



# ESP WATER

LEAKAGE CODE OF PRACTICE



Valid for ESP Water 2023-2024

Published September 2023

**ESP**  
WATER

## INTRODUCTION

Water is a vital resource that is sadly becoming scarcer due to changes in climatic patterns and our demands for it. Promoting the efficient use of the water supply is important to us, so we must act when we are aware it is being wasted, which includes the prompt detection and repair of any leaks from our water network.

### 1.1 Responsibility for leaks

We are responsible for promptly fixing all leaks on the water pipes and fittings we own, which includes the outside stop tap, located at the boundary of your property, and water meter (where one is fitted).

You are also responsible for ensuring that your supply pipe does not leak and for putting right any leaks that do occur. Leaks can worsen over time and, despite the obvious wastage of water, can cause extensive and costly damage to property. Dealing promptly with any leak you might have is therefore cost effective.

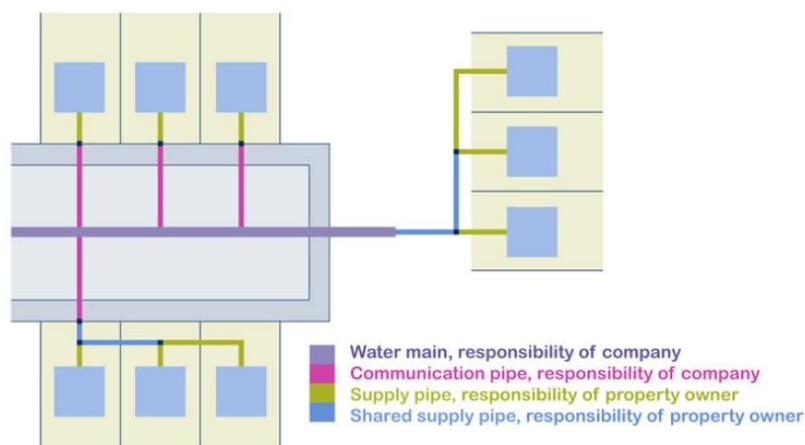
It is worth noting that, if your property is a long way from the water main, you are responsible for the entire length of the water supply pipe, even if it crosses someone else's property.

We have included some details below describing in more detail pipe ownership and responsibility from our Customer CoP, but if you need any further assistance on this, please contact us on 03301234201 or go to our website [www.espwater.co.uk](http://www.espwater.co.uk) for further information.

*We own and maintain the network of water mains which carry water to the homes and businesses in your area.*

- *Your property is connected to our water main by a pipe known as a 'service pipe'.*
- *You (or your landlord) are legally responsible for section of the service pipe from the public highway to your property; the 'supply pipe'.*
- *We are responsible for the section of pipe between the water main (in the street) and the boundary of your property; the 'communications pipe'. This pipe work usually ends in the footpath outside your property and is where we would install a stop-tap and water meter.*
- *In some instances, you may share a supply pipe with your neighbour(s), in which case you are all responsible for it.*

### Water pipe ownership



*You must maintain your supply pipe in good order, even where it runs beneath other properties before reaching yours.*

*Most properties have a separate stop-tap where the supply pipe enters the building. You are advised to know the location of this stop-tap so that it can be shut off in an emergency. This is particularly important in advance of any planned plumbing works you are undertaking inside your property.*

## 1.2 Spotting a leak

If you find a leak in a road, pavement, or public place, please help us by reporting it without delay to 0330 123 4201, our 24-hour helpline number.

We may identify a customer leak whilst conducting our operational activities. If we spot one at your property, we will ensure we notify you without delay. We can offer free advice about fixing leaks on your supply pipe if you contact us.

Water leaks can occur both inside the home or business and outside on your water supply pipe due to the following:

- Faulty pipework and fittings.
- The effect of freezing or very dry weather.
- Damage caused over time by water or soil surrounding the pipe, known as corrosion.
- Gaps forming between sections where pipes join.
- Damage from traffic vibrations or construction activity.

You may have a leak within your property if you notice any of the following signs:

- Higher than usual meter readings.
- Damp patches around your property.
- Areas in your garden where plants or grass continue to grow through a dry spell.
- Loss of water pressure.
- The sound of running water in your property when none is being used.

If we identify a potential leak when we read your meter, we will let you know as soon as we can.

If you suspect a leak:

1. Ensure all taps are turned off and no cisterns are filling.
2. Read your meter (located outside your property, normally in the pavement).
3. Wait 30 minutes, using no water, and read your meter again.
4. If the readings are different or you can visibly see the numbers on the meter turning, then you may have a leak.
5. We will help investigate it with you if you report any leak to us.
6. If you are a business customer also report it to your retailer.

## 1.3 Fixing Leaks

We will repair or replace all pipes that are our responsibility but please do contact us if you are not sure who owns a pipe with a leak so that we can avoid a delay in repair.

Fixing a leaking water supply pipe on your property is usually your responsibility. We recommend you respond quickly as there could be a risk of damage to your, or someone else's property. We suggest you call an approved plumber in the first instance such as a member of the Water Industry Approved Plumber Scheme such as WaterSafe. Visit [wras.co.uk/wiaps](https://www.wras.co.uk/wiaps) for more details.

If you are the property owner, you are also responsible for all internal water fixtures and fittings, so must ensure any leaks are swiftly fixed. Under Section 73 of the Water Industry Act 1991, it is an offence to intentionally waste the water supplied by us. The maximum penalty is £1,000. If you need assistance in repairing a leak on your pipework or fixtures and fittings, please contact us on our 24-helpline number 0330 123 4201 for advice.

## 1.4 Leak Allowance

If you have a water meter it will record all leakage as well as the actual water you use. In special circumstances we will give a leakage allowance on your water bill. You will be eligible for this if:

- The supply pipe has been repaired
- The leak was repaired within six weeks (30 days) of being identified and confirmed
- You make the claim within three months of the repair
- The leak was not caused by neglect
- You have not been served by a Section 75 notice from us

Note: if you do not meet these criteria, we will still consider you leak allowance.

A leak allowance can only be provided once for internal leaks, but at any time on for a supply pipe leak.

If you have a water meter, we will compare how much you have used whilst you had the leak against a comparable period in the past. We will credit your water and wastewater services account with the difference in cost; this is the allowance amount. If we do not provide your wastewater services, we will let the other company know so they credit your wastewater allowance. The allowance can be backdated to a maximum of two years.

Where we do not have past information on your usage, we will base the allowance on a typical house of similar size and number of occupants.

If you disagree with our leak allowance assessment once we have adjusted the bill, please let us know. We will review the allowance and let you know the outcome.

To apply for a leak allowance, please call us on 0330 123 4201. If you are a business customer, please contact your retailer initially.

## 1.5 Preventing winter pipe bursts

We recommend the following tips to ensure your heating system and water pipework and fittings are protected during the winter months:

- Ensure any dripping taps are fixed
- Insulate any pipes and fittings in cold or draughty spaces with lagging – this could include external buildings and loft spaces
- Cover tanks and cisterns with lagging
- Make sure your heating always operates by running it at a minimum setting or installing a Frost-Stat
- Leave the heating on when you are away. Alternatively isolate the system and drain it down
- Drain down anything you do not intend to use over the winter. Isolate external taps at the stop cock

## HOW TO CONTACT US

YOU CAN WRITE TO US AT:

ESP Water  
Blue Bird House  
Mole Business Park  
Leatherhead  
KT22 7BA

FOR BILLING, YOU CAN CALL US ON:

**0333 000 0059**

Our office hours for billing and account queries are:

**Monday - Friday 08:30 - 17:30**  
excluding bank holidays

YOU CAN EMAIL US AT:

For billing related enquiries:  
[billing@espwater.co.uk](mailto:billing@espwater.co.uk)

For all other enquiries:  
[GeneralEnquiries@espwater.co.uk](mailto:GeneralEnquiries@espwater.co.uk)

YOU CAN VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT:

[espwater.co.uk](http://espwater.co.uk)

EMERGENCIES CONTACT:

For any emergencies with your water or wastewater supplies please call our 24 hour emergency number on 0330 123 4201