Independent Water Networks

Water Leakage

IWNL CUSTOMER CODE OF PRACTICE



Independent
Water Networks

Contents

03 Introduction
03 Boundary diagram
04 Leakage
04 How to spot a leak
04 Leakage from our pipes
04 Leakage from your pipes
05 Where to find your meter
05 Can the meter be moved?
05 Repairing the leak
05 Leakage allowances
06 Wastewater notices
06 Tips for preventing bursts
07 Independent advice
08 Contact us



Introduction

This booklet explains what you should do if your water is supplied by Independent Water Networks (IWNL) and you discover a leak. This document is available in formats such as Braille or large print on request.

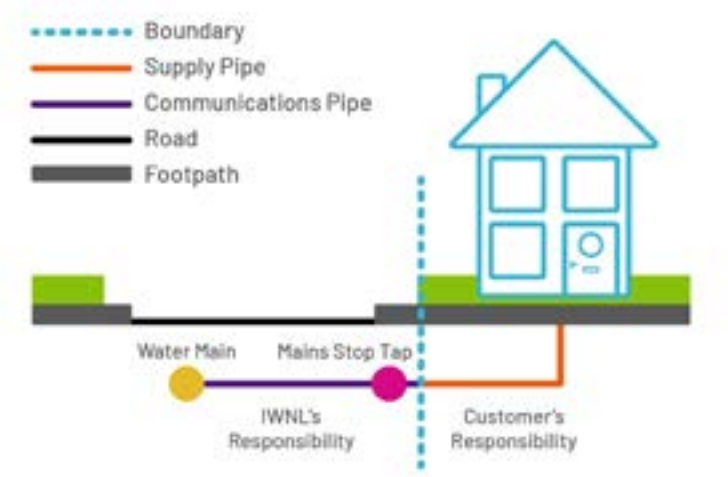
Independent Water Networks is the water and sewerage services company supplying your area. We are owned by BUUK Infrastructure, a company that owns and operates gas, water, electricity, fibre and heat networks across England, Scotland, and Wales.

Responsibility for pipework

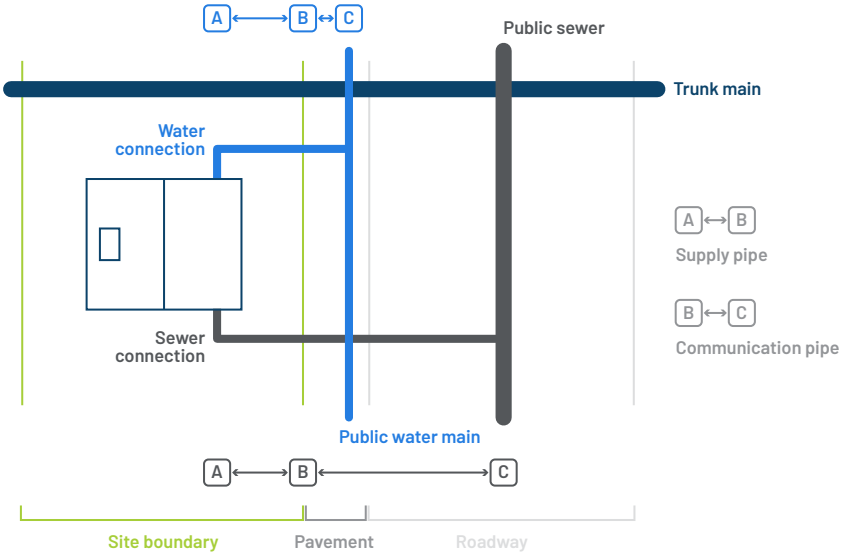
It is important to know where your responsibility lies for the pipework in and around your home.

You are responsible for maintaining all of your internal pipework and the supply pipe up to the boundary of your property.

We will maintain the water main and equipment up to the boundary of your pipework.



Boundary diagram



Leakage

If you find a leak on your property, it is important to get in touch with us on 02920 028711 as soon as possible.

We will help you find and repair leaks on your supply pipe. They must be accessible and not under any structure, up to the wall of your property. There is no limit to the number of repairs we will carry out, but we reserve the right to replace the pipe rather than repair it. When we reinstate the area directly affected by the repair and the work is completed, we will attempt to match its previous condition where possible.

In the case of new-build properties, you may be advised to contact the builder in the first instance, as this type of work is usually covered under the builder's guarantee for the first few years.

If you have received a large bill as a result of a leak from underground pipe work, you may be entitled to a leakage allowance.

How to spot a leak

Signs of a leak include:

- 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 you think you may have a leak, please make sure that all taps are turned off and no water is being used by any other appliances.

Watch the dials on your meter to see if they move, or take a meter reading and check again in an hour. If the second reading is higher and no water has been consumed in the meantime, you may have a leak.

Leakage from our pipes

Finding leaks on our system helps us conserve water, minimise the impact on the environment, reduce our costs and keep your water charges down.

It is our duty under law to prevent water wastage caused by leaks on our system and make sure that our networks are as efficient as possible.

Our networks are designed to prevent leaks occurring; however, it is still possible for them to develop, so if you discover a leak please call us on 02920 028711 to report it. This line is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Alternatively, you can contact us through our website at: **www.iwnl.co.uk**

Once we are aware of a leak on our pipes, we will aim to carry out the repair as soon as possible. This will be dependent upon gaining clearance from the relevant authorities.

Leakage from your pipes

You are responsible for maintaining all your internal pipework and your supply pipe up to the boundary of your property.

We are responsible for maintaining any communication pipe outside the boundary of your property, the water meter, and our stopcock. The diagram on page 3 details a typical water network system. If you wish to clarify responsibilities at your property, please contact us.

You should look after your part of the supply pipe as you would do any internal plumbing, even if it runs underground. Any work that needs to be done to your supply pipe is legally your responsibility. If you are a tenant, you are responsible for alerting both your landlord and us to the possibility of a leak.

A leak could cost you money in repairing pipes, damage to your property and charges for any water wasted. It is our duty under law to prevent water wastage caused by leaks on our system, and if you do not repair a leak on your property within 14 days we may start proceedings against you under section 75 of the Water Industry Act 1991.

Where to find your meter

There are three possible locations for a meter:

- External at our stopcock just outside the boundary of your property
- External inside the boundary of your property, either in your garden or on the outside wall of your property
- Inside your property

If you would like to find out more information on finding and reading your water meter please visit:
www.iwnl.co.uk/help-and-advice/reading-your-water-meter/

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; you are responsible for the supply pipe running to the property boundary regardless of where the meter is located.

Can the meter be moved?

If you want to move your water meter you will need to write to us giving reasons for the relocation. If we agree, we will provide you with the details of how much the work will cost. Customers with individual needs who need the meter to be relocated, to enable them to read it, will not be charged.

At the time of the relocation, we will check your incoming pipework and repair it for free, if it is found to be leaking.

If your meter is located near our stopcock, it will record any leaks that occur from your property boundary onwards, so you may be charged for water wasted as a result of a leakage on your supply pipe.

There is the possibility of a leakage allowance being granted.

If your meter is in a meter pit box, rainwater can collect in the box. This does not mean the meter is faulty.

Repairing a leak

If you find a leak in your property it is important to get in touch with us on 02920 028711 as soon as possible.

If the leak is anywhere within your property boundary you are responsible for repairing it. We offer a free leak-detection service (only available during normal working hours) where 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, we will repair or replace this free of charge, if it is accessible and does not pass under any structure. We will aim to make the repair within 7 days.

There is no limit to the number of repairs we will carry out; however, where appropriate, we will replace the pipe rather than repair it. When we reinstate the area directly affected by the repair, we will attempt to match its previous condition.

The leak detection or repair service is not available as a 24-hour emergency service. Outside of normal working hours you will need to contact an approved plumber. Advice on finding a plumber can be found on our website:
www.iwnl.co.uk

Leakage allowances

IWNL uses water meters, which mean we charge you on the amount of water and wastewater used.

If your meter reading is higher than usual and you feel you have used no more water than normal, you may have a leak. We are responsible if the leak is on the meter itself, and you are responsible for repairing leaks on the supply pipe. If your meter is situated near the boundary of your property it will record any water wasted from leaks in your supply pipe.

If you are aware of a leak and have taken no action to repair it, you may be liable for the cost of repair, clean-up, sampling and testing, removal of contaminated ground and the replacement of the supply pipe. If there is a leak and it is repaired straight away, was not caused by your negligence, and was impossible for you to discover and repair sooner, we will adjust your charges accordingly.

IWNL will not adjust your water charges for any future leaks, but you may be entitled to a change to your wastewater charges. Any changes to your water supply charges will also be made to your wastewater charges.

You may be entitled to a leakage allowance to help cover the cost of the water wasted by a leaking 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 for a leak on the supply pipe at the property. Our offer applies per property, per owner. This means that if you have recently bought a new property and we paid an allowance to a previous occupier, you will still be eligible for a further payment. If there is a change in tenancy however (not landlord), a further allowance will not be granted
- You repair or replace the supply pipe within 21 days

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

- You knew there was a leak (or should have known) and failed to repair it
- The leak was caused by negligence or recklessness either by you or by a third party
- The leak is inside your property

You must continue to pay your account as normal while your claim is being considered. Any allowance will be deducted from your future bills.

The allowance will be for the time that the leak occurred up to the date of repair, up to a maximum period of two years. It will be based on your past average usage, or, where this is not available, the average usage for your property type. This can be reviewed later if your actual usage is very different from what is expected.

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

In the event of a future leak(s), an allowance may be granted if you're able to demonstrate that you regularly monitor your water usage; for example, by recording meter readings monthly and acting quickly to deal with any unexplained increase in usage.

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

Wastewater notices

If you do not repair leaks on your supply pipe quickly, we can issue you with a wastewater notice requiring you to complete the necessary works within a fixed time period, usually 21 days. You will need to employ a plumber or contractor to carry out the work.

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

You may be eligible for a leakage allowance as outlined previously. However, if we have to repair the leak as a result of an expired wastewater notice, you will not be eligible.

Tips for preventing bursts

Leaks can be expensive and stressful, but you can avoid them by following some of these simple tips:

- Know where your main stop valve is - this allows you to turn off the water supply to your property. Usually, you can find it under the sink, in the garage or where the mains supply enters the property
- Keep rooms that are not used often heated at the lowest settings. This will stop your pipes and tanks from freezing
- Make sure your cold-water tank and pipes are properly insulated - you could save money on your energy bills too
- Repair dripping taps and faulty washers
- If you're going away for a short time, leave your central heating on a low setting to prevent your pipes from freezing
- Have the name and phone number of an approved plumber to hand

What to do if you have a burst pipe:

- Shut off the water at the main stop valve
- Turn off your central heating to prevent damage (or even an explosion)
- Open all taps to drain water from the pipes
- Contact a plumber

Independent advice

CCW

The voice for water consumers (CCW) is the independent customer watchdog for the water industry and may be able to provide you with independent advice.

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 see our Customer Complaints Procedure which is available on our website - **www.iwnl.co.uk**

CCW
23 Stephenson Street,

Birmingham,

B2 4BH

Telephone: 0300 034 2222
Website: www.ccw.org.uk

Contacting us

You can contact IWNL at:

Independent Water Networks
Driscoll 2
Ellen Street
Cardiff
CF10 4BP

Website: www.iwnl.co.uk/contact-us
Telephone: 02920 028711

Our office hours

GENERAL QUERIES AND BILLING:
Monday – Friday 8am - 8pm
Weekends and bank holidays 9am - 5pm

WATER OR DRAINAGE EMERGENCIES:
Available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

