



BRISTOL  
WATER

# Leakage

Help and information for household customers

# Let's talk about leakage

## Did you know we have the lowest leakage in the UK?

We've spoken to loads of customers face-to-face, over the phone, and on social media and you've told us it matters how much water is wasted through leaks.

So we know you care about leakage. If you care about it – we care about it, pretty simple. We're pleased to say that we have the lowest leakage in the UK.

Leaks can happen for a few reasons, from ground movement because of weather or traffic, or simply due to pipe deterioration.

We have a super friendly Network team who work really hard to spot these tricky leaks way underground before they become a problem for your water supply.

You may have spotted us out and about on the road, or in your street making quick repairs in all weathers to avoid any disruption to your water supply.

## Which pipes are yours?

We own miles and miles of pipework, but did you know you own some too?

Did you know that we don't actually own all of the pipes our water moves through? Sure, we own most of it, but the pipework inside your property boundary belongs to you.

That means if there's an issue with your pipes, you'll need to chat with your plumber who will be able to get it all sorted for you. The responsibility for some pipes just outside your property could also be shared with a neighbour; if they're shared then all property owners may be responsible

for organising and paying for the repair. Either way WaterSafe has a great list of local, trusted plumbers you can ring, just go to [watersafe.org.uk](http://watersafe.org.uk) or phone 0333 207 9030

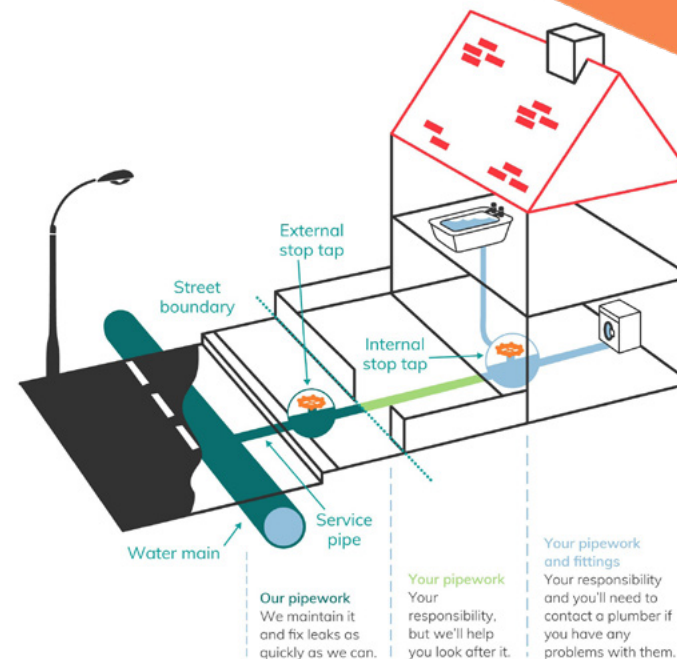
We can provide help here if you need it. Our LeakStop scheme offers you up to £100 financial assistance towards the repair of your pipe.

# Leaks on your pipework

We'll issue a legal document called a Leakage Notice when we know about a private leak. It's important as we don't want to waste water, risk harming the environment or properties, or interrupting the supply of water. The notice says how long you have to fix the leak, however this booklet gives you all the information you need to get there.

There are a variety of signs for a leak on your private pipework including:

- You may have got in touch as you've noticed a drop in water pressure
- Your bill may have increased and you haven't knowingly increased your usage
- You may have asked us why you have noisy pipes
- Our systems may have indicated a leak in the area and we've been out and confirmed it is on your pipe
- You may have a dripping tap or a faulty toilet system that has caused a high bill
- You may see a damp patch of ground or the grass may be growing quicker and greener due to the extra water.



## Tip

We recommend customers do monthly meter readings to help spot leaks. If your meter is turning when no water is being used, it could be a leak.



## Leakstop

There's help available for homeowner customers with private leaks

To help put things right quickly, our Leakstop scheme offers help for leaks on underground supply pipes. We offer:

- A free half hour leak detection service and advice on your next best steps
- Up to £100 subsidy payment if you repair the leak or replace the leaky pipe within 21 days (this is capped to one payment per leaky pipe). We'll arrange payment once we've confirmed the repair or replacement is all done. We'll require proof of payment so please keep any relevant receipts and invoices.\*
- Continuous support and advice on 0800 281 402 (Monday to Friday 8am - 4pm).

Please keep us updated on how you're doing and we'll visit again or advise on the phone. We'll then follow up in 14 days from your first visit.

- A leakage allowance for metered customers (see p8 for full details)

If this help isn't enough or you need further advice, please call us on 0800 281 402 and we'll advise what to do.

If you pay a bill directly to Bristol Water and are struggling to pay please contact us for further advice

\* This doesn't apply for rented properties.

## Your Leakage Notice checklist

Fixing leaks is important, we ask that you make the repair within the timescale given in your Leakage Notice.

Here's a checklist of things you may find useful:

1. Check the leak notice for your individual deadline, some are shorter than 21 days if the leak is more severe.

2. Find a plumber. WaterSafe has a great list of local, trusted plumbers, just go to [watersafe.org.uk](http://watersafe.org.uk) or phone 0333 207 9030

3. Check your household insurance as the leak repair might be covered.

4. Do you have a shared water supply? If so, let your neighbours know.

- Make sure everyone's aware of the leak and that they may have a shared responsibility to repair.

- When the pipe's being repaired you should let your neighbours know before the water supply is turned off.
- You may also want to think about having your own private supply pipe. Call us on 0345 602 8022 to talk through your options.

5. Let us know when it's repaired

6. If you're on a metered bill we'll contact you about applying a leakage allowance.

If you have any questions about your bill please call 0345 600 3 600

# The legal bit, what happens if you don't fix the leak?

If we've given you a leakage notice under the Water Industry Act 1991, it's to inform you of the following:

- We are aware that water is leaking from a water pipe or fitting for which you are responsible
- The need for you to arrange the repair within a specified timescale, which may range from 7 days to 21 days depending on the severity of the leak, and the Leakage Notice issued
- How to contact us for help or advice
- What will happen if you do not arrange the repair

**Please read the information and advice below.**

## Responsibility for leaks

- Our water mains are normally in the highway, although some do run across land and through private property.
- Your supply pipe usually joins our pipework at the boundary of your property; there is often an external stop tap at this point.
- You are responsible for repairing leaks on your supply pipe and on internal pipework and fittings in your premises.
- Where you share a supply pipe or pipework, all customers who receive water from the shared pipe, maybe responsible for the repair<sup>1</sup>.
- We are only responsible for repairing leaks on our pipework.
- We also have a statutory duty to ensure that leaks for which you are responsible are repaired.

## The importance of repairing leaks

- Water is a valuable resource.
- If you have a water meter, you will be charged for water that you are not using and that is running to waste.
- You may experience poor water pressure in your property.
- Leaking water may cause damage and contamination to your property and/or other people's properties.
- Wasting water is a breach of the Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations 1999 and may lead to a criminal prosecution and a fine.

## Arranging a repair

- Obtain quotes or estimates of the likely cost before asking for the work to be carried out.
- Always use a suitably qualified plumber or contractor. For advice on finding a qualified plumber or contractor you can contact WaterSafe, a national accreditation body for qualified plumbers. You can contact them on 0333 207 9030 or visit their website [watersafe.org.uk](http://watersafe.org.uk).
- Ensure your chosen plumber or contractor can do the repair within the required timescale.
- We will carry out a further check 14 calendar days following the issue of the 21-day and 14-day Leakage Notice, and 7 calendar days after the issue of a 7-day Leakage Notice
- Under our LeakStop scheme we will make a "once only" discretionary contribution up to £100 – provided the work was carried out within the initial 7-day, 14-day or 21-day leakage notice period following our visit

## New or separate supplies

- If you intend to replace an existing supply pipe or if you intend to install a separate supply pipe instead of using the existing joint supply, please let us know immediately.
- This does not remove your responsibility for repairing the leak within the required timescale.

## Enforced repair

- If you don't comply with our request, we can serve a legal notice requiring a repair to be carried out. We are also able to carry out the leak repair ourselves using our powers under Section 75(9) (a) and (b) of the 1991 Water Industry Act and charge you reasonable expenses for carrying out the work.

## Emergency disconnection

- We have legal powers to disconnect (or restrict) your supply until the repairs have been carried out, in circumstances where the wastage of water becomes or causes an emergency, or where there is the risk of contamination, damage to property or harm to people.

<sup>1</sup> Where the leak is on a shared supply, we normally inform all the customers who are responsible for it. It may help if collectively you agree on one person to arrange the repair on behalf of you all and then each of you contributes your share of the repair cost.

# Leakage allowance for metered customers

If you've repaired the leak within 21 days of being made aware then we have a leakage allowance policy that reduces the cost of your bill

Once the repair is made, let us know on 0800 281 402 and we will let our billing department know to make the adjustment to your account.

## Here's the detail

- We may make allowances for leakage to household customers who pay for water by meter subject to the customer repairing the leak within 21 calendar days of first identifying it.
- We will give a 100% allowance for water lost from your supply pipe on the first occasion and 50% allowance for water lost from the supply pipe on the second occasion whilst you live at the property. No allowance will be made for subsequent leaks.
- For customers living in a mixed use property, using less than 200 cu.m. p.a. you may claim an allowance of 100% of consumption above normal usage lost from your supply pipe in the first instance and 50% allowance for water lost from your supply pipe on the second occasion whilst living at the property. No allowance will be made for subsequent leaks.
- For customers living in a mixed use property, using between 201 – 15,000 cu.m. p.a. you may claim an allowance of 50% of consumption above normal usage lost from your supply pipe in the first instance, whilst living at the property.
- An allowance will only be made once the repair has been satisfactorily carried out.
- This repair may be subject to inspection by ourselves.
- If we agree to reduce your bill, we will calculate the allowance based on your last two billing periods. We may adjust the bill again if we find that you use a lot more or a lot less water when we next read the meter. If you have no consumption history, we will calculate the allowance based on the consumption of a similar property type. However, as soon as the actual average consumption is known the allowance will be adjusted accordingly.
- No allowance will be granted where a leak has been caused through negligence by you or by anyone acting on your behalf.
- No allowance will be made due to water loss through faulty equipment and fittings.
- It is the customer's responsibility to repair the leak quickly and ensure the supply pipe is 'fit for purpose'.
- Allowances will only be made for leakage from underground supply pipes – this may include underground supply pipes located underneath the property.
- A leakage allowance claim must be made within three months of the leak being identified and can be applied for up to two billing periods.
- If your water bill is reduced, you will also be entitled to money back on your sewerage bill. If you receive a joint Bristol Water and Wessex Water bill, the sewerage allowance will be made at the same time as the water supply allowance. Otherwise we will notify your sewerage company of the allowance we have made, although you should check this with them personally. Allowances will be applied to your current or next water bill.

## Need help paying your bill?

If you're struggling with your bill, there's no need to worry. We have a range of solutions for the most common reasons for not being able to pay a bill. So, if you're on a low income and are struggling to pay, your only income is pension credit or the state pension, or you're in debt with us then please give us a ring or visit [bristolwater.co.uk/struggling-to-pay](http://bristolwater.co.uk/struggling-to-pay) for more details.

We can also help you out if you have a medical condition or disability through our Priority Services Register. It's totally free and only takes a few minutes to sign up. Visit [bristolwater.co.uk/priority-services](http://bristolwater.co.uk/priority-services) to read more and sign up today.

For any more information, visit the website or give our team a call on 0345 600 3600, our opening times are Monday to Friday from 8am 'til 8pm and Saturday from 8am 'til 2pm

## Life's sweeter with a meter

You're probably well familiar with the concept of a meter. After all, you've had one for your electric and gas for years. A water meter is no different, it's just there to help you pay for what you use and not a Bristol Pound more.

We're making our way up and down our region, making sure everyone is fitted with their

very own meter, completely free of charge. We'll pop it in for you and even give you loads of ways to help you reduce the amount of water you use that helps your bill, and the planet.

For more information and to apply, visit [bristolwater.co.uk/water-meter](http://bristolwater.co.uk/water-meter)



## It only takes a bit to save a lot

Using only what you need and wasting less water in your daily life can make a real impact – from protecting future water supplies to helping the environment and even saving a few pennies on your bill.

Here are some really simple tips to help you become more water efficient at home:

### **Turn off the tap whilst brushing your teeth and save 18 litres each time**

Brushing your teeth with a running tap uses 9 litres of water a minute. Keep to time with one of our free toothy timers.

### **Make your shower 4 mins long instead of 10 and save 20 litres per shower**

Having a typical length shower uses a shocking 62 litres of water. Why not put on your favourite tune and make sure that by the time it's finished, you're done too?

### **Run your washing machine full (rather than half loads) and save up to 10 litres per wash**

Washing your clothes with a typical washing machine uses an average of 112 litres of water a week. Save clothes up rather than washing a few at a time.

Visit [savewatersavemoney.co.uk/bristol/free-water-saving-products](http://savewatersavemoney.co.uk/bristol/free-water-saving-products) to get your free water saving devices.

## Lead replacement

To find out more and apply visit:

[bristolwater.co.uk/home/supplies-and-connections/new-supplies-and-connections](http://bristolwater.co.uk/home/supplies-and-connections/new-supplies-and-connections)

We will;

- Check if you share your supply pipe
- Advise you if any payments will be needed
- Advise you where to lay your new pipe
- Check your water supply system complies with the regulations
- Specify the point to which your new pipe should be laid (normally to the position at the edge of your property nearest to the stop tap in the pavement)

## Electrical earthing message

Properties built before 1966 may use incoming metal water pipes as an earth for their electrical systems. Installing a new plastic supply pipe may mean that this kind of earthing system will no longer work. If you are in any doubt about how your property is earthed you should contact a qualified electrician for advice.

Bristol Water staff and contractors are not qualified to advise you about electrical matters and cannot accept

any legal liability for damages or injury resulting from the use of a water pipe as an electrical earth.

If you are not responsible for the electrical earthing of the property, please make sure the owner of the property or the appropriate person is aware of this information.

# Your notes

You can use these pages to write down any notes to remember later on.





# Need to get in touch?

There are loads of ways you can get in touch with our customer team. If you have an issue out of hours, we keep the line open for emergencies only. Alternatively, you can visit our website and fill out a contact form.

## **Operations and water supply**

To submit an enquiry visit:

[bristolwater.co.uk/general-enquiry-form](https://bristolwater.co.uk/general-enquiry-form)

Call our ops team on

**0345 702 3797**

Call our lead replacement line on

**0345 602 8022**

Call our leakage line on

**0800 281 402**

Address:

Bristol Water plc.

Bridgwater Road

Bristol

BS13 7AT

## **Opening times:**

8am 'til 6pm Monday to Friday

9am 'til 4pm on Saturday

9am 'til 3pm on Sunday

## **Billing and your account:**

To submit an enquiry visit:

[submit.bristolwater.co.uk/enquiry-form/](https://submit.bristolwater.co.uk/enquiry-form/)

Give our billing team a call on

**0345 600 3600**

Address:

Bristol Wessex Billing Services Ltd

1 Clevedon Walk

Nailsea

Bristol, BS48 1WA

## **Opening times:**

8am 'til 8pm Monday to Friday

8am 'til 2pm on Saturday

You can also chat to us on social media or Live Chat