Customer Code of Practice:

Water Leakage

November 2026

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Introduction

This Code of Practice is for Leaf Water customers and explains what to do if your water is provided by us and you discover a leak.

Leaf Water is the trading name of Advanced Water Infrastructure Networks and we are owned by Advanced Utilities Asset Networks Limited. Leaf Water is the water and sewerage service company serving your area. We are a company that owns and operates water and sewerage networks in England.

Leakage

If you have a burst pipe please skip to the section 'What to do if you have a burst pipe'.

Reducing water leakage is very important to us as it helps protect the environment by conserving water and it also reduces our costs and your water bills.

We have a duty to prevent water wastage and to make sure we operate an efficient water network. Our meters have technology within them that highlights potential leaks at a property.

Leakage can occur in a number of places and responsibility for leaks varies depending where the leak is happening. The following diagram sets out who is responsible for what.

How to spot a leak

There are some indicators to look out for that may mean you have a leak.

If you have:

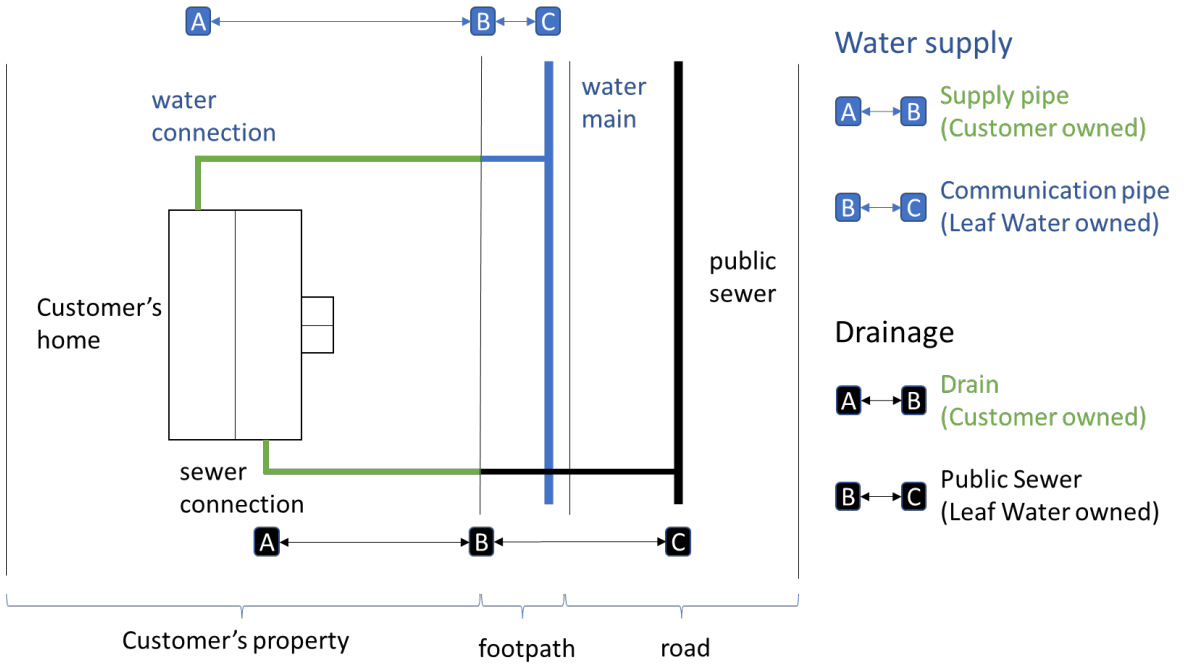
Recite me®

Our website is 'Recite me' enabled and our documents are also available in other formats such as Braille and large print. Please contact us for more information.

- Higher water meter readings than you usually do for a regular period of time
- A reduction in water pressure compared to previously
- Areas in your garden where plants or grass continue to grow during dry periods of weather
- Damp patches in or around your property
- The sound of running water in your home when none is being used

Then it is worth investigating for a leak. In the first instance, please check all taps are turned off and no appliances are using water. Take a meter reading and watch the dial to see if it moves, or check again in an hour. If the dials are moving or the second reading is higher and no water has been consumed in the meantime, you may have a leak.

Our smart meters may highlight a potential leak and we will contact you if this is the case.



Where to find your meter

Your meter is probably in one of these locations:

- Below ground in the footpath or highway just beyond the boundary of your property and with a lid marked with a 'W' or 'Water'.
- Below ground within the boundary of your property with a lid marked with a 'W' or 'Water', or in a cabinet on the outside wall.
- Inside your property (in the garage, kitchen, utility room or a service cupboard)

If you would like to find out more information on finding and reading your meter please see our Customer Code of Practice:
www.leafwater.co.uk/publications

If you cannot find your meter please contact us and we will be able to advise you where it is. The position of the meter does not affect the ownership of the pipe and you are responsible for the supply pipe running from your home to the boundary of the property (A to B on the diagram) regardless of where the meter is located.

Tips for preventing a burst pipe and leaks

Leaks can be expensive and stressful, but can generally be avoided if you:

- Make sure your cold water tanks and pipes are insulated
- If you can, keep unused parts of your home warm at the lowest temperature setting during cold spells.
- Repair dripping taps & faulty washers

What to do if you have a burst pipe

If you have a burst pipe in your house or on an external tap, then we recommend:

- Shutting off the water at the main stop valve

- Turning off your central heating to prevent damage (or possible explosion)
- Opening all taps to drain water from your pipes
- Contacting a plumber

What to do if you have a leak

Know where your stop valve is so as you can turn off the water supply to your property.

If you find a leak either on or off your property then please contact us on 0345 646 0680 as soon as possible. If the leak is on your property then our customer service team will help to determine whether it is on your supply pipe or within your house. If the leak is within your house you should contact a plumber. If the leak is on your supply pipe we will help you find and repair the leak. If you are telling us about a leak off your property we will come and investigate and make any necessary repairs.

Leakage investigation and repair is not available as a 24 hour emergency service. For investigations and repairs needed outside of normal working hours we recommend you contact an approved plumber. You can find an approved plumber through WaterSafe:

www.watersafe.org.uk

Leakage from our pipes

We are responsible for maintaining any communication pipe outside the boundary of your property, the water meter and the stop cock.

Once we are aware of a leak on our pipes we will aim to carry out the repair as soon as possible. This is sometimes dependent on gaining the approval of any relevant authorities.

Reducing leakage on our pipes helps keep your water charges down, so please do call us on 0345 646 0680 or contact us through our website www.leafwater.co.uk/report-a-problem to report any leaks off your property.

Leakage from your pipes

As the home owner you are responsible for maintaining all your internal pipework, including any outside taps, along with your supply pipe from your home to the boundary of the property (A to B on the diagram). If you wish to clarify the responsibilities at your property please contact us. If you are a tenant then we recommend alerting your landlord and us of the possibility of a leak.

In the case of a new build property you may be advised to contact the builder in the first instance as work to the supply pipe is usually covered under the builder's guarantee for the first few years.

You should look after your supply pipe as you would the internal plumbing of your

home, even if it runs underground. Any work that needs to be done to your supply pipe is legally your responsibility. We will help you find and repair leaks on your supply pipe, for us to do this your supply pipe must be accessible and not under any structure from the boundary up to the entry point into your home. There is no limit to the number of times we will investigate and either repair or replace your supply pipe due to a leak.

It is our duty under law to prevent water wastage caused by leaks on our network and if you do not repair a leak within 21 days we may start proceedings against you under section 75 of the Water Industry Act.

Repairing a leak

We offer a free leak detection service during normal working hours and we will do all we can to help you find the leak or the source of the problem.

If a leak is found on your supply pipe within the boundary of your property this is your responsibility, however, we will repair or replace this free of charge if it is accessible and does not pass under any structure. When reinstating the ground directly affected by any repair or replacement of your supply pipe the area will be made good to the best of the abilities of Leaf Water or our contractors with suitable permanent reinstatement but it is not guaranteed that a like for like reinstatement will be possible.

We will aim to either make a repair or replace the pipe within 7 days with a target of taking no more than 21 days.

If a leak is found to be on our network outside of your property boundary this is our responsibility and we will aim to carry out the repair as soon as possible. This is sometimes dependent on gaining the approval of any relevant authorities.

If a leak is found to be on the internal plumbing of your property, including external taps this is your responsibility and we recommend you contact a plumber.

What next now your leak has been repaired?

If your metered water consumption has been higher than usual and you feel you have used no more water than usual you may be eligible to receive a leakage allowance for both water and wastewater.

We may need to carry out an inspection at your property to verify that the repair work has been completed.

Our smart meters will continue to monitor for leakage and we will contact you if they indicate there is a leak at your property.

Leakage allowances

If your meter is near the boundary of your property it will have recorded any water leakage in your supply pipe prior to it being repaired. Our meters include leakage technology and so we should be able to further understand the extent of the leak from the meter data.

If this was your first leak at this property and it was: repaired straight away, not caused by your negligence and, on balance, was not obvious or identifiable for repair sooner, you should be eligible to receive an adjustment to your water and wastewater charges.

If you have been aware of a leak and have taken no action to repair it you may be liable for the cost of the: wasted water, repair, clean-up, sampling, testing, removal of contaminated land and the replacement of the supply pipe.

When you report the leak to us we will let you know if you are eligible to make a claim and advise you to complete a claim form once the leak has been repaired. This does not guarantee that you will be paid the allowance; a decision will be made once your application has been reviewed.

We will make a payment where all of the following apply:

- This is the first instance of a claim by you at this property.
- If an allowance has been paid for this property previously, then ownership of the property has changed since that payment.
- You have repaired or replaced the supply pipe within 21 days of the leak being identified

We will not make a payment where any of the following apply:

- The property has not changed ownership since this allowance was last paid;
- To tenants where a previous tenant has been paid the allowance and the ownership of the property has not changed;
- You knew there was a leak (or it is reasonable that you should have known there was a leak) and you did not repair it
- The leak was caused by negligence or recklessness by either you or a third party
- The leak is on the internal plumbing of the property (including any outside tap)
- We have issued you with a waste of water notice and it has expired

We will consider eligibility for a payment for a future leak if you're able to demonstrate that you regularly monitor your water usage and you act quickly to deal with any unexplained increase. For example if you record your meter readings monthly and track your average consumption.

It is important that you continue to pay your water bill as normal while your claim is being considered. Any allowance awarded will be deducted from your future bills.

If we only supply water to your property we will inform your sewerage company that you have had a leak and an allowance needs to be granted.

We will consider your claim and calculate any eligible allowance as follows:

- It will be from the time the leak is deemed likely to have occurred up to the date of repair up to a maximum of 2 years
- It will be calculated based on your past average usage, or where this is not available the average usage of your property type
- If your actual usage after the repair turns out to be very different from the original calculation the allowance amount can be adjusted to reflect this

Waste of water notices

It is very important that leaks are investigated and repaired and if you do not complete a repair that you are responsible for once the leak has been identified, we may issue you with a waste of water notice requiring you to complete the necessary works within a fixed period of time. This is usually 21 days.

If you do not take action and complete the repair we have a legal right to make the repairs ourselves and can charge you the full cost. In some cases we could also turn off your supply to prevent wastage and contamination.

You may still be eligible for a leakage allowance as outlined above. Although, if we have to repair the leak as a result of an expired waste of water notice you will not be eligible.

Independent advice

Consumer Council for Water (CCW)

CCW is the independent voice for water consumers in England and Wales and provides free independent advice and support.

If you have a complaint you can refer it to CCW at any point, but they may ask that you contact us to look into the matter before they begin their investigation. For more details, please take a look at our Customer Complaints Procedure which is available on our website: www.leafwater.co.uk/publications

You can contact CCW as follows:

By writing to:

CCW
23 Stephenson Street
Birmingham
B2 4BH

Or calling them on: 0300 034 2222
Their website is: www.ccw.org.uk

Further Dispute Resolution Information

Dispute Resolution Ombudsman (DRO)

If you remain dissatisfied following CCW's efforts to resolve your complaint, you have the right to refer your complaint to the Dispute Resolution Ombudsman.

The DRO is an independent, not-for-profit, and government-approved service that has been appointed by CCW. It has provided a range of services to its registered business and their customers for more than 30 years. The DRO is designed to provide an independent, impartial and easy to use alternative to going to court or tribunal.

We continue to align our approach with the requirements:

- To provide DRO assistance free of charge to customers;
- To support the principles set out in the Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Specification
- To respect the independence of the DRO
- To be bound by the decision of the DRO's adjudicator if accepted by the customer and to implement the decision as required by the scheme rules
- To co-operate with and have due regard to the recommendations of the ADR panel
- To provide accurate and reliable information to, and co-operate with, the DRO adjudicators

You can make an application, free of charge, via the DRO website: https://www.disputeresolutionombudsman.org/ or you can ask for more information from your CCW advisor. Guidance is available on the DRO website.

You can contact the DRO as follows:

By writing to:

Dispute Resolution Ombudsman
Premier House
First Floor
1-5 Argyle Way
Stevenage
SG1 2AD

Or calling them on: 0333 241 3209
E-mailing them on: info@disputeresolutionombudsman.org
Looking on their website: https://www.disputeresolutionombudsman.org/

Contacting us

You can contact Leaf Water as follows:

By writing to:

Leaf Water
Nexus Park
Avenue East, Skyline 120
Great Notley
Braintree, Essex
CM77 7AL

Or calling us on: 0333 009 5212
e-mailing us on: enquiries@leafwater.co.uk
looking at our website: www.leafwater.co.uk

Our Office hours are:

General Queries & Billing:
Monday to Friday: 8.30am to 5.30pm

Water or Drainage Emergencies:
Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week on 0345 646 0680.

You can also access your account by registering on our customer portal (myaccount.leafwater.co.uk) and where you can manage a number of aspects of your account including:

- Viewing your water bill
- Paying your water bill
- Submitting a water meter reading
- Registering for priority services