

Leakage code of practice

This code of practice gives details of the procedures on leakage from domestic properties whether or not the supply is metered.

What is covered in this code of practice?

This code of practice applies to all domestic customers (the occupiers of premises used wholly or partly as a dwelling) whether or not the supply is metered.

It explains who is responsible for leaks from your pipework and when we would adjust your water charges. This is one of a series of codes of practice which has been approved by Ofwat.

The causes of leaks

We supply you with water 24 hours a day, seven days a week through our mains network. Leakage from our pipes and yours can happen for a number of reasons including:

- leaks from the joints between pipes;
- deterioration in the materials of the pipes;
- corrosion of the pipes by the water in them or the soil around them;
- vibration or damage from traffic;
- freezing during cold weather or subsidence of the soil during long dry periods;
- damage by other utilities as they work on their own pipes or network; or
- leaks on internal pipework or water lost from faulty fixtures or fittings e.g. faulty overflows.

The importance of repairing leaks

We have a legal duty to maintain a sustainable, economical and efficient water supply system.

To make sure there is enough water available whatever the weather, we are committed to finding and repairing leaks as quickly as possible. Our booklet 'A simple guide to water pipes, drains and sewers' explains more about leakage and how we are tackling it. To get a copy please call **0845 303 7711**.

How to spot leaks

Tell-tale signs of leaks on your supply pipe include a regular wet patch in the garden or on your driveway, poor water pressure at the tap and noises in your internal pipes when no domestic appliances are being used. If you spot a leak call our Leakline free on **0800 33 00 33**.

Getting in touch

Spotted a leak?

Call our 24 hour, 7 days a week Leakline on Freefone **0800 33 00 33**

Water supply enquiries

• **0845 746 2200**

Office hours

*8am and 8pm on weekdays
8am and 6pm on Saturdays
8am and 12noon on Sundays
Please use the same numbers for emergencies (24 hours).*

Billing enquiries

• Unmetered: **0845 746 1100**
• Metered: **0845 746 2222**

Office hours

*8am and 8pm on weekdays
8am and 5pm on Saturdays*

Or if you prefer, write to us at:

United Utilities
PO Box 50
Warrington
WA55 1AQ

Related factsheets

- Private leak repair scheme
- Burst allowance claim form

For a copy of any of our leaflets please call our automated leaflet request line on:

• **0845 303 7711**
• Textphone: **0808 143 1195**

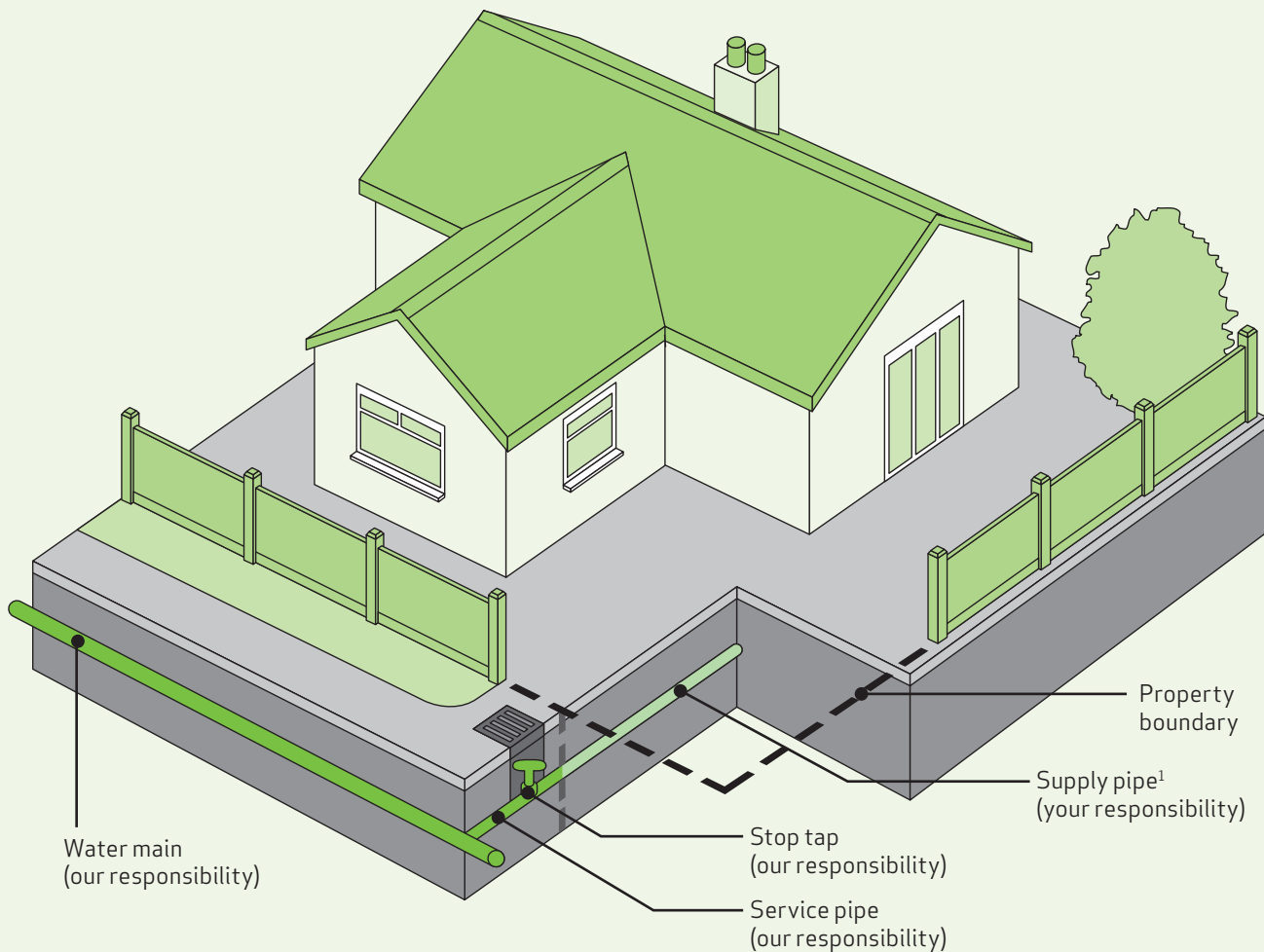
To find out more, visit our website: **unitedutilities.com**

Customers who have a water meter can use the meter to check for leaks

You can take regular meter readings every month or so to check for leaks. If you are using more water – has a tap started dripping or is an overflow running or is it a leak? Remember to check any outside taps. To check for leaks:

- turn off all taps and appliances which use water;
- wait 30 minutes or so, then read the meter (including all red digits);
- do not use any water for another hour then read the meter again.

If the red digits can be seen moving whilst all taps and appliances are off or the meter reading has increased after the 30 minutes or so, you may have a leak.



Single supply pipes

What are you responsible for?

- You are solely responsible for the repair of any leaks on your supply pipe¹ (see diagram above) unless you qualify under our private leak repair scheme.
- If the leak is on a supply pipe that is running through a neighbour's property who is not supplied from this pipe:
 - Where the supply pipe is accessible, it is your neighbour's responsibility to provide you with access to enable the repair to be completed at your cost.
 - If the leak is not readily accessible and the location of the pipe contravenes the Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations 1999, then it is the neighbour's sole responsibility to remove any obstacles to allow repair.

More information is available in our factsheet - private leak repair scheme, available by calling **0845 303 7711** or alternatively visit our website at unitedutilities.com/bursthome.

The responsibility for repairing leaks

We are responsible for repairing leaks on our water pipes (generally pipes in streets up to the boundary of your property). We aim to do this within seven days of knowing about the leak, but give priority to repairing large or dangerous leaks.

Legally you are responsible for your water supply pipe. However, we currently offer a private leak repair scheme. This means that in certain cases we may repair a leak on your supply pipe without charge. For more information about our private leak repair scheme please call us on **0845 746 2200**.

Supply pipe arrangements can vary. If you are unsure of the layout of your pipes and your responsibilities please contact us. We will:

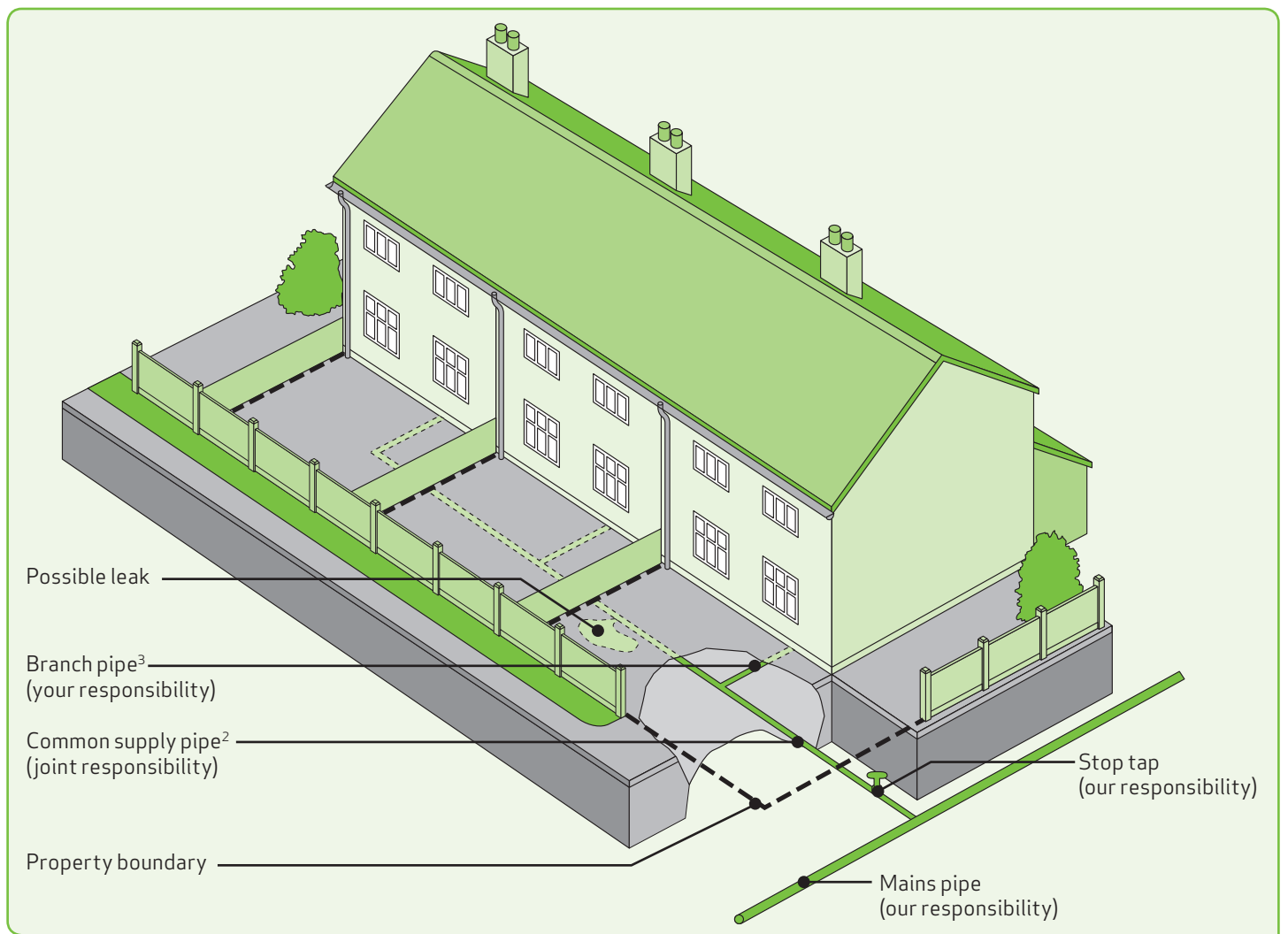
- only repair supply pipes to domestic properties;
- only repair underground pipes, not internal plumbing or pipes underneath buildings or permanent structures; and
- provide temporary reinstatement (you are responsible for final reinstatement) and leave your property safe and tidy.

NB: we normally aim to carry out the investigation and/or repair leaks within seven days. If the leak is an emergency or causing damage to your property, please contact your plumber. We would recommend that you use a member of the Water Industry Approved Plumber Scheme. For further details visit the website www.wras.co.uk/wiaps

If we find a leak when fitting an external water meter

If we find a leak on the incoming pipework when we fit an external meter, which we can repair without any extra digging, we will repair the leak without charge. If we cannot repair the leak at this stage because extra work is required we will process this under our private leak repair scheme, details of which can be found in the previous section.

If we suspect there is a leak somewhere else, for example on your internal plumbing, we will tell you. If you do not repair the leak you will have to pay for the water lost from the leaking pipe.



The location of the meter

We will decide where the meter is fitted in line with regulations made by the government. There are three possible locations:

- inside the house, usually straight after the stopvalve, most internal meters are located under the kitchen sink;
- in a purpose made meter box built through the cavity wall (in wall); or fixed to an external elevation of the property (wall mounted);
- outside the house in the street close to the property boundary in a chamber with the stopcock.

In new properties we prefer meters to be fitted internally or in wall mounted boxes. With existing properties (for example when a customer requests a meter and our survey confirms that a meter can be fitted) the meter will usually be fitted inside the house, or outside if this is not possible. A wall mounted box cannot be fitted in existing properties because of significant structural and plumbing alterations that are needed.

You can request an alternative location providing it is acceptable to us and you must meet any additional costs. Such charges may be waived for customers with extra needs who

are registered on our ExtraCare scheme. For further information about this scheme please call us on **0845 746 1100** or log onto unitedutilities.com/extracare.

Powers to prevent waste and misuse of water

If a leak cannot be repaired under our private leak repair scheme, you will be required to fix the leak at your expense within ten days. If the leak is not repaired within ten days, we have a legal duty to carry out the work and we will charge you for all reasonable costs associated with the repair. Sections 73-75 of the Water Industry Act 1991 give us the right, in certain circumstances, to turn off the supply if the leak is not repaired.

Allowances against metered charges for water lost

If your supply is metered and you find a leak on your supply pipe, we may repair the leak without charge under our private leak repair scheme. However, if the pipe runs inside or underneath buildings or permanent structures, you will have to repair the leak yourself. You may use your own plumber to do this. If you discover a

Common supply pipes (CSP)

What are you responsible for?

- If the leak is on the 'joint responsibility' part of the common supply pipe², the owners of the properties would share the repair costs equally.
- If the leak is found to be on the branch pipe³ to an individual property, the owner of that property would pay for the repair in full if it did not qualify under our private leak repair scheme.
- If the leak is on a part of the CSP that is not readily accessible, i.e. under an extension and there is a breach of the Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations 1999, then the property owner at that location, whether or not they are supplied by the CSP, must remedy the contravention.
- Alternatively, where the supply pipe is accessible, it is your neighbour's responsibility to provide you and your neighbours with access to enable the repair to be completed. Repair costs on the CSP would be shared by you and those neighbours supplied by the CSP.

More information is available in our factsheet - private leak repair scheme.

leak on your supply pipe, we will make a one-off allowance for the cost of water lost, once we are satisfied that the leak has been repaired. If you are responsible for repairing the leak you may employ a plumber at your own expense to do this, but the repair must be completed within two weeks of discovering it, or we will not adjust your charges. You will be charged for any water lost through further leaks.

Allowances following a leak are only granted once per customer per property. We expect customers to make a claim within 12 months of the repair being completed, and will normally give an allowance for the period covered by the leak.

We will not normally adjust your charges for:

- leaks on the non-domestic part of a supply pipe;
- leaks caused by negligence;
- leaks you knew about and did not either report to us, or repaired by yourself without any receipt for water fittings used to complete the repair; or
- leaks on internal pipework or water lost from faulty fixtures or fittings e.g. faulty cistern overflows, dripping taps.

You are also responsible for making sure that all the pipework within the boundary of your property remains in good condition and does not leak.

I have a water meter how do I make a claim?

If you want to make a claim for an allowance against your metered water charges and/or metered sewerage charges you must complete and return a burst allowance claim form. Copies are available from our website or by calling us on the billing enquiries number shown in the 'getting in touch' section on the first page.

If we agree to adjust your charges, under a condition of our licence, we must base the adjustment on how much water you have used in the past.

The burst allowance will be calculated using previous consumption where this is available. If there is no record of how much water you have used in the past, we are required to base the adjustment on the typical use for a similar property. We normally check this adjustment against your actual water use after the leak has been repaired. Usually for household customers a period of two weeks is sufficient time to establish typical water use. Normally charges will be adjusted for the period of the leak providing we are satisfied that the leak was repaired in accordance with our requirements. You must continue to pay your account as normal while your claim is being considered. We would only expect you to pay your normal consumption not the excess consumption while your claim is being considered. Any allowance or adjustment resulting from your claim will be deducted from subsequent bills.

Adjusting sewerage charges

When we adjust your water charges, we will make a similar adjustment to your sewerage charges if appropriate. However, if there are repeated leaks from your property and it can be shown that the water is not going back into the sewer, we may reduce your sewerage charges more than once.

Water and sewerage services provided by different companies

If your water is supplied by a different water company (and we provide your sewerage services) and they have adjusted your water charges because of a leak, we will arrange to make a similar adjustment to your sewerage charges.

Similarly, if we have adjusted your water charges because of a leak and a different company provides your sewerage services, then we will tell them about the adjustment and what we based it on.

What can I do if I have a complaint?

If you have any complaints about the way we have dealt with you, or the way we have operated under this code, you should contact us. We have a complaints procedure which you can get by phoning our automated leaflet request line or by writing to the address shown in the 'getting in touch' section.

Consumer Council for Water

The Consumer Council for Water is an independent body which represents the interests of water customers. They can investigate complaints which remain unresolved after the completion of our complaints procedure.

You can contact the Consumer Council for Water at the following address:

Consumer Council for Water North West
Suite 902, 9th Floor
Bridgewater House
Whitworth Street,
Manchester, M1 6LT

Tel: 0161 236 6112
Lo-call: 0845 705 6316
Minicom: 0121 345 1044
Fax: 0161 228 6117
Email: northwest@ccwater.org.uk

unitedutilities.com

United Utilities Water PLC
Haweswater House
Lingley Mere Business Park
Lingley Green Avenue
Great Sankey
Warrington
WA5 3LP

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