

how to avoid leaks and bursts

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Hello, I'm Anne Spiteri, a water service administrator at Bristol Water. I've worked here for 21 years now – and my family, as a whole, has notched up well over 130 years of service for the company!

I've always been involved in dealing with customers and I enjoy trying to help them. At this time of the year, if it's icy, we get a lot of calls about leaks and burst pipes. Many people still don't realise that they are responsible for the pipes in their houses.

Did you know?

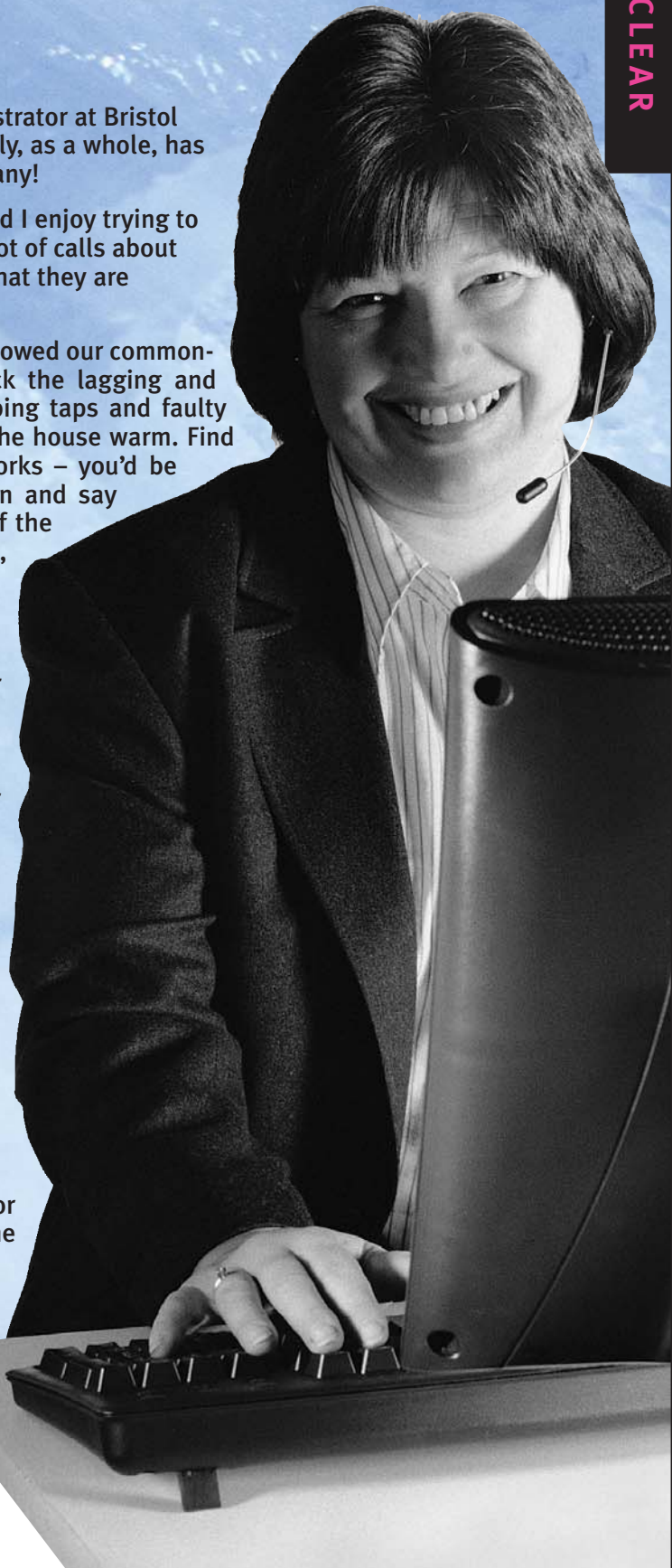
- Our main switchboard receives around 1,000 calls a day, with 250 of those for the customer helpline.
- On average calls are answered in just 7 seconds.
- Bristol Water supplies over one million people and businesses.
- We are responsible for over 6,500 kilometres of mains – that's 17 times bigger than the London Underground!

A lot of problems could be avoided if people followed our common-sense advice: Before the big freeze, check the lagging and improve it where possible. Repair dripping taps and faulty ball valves; stop draughts and keep the house warm. Find your stop-tap and make sure it works – you'd be amazed how many people ring in and say they don't know how to shut off the water in their own house! Oh, and keep the name and number of a plumber handy.

If your pipes do freeze, turn off the stop tap; examine pipes for splits or forced joints and, if there are none, apply gentle heat to the pipe, starting from an open tap. Use a hot water bottle or cloth soaked in hot water. Put a portable heater in the room (but not in the roof space or where there might be a fire risk). Don't use any electrical appliance where it might get wet.

If a pipe does burst, turn off the stop tap, block the escaping water with, say, towels; open all taps to reduce flooding; and call the plumber. Finally, don't forget to turn off the taps once the problem is fixed, otherwise there'll be another flood later!

You can also help us – if you spot a leak in the road or pavement when you're out and about, call our Leakline on 0800 801011 free at any time. Thanks. ”



For more information contact Corporate Affairs, Bristol Water plc, PO Box 218, Bridgwater Road, Bristol BS99 7AU. Or visit www.bristolwater.co.uk