

Frequently Asked Questions



Q1. How can I tell whether the underground supply pipe is leaking?

- If your supply is metered, the meter dials will record the flow even when you know there's no water being used in your home.
- If your supply is metered, you'll receive a higher meter reading than normal and a bigger bill.
- You may hear a faint hissing noise on the pipe when you aren't using any water.
- You may see damp patches in the drive or garden.
- You may notice poor water pressure or, in severe cases, no water at all in your home.

If you have a meter at or near the boundary of the street, you can check for an underground leak just by turning off the stop tap inside your house (often under the kitchen sink) and checking to see whether the meter is still recording a flow.

If the meter dials are still moving, call us on our leakage team on 023 9249 9888 and we can explain what to do next. If the meter stops recording, it's unlikely that your underground pipe is leaking. If the leak is inside the property, you should call your own plumber. We recommend a WaterSafe approved plumber to carry out any works on your property.

Q2. Where's the leak?

Leaks on underground pipes are often difficult to find as leaking water doesn't always rise to the surface. Sometimes the water can 'track' to a different position further away from the point of the leak. This can make the process of pinpointing the leak more difficult. We can help you with up to one hour's free leak detection survey, but it isn't always possible to find a leak within an hour even with the equipment we have.

Q3. Do you repair leaks free of charge?

No, but we do offer up to £100 towards the cost of a pipe repair and up to £200 if the entire supply pipe is replaced (in line with our terms & conditions).

Please note, a repair isn't advisable in all circumstances. If you have an iron, lead or an older plastic pipe, we recommend a complete pipe renewal. It's important to

remember that we will only contribute towards the repair costs once in any five-year period.

Q4. How much will a Supply Pipe renewal cost?

This will depend on a number of factors such as the length of your supply pipe and if plumbing alterations are necessary within the property. We can arrange for a trusted contractor to provide you with a no obligation quote to undertake the work. We may also offer a contribution towards the cost of relaying a supply pipe.

Q5. Will my insurance cover it?

Some policies do. You should contact your insurance company to confirm if your Supply Pipe is covered. You may wish to consider bespoke plumbing and drainage cover and we would recommend considering [HomeServe](#). HomeServe offers cover for your home's plumbing and drainage, giving you peace of mind that if anything should happen. Find out more: portsmouthwater.co.uk/customer-services/help-for-leaks-pressure-and-pipes

Q6. Why has this leak happened?

Most leaks occur because the supply pipe is in poor condition, a fitting has failed or the pipe has aged. It's often cheaper in the longer term to replace a supply pipe than find and repair a leak or series of leaks. A recent meter installation can also bring to light an existing leak that you didn't know about.

Q7. Could the leak damage my property?

This depends on where the leak is and the size of the hole in the pipe. We strongly advise you to act promptly as the leak may damage the foundations of your property or those of a neighbour.

Q8. Do I have to get the leak repaired?

Yes, you have a legal obligation to repair any leak on your pipework, but we do allow you time to get quotes if required. If you have a meter and don't repair the leak within 30 days of it being confirmed by us, you'll forfeit any allowance you could've received for the wasted water. We have legal duties to promote the efficient use of water and to act where we find it's being wasted. Therefore we have to ask you to act reasonably quickly if you have a leak. We

may serve you with a legal notice, requiring you to stop the leak, or to undertake the work ourselves and recover our costs for doing so.

Q9. I have a water meter, will I have to pay for leaking water?

Not if it's your first leak at the property concerned, or if more than five years have passed since you last received a leak allowance for the property, and you get it repaired within 30 days after it's been confirmed.

Q10. Will the sewerage company give me an allowance?

If you have a water meter and we've given you an allowance following a leak repair or supply pipe replacement, we'll pass the details of the lost water and of any adjustment to your waste water provider and they'll make similar adjustments to your sewerage bill.

Q11. How do you calculate the allowance for the cost of lost water?

After the leak has been repaired, we calculate the amount of water wasted by deducting the average amount of water you would have normally used during the period the leak has been running. Where there's no record of past consumption, we base the adjustment on the daily average for your property type.

Q12. Do you have special equipment to detect a leak?

We have equipment to assist in finding a leak, but there's still a significant possibility that we won't be able to pinpoint its location accurately enough to allow your contractor to find/fix the leak. If it's a small leak and there's no water showing at the surface, we'll advise you to replace the supply pipe to where it enters the building.

Q13. Who can I get to repair the leak or replace the pipe?

We can also refer you to a supply pipe repair and replacement specialist. We always suggest you ask for at least two quotes from WaterSafe-approved contractors.

Q14. Will it make a mess – will the garden be dug up?

If you arrange for a repair of the leak, this will involve digging a hole. If the pipe is replaced, some contractors, where possible use a pipe-pulling 'mole' (which effectively drills underground and avoids the need to dig an extended trench in your garden). They will survey and advise you on how much digging will have to be done.

Q15. Will the garden look the same afterwards?

This will have to be discussed with your chosen contractor, but a reputable contractor will try their best to leave your garden as before, but the finish on drives and pathways may not exactly match the original surface.

Q16. Do I have to tell you that the pipe has been fixed?

Yes, if you want to claim your contribution towards the pipe repair or replacement and if you have a water meter, and want us to consider a leak allowance for any water loss, please let us know within 15 days from the date of the repair or replacement.

Q17. What if the leak is internal, say from a faulty overflow or tap?

We advise you to contact a WaterSafe-approved plumber via their website at www.watersafe.org.uk in such cases.

Q18. Will you give me an allowance for lost water from an internal leak?

Allowances are not made for leaks or water losses from plumbing systems or fittings within your home.