply to prevent waste and contamination.

Household customers

As part of our commitment to reducing leakage, we will endeavour to repair one leak on your part of the underground supply pipe, free of charge, within a three-year period. We may carry out a maximum of two trial hole excavations including installations of one "in-line" stop tap if deemed necessary by us to locate your leak. If

following this work, we are still unable to locate the leak, you will be informed and asked whether you want us to carry out any further investigations, which you will be recharged for. Alternatively you can employ a contractor of your choice to carry out this work for you. If we find that the supply pipe is in a poor condition and we are not able to repair it, we may decide to replace part of the pipe, up to a maximum of 15 metres. Again, this work will be carried out free of charge. Please note that there may be other restrictions that apply which will be discussed with you - any leak caused by the negligence of a customer will not qualify for a free leak repair. Please be aware that our reinstatement policy is backfill only.

Where the leak is on the supply pipe under your house, we will generally recommend that you replace the pipe rather than attempt to repair the leak. Leaks under a customer's property remain the responsibility of the customer, we will not attempt to undertake repair work under any form of structure or building, and our leak repair policy does not apply in these circumstances.

Please remember that even if we repair or replace your part of the supply pipe, it is still your responsibility. As it is not in our interest or yours to keep repairing leaks on the supply pipe we will only carry out one free repair or pipe replacement in a three year period.

If you find a leak in your house, then you will need to contact a plumber as a leak of this nature is your responsibility. We recommend that you always use an approved plumber to carry out any work for you.

Please telephone us on **0800 052 0130** for further information. This line is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Non-household Customers

Because of the importance of minimising water leaks from all underground water pipes, non-household customers are eligible to apply for a £50 grant towards the cost of repairing or replacing their supply pipe. In order to qualify for the grant, the leak must be repaired on the underground supply pipe within 14 days of your first contact with us. As it is not

in our interest or yours to keep repairing leaks on the supply pipe, we will only give you one repair grant for the same property in a three year period.

The non household policy for repairs also applies to mixed use premises.

Metered Customers

If you are on a meter and the leak is not repaired you may have to pay for the wasted water which has passed through the meter. This means that your bill may be higher than normal due to water lost through leakage. Please refer to the section on "Will metered customers have to pay for water lost through a leak?" on page 6.

1. What happens if I have a new meter fitted?

We will carry out a simple survey at your premises and decide on the most suitable place for the water meter to be installed. It must be installed where it will measure all the water you use, including any outside taps, outbuildings etc, and where it will be easily accessible for reading and maintenance. We usually decide where the meter is positioned in accordance with regulations made by the

Government (Part II of The Water (Meters) Regulations 1988). There are three possible locations for a meter. Generally, meters will be on our part of the supply pipe near the highway boundary at the external stop tap. This is our preferred location. Occasionally, we may install them inside the premises, or alternatively outside on your part of the supply pipe. Customers may be charged if they choose an alternative to the Company's proposed location of the meter, pipe or apparatus.

We check for leaks in the pipes when we fit a new meter. If we find a leak on your external pipe work and can repair it without more digging at the time, we will do so free of charge. If further excavation is required to locate the leak then this remains the responsibility of the customer, however a free leak repair would be granted provided the customer meets the requirements of the free leak repair scheme, i.e. that no repair has taken place in the previous three years, that the total supply pipe is less than 15 metres and that there are no structural implications involved.

If you do not qualify for a free repair it is your responsibility to repair any leaks, and the company is entitled to charge for any lost water passing through the meter.

For customers on our Additional Services register we may move a meter free of charge if it makes it easier to read – depending on the supply arrangements.

Your water supply will be off for up to two hours while we install the water meter for you.

2. Checking for leaks with metered supplies

You should check your meter readings regularly, if it is safe for you to do so. That way you will be able to find out if there are any leaks, or other waste of water.

Turn off all taps and water-using appliances and then check to see if your meter is moving. If the meter does move it could indicate that you have a leak.

We suggest that you read the meter on the same day each month and keep a record of the readings (the black numbers only). Any large increases in the monthly usage will help you to spot any wastage or leakage and

highlight the need to carry out repairs quickly. If you cannot read your meter dial because of dirt, condensation or anything else, please contact us on

0800 052 0140. Also contact us if you think the meter has stopped working. Please replace the meter cover and any protective pieces of foam as found.

3. Who owns the water meter?

The water meter remains the property of Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water and therefore, the meter must not be removed or made inaccessible. It is against the law to change the way it reads, or to tamper with it any way whatsoever. If you have a meter fitted inside your premises, you are responsible for protecting the meter against damage and frost.

Will metered customers have to pay for water lost through a leak?

We will provide a full water and sewerage allowance on the amount of water lost to leakage if, following investigation, the leak is deemed to be the responsibility of Welsh Water or its appointed agents/contractors.

Allowances

For household customers water and sewerage allowances are calculated on previous consumption where this is available. If there is no previous consumption we would base the allowance on typical usage for a property of a similar type and adjust this allowance if subsequent meter readings show your actual usage is significantly different.

For non household customers, if no previous consumption records are available we will take readings following the leak repair to ascertain your “normal” usage.

1. Water Allowances

Household customers may be awarded a one off allowance against their water charges in respect of the metered water lost when a leak on the customers’ part of the service pipe has been repaired or replaced. This applies when the repair/replacement is carried out by the Company or by the customer. (The allowance is applicable once per customer at that property).

Customers whose properties have a mixed use may be given a water allowance in respect of the household element of their bill.

The water allowance may be backdated to the beginning of the billing period prior to the one in which the leak was repaired.

Water allowances are not given to non-household customers.

2. Sewerage Allowances

Household and non-household customers may be entitled to a sewerage allowance on the first and subsequent leaks where the water lost due to leakage has not returned to the sewer. The allowance may be granted for up to two charging years prior to the one in which the leak was repaired, if it can be shown that the leak was present during that period.

Following the repair of the leak, your bill will be calculated up to, or past, the date of repair and the allowance will be applied.

If you think you may be entitled to such an allowance, or you require any further information, please visit us online at www.dwrcymru.com or call us on **0800 052 140**.

PLEASE NOTE Customers must apply for an allowance within six months of a leak being repaired.

No allowance will be given where a leak has been caused through the negligence of the customer (or the owner responsible for the supply pipe) or their respective agents or where the customer knew or ought to have known that there was a leak and failed to repair it.

Using Water Wisely

Part of our leakage strategy is to encourage customers to use water wisely. If you would like to carry out your own audit to check you make best use of your water, please ring us on **0800 052 0138**, and ask for a free copy of one of our Water Audit booklets.

Useful tips for household customers

- Be aware of toilets fitted with a “flap valve” rather than the traditional siphon. These toilets have a tendency to leak and should be avoided
- Have a shower rather than a bath (but please note that power showers use much more water than ordinary showers and can use as much water as a bath)
- Only use dishwashers and washing machines when you have a full load
- Don’t wash dishes or brush your teeth under running water
- Use a bucket instead of a hosepipe to wash your car
- Collect rainwater in a barrel for your garden
- If possible avoid using hoses
- Fix all leaks and dripping taps.

Please remember, if you think we have a leak on our pipes, please telephone us on **0800 281 432**, available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Useful telephone numbers

These lines are available to you Monday to Friday between 08.00am and 8.00pm, and Saturday between 08.30am and 1.30pm (excluding bank holidays), unless otherwise stated.

For advice on water services or in an emergency, please ring:

0800 052 0130 (This line is available 24 hours a day seven days a week)

If you spot a leak, please ring:
0800 281 432 (This line is available 24 hours a day seven days a week)

Billing and account enquiries:
0800 052 0145

Water meter enquiries:
0800 052 0140

Welsh language line for billing and account enquiries:
0800 052 6058

If you have hearing difficulties please ring minicom text:
0800 052 4125

This code, together with our Customer and Debt Code form part of a suite of leaflets available from Welsh Water. Details of all our publications can be found on our web site; www.dwrcymru.com/publications/.

Alternatively, please ring us on **0800 052 0138** for further information.

Consumer Watchdog

At Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water, we are committed to putting our customers first. If you are unhappy with any service we have provided, please contact us on **0800 052 0145**. However, if we are not able to resolve your complaint satisfactorily, you can also contact the Consumer Council for Water Wales (CC Water) the consumer watchdog representing water and sewerage customers in England and Wales.

Consumer Council for Water Wales, Room 140, Caradog House, 1-6 St Andrews Place Cardiff, CF10 3BE.

Web: www.ccwater.org.uk
Telephone **08457 078267**
Fax **029 20 239847**
Minicom **0121 345 1044**

Please contact us first as CCWater will normally only investigate complaints you've already told us about and will want to see how we've handled your complaint first.