



Issue No 6  
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## CODE OF PRACTICE FOR LEAKAGE (HOUSEHOLD AND NON-HOUSEHOLD CUSTOMERS)

### ABOUT THIS CODE

This Code of Practice, which has been approved by Ofwat, the regulatory body for the water industry, explains why it is important to reduce the amount of water wasted through leaks. Leaks can occur on pipes that our customers are responsible for, as well as on our own pipe network. This Code of Practice sets out our responsibilities and that of our customers, if a leak is discovered on a private supply pipe. It also describes how to identify a leak, what to do about it and how we will help. This Code applies to both household and non-household customers, as well as customers with a mixed-used property, such as a farm supply including the farmhouse or a shop with a flat above who are entitled to the same level of service as a household customer.

### PAYING FOR WATER

There are two methods of calculating your water bill. If you have a water meter, you will pay a standing charge and an amount per cubic metre for the volume of water that passes through the meter. If you do not have a water meter, your bill is based on the rateable value of your property.

This Code of Practice applies to all of our customers, regardless of how you are charged for your water. But, if you pay for water on the rateable value method, you will not be entitled to an allowance for leakage as your bill is not determined by the amount of water that you use.

If you do not have a water meter, you may be able to reduce your water bill by choosing to have a free optional meter installed. This may be particularly true if your property has a high rateable value and/or a low occupancy level. If it is reasonably practicable to fit a meter to an existing supply, we will install it in our preferred location, free of charge for households. For more information, please see our *Free Optional Meters for Domestic Households* leaflet or contact our **Customer Accounts Department**. If you wish to have the meter installed in a different location, we will carry out a survey to ascertain if it is practical to do so, but we may ask you to pay any additional costs.

### REDUCING LEAKAGE

There are environmental and financial costs associated with wasting the large amount of resources necessary to treat and supply water which meets the high quality standards required. As part of our legal duties we have developed a Water Efficiency Strategy which sets out our aims to promote water efficiency to our customers and

reduce leakage. Leaking pipes can also cause damage to roads and drives and, in some instances, can cause damage to the foundations of walls.

We have a team of trained staff who locate and repair leaks. We have divided our pipe network into a number of zones and use leakage detection equipment and computer software to identify areas of high water use. If we suspect that there is a leak, we will visit the area and investigate. If we discover that there is a leak on your supply pipe we will let you know.

We operate a free 24 hour Leakline for customers to contact us on if they see evidence of any other water leaks, the number is **0800 2987112**.

## **HOW TO IDENTIFY A LEAK**

You can help to reduce the amount of water lost through leakage by regularly checking for leaking pipes.

Not all leaks are obvious and some can go unnoticed for long periods of time. During periods of dry weather you should check your drives and paths for unexplained damp spots and check your lawns and borders as unusually lush vegetation is another sign that you may have a leak. You may also notice that the flow and pressure from your kitchen tap has reduced, this could also be a sign of a leak.

If you have a water meter, you can carry out your own leak test:-

- Turn off your internal stop tap (this is usually located under the kitchen sink or in the utility room).
- Turn on the cold tap in the kitchen to check that the stop tap is completely shut. A small amount of water will run from the tap as the pipe empties, if water continues to flow, the stop tap is not completely shut.
- Once the stop tap is completely shut, read your meter. The black numbers show the number of cubic metres of water used and the red numbers and dials show the fractions of cubic metres of water used.
- If possible leave the stop tap closed for at least an hour and re-read the meter.
- If your meter is outside, remember to replace the protective foam and lid, and turn the indoor stop tap back on.

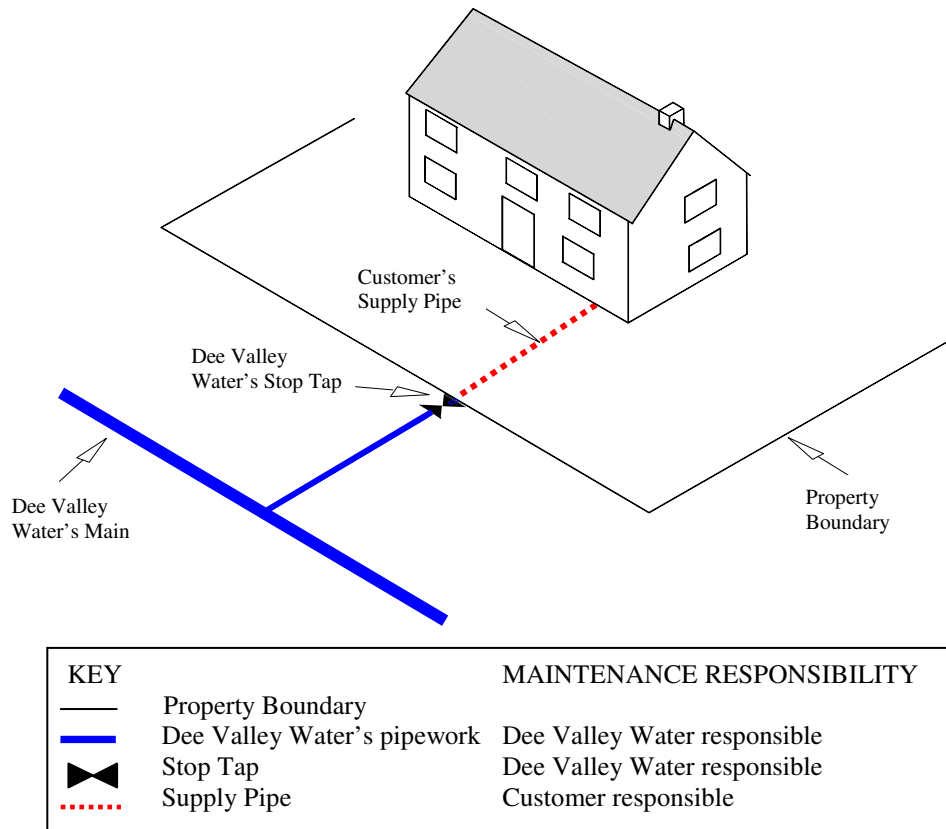
If the meter is still turning or your second meter reading is different from the first, you may have a leak. If this is the case, contact our **Control Room** and we will try to help. If you think that your meter has stopped recording, contact our **Control Room** and we will investigate.

If it is not possible to read your meter, or you do not know where it is, contact our **Control Room** and we will investigate free of charge.

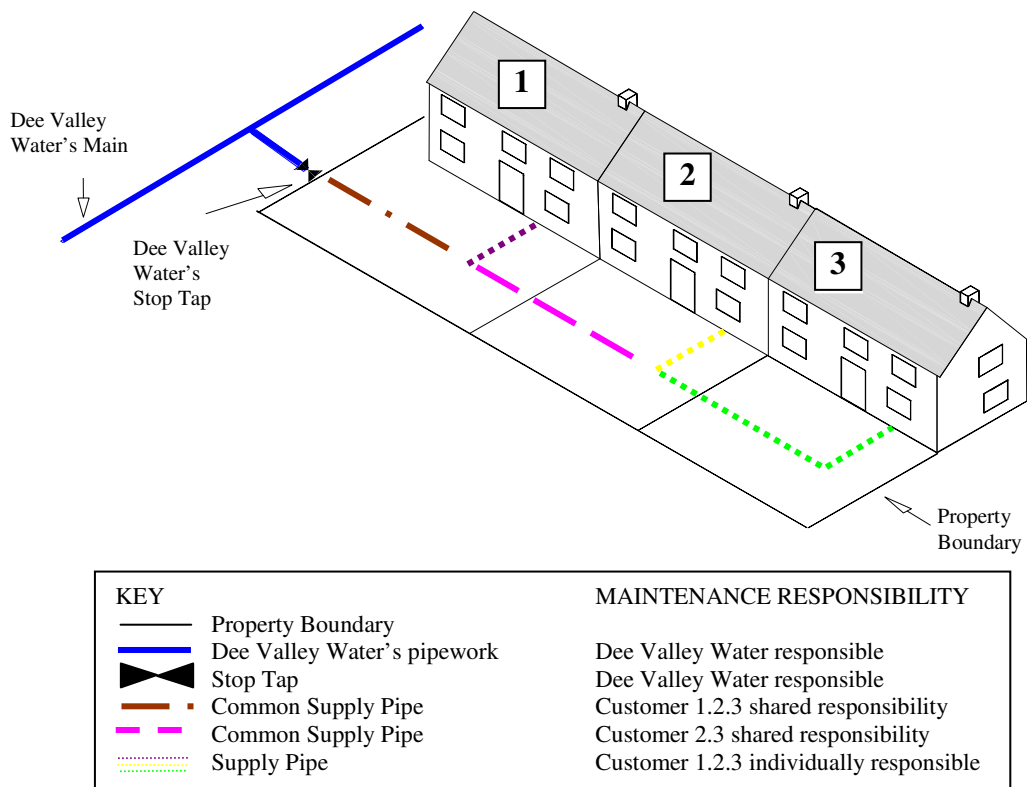
## **WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?**

In most cases, we are responsible for the pipework between our water main and the boundary to your property and you are responsible for the maintenance and repair of the supply pipe, which usually runs from our stop tap or meter to your property. The

diagram below shows the typical responsibilities for the maintenance and repair of pipework.



However, on some occasions, more than one property may share a supply pipe. In these cases of shared supply, the responsibility for the pipe is normally shared between all of the customers who receive water through this pipe. The diagram below shows the typical responsibilities for maintenance and repair of a shared supply pipe.



If you have a leak on your supply pipe, you are responsible for repairing the leak. We can help you locate the leak and if you are a domestic customer, we may be able to repair the leak free of charge or at a reduced cost. Details of our *Leak Repair Scheme* are given at the end of this document. If you are unsure of your responsibility or would like more information, contact our **Control Room** and we will investigate.

## **WASTING WATER**

A leaking supply pipe can waste as much water in five days as an average family uses in a year. We have legal powers to issue you with a formal “Waste Notice” which requires you to mend the leak. The Water Industry Act 1991 Sections 73-75 gives us the legal right to insist that you repair a leak even if you do not qualify for our *Leak Repair Scheme*. If you do not repair the leak within 21 days, or if the leak has the potential to cause damage to another person, we may carry out the remedial work and recover the costs of repair from you. In extreme cases we may disconnect the supply if damage is being caused.

If we send you a Waste Notice and you are not sure what to do, contact our **Control Room**.

## **WHAT TO DO IF YOU HAVE A LEAK**

You are responsible for maintaining and repairing your supply pipe (the pipework that runs from our stop tap or meter to your property).

### **Household Customers**

We offer household customers and customers with a mixed use property a leakage detection service which is free for the first two man hours. At the end of this two hour period, we will advise you of the options available. The leak detection service is available regardless of whether you have a water meter or not. The leak detection service is available for each leak that occurs, provided we have not previously deemed the pipework uneconomical to repair.

As part of our commitment to reducing leakage, we offer a leak repair scheme for our customers. We will assess the cost of repairing the leak and if the costs are less than £220, subject to certain conditions (full details can be found at the end of this document or by contacting our **Control Room**), we will carry out the repair for free.

If we think that the cost will be more, we will inform you of how much it will be and you can decide if you wish us to repair the leak or if you want to have the leak repaired by another party.

The *Leak Repair Scheme* only applies to leaks on a supply pipe. For any other leakage such as an indoor leak or a leaking overflow pipe, you will be responsible for the repair and you will need to contact a plumber. We recommend that you use a WIAPS approved plumber. If you need help or require information about approved plumbers, contact our **Control Room**.

If we deem that a pipe is uneconomical to repair due to its poor condition, you will be responsible for replacing or repairing the pipework at your own cost.

Remember, if you are on a meter and the leak is not repaired, you will have to pay for any of the wasted water which has passed through the meter.

### **Non-Household Customers**

You must repair any leaks at your own cost. We recommend that you use a WIAPS approved plumber. However, we will provide one hour's free leak detection service. At the end of this period, we will advise you of the options available.

The leak detection service is available for each leak that occurs, provided we have not deemed the pipework uneconomical to repair.

If you need help or require information about WIAPS approved plumbers, contact our **Control Room**.

### **PAYING FOR WATER LOST THROUGH LEAKAGE**

If you have a metered water supply you will be charged for any water that passes through the meter even if it is lost through leakage. In certain circumstances, as set out below, you may be eligible for a first time leakage allowance which will cover the cost of any water lost through leakage.

If you pay for water through the rateable value method, you will not be charged for any water wasted but you must repair the leak as soon as possible, if you do not, we have the legal right to insist that you repair the leak.

Customers with a mixed use property are entitled to the same level of service as a household customer.

We will backdate the allowance to the earliest time that it can be identified that the leak occurred.

The allowance will be based on your past normal consumption. When there is no record of past consumption, the adjustment will be based upon typical usage for a property of a similar type and your measured charges will be further adjusted if your subsequent actual usage is significantly different.

When a leak has been caused through negligence of either yourself or someone working on your behalf, no allowance will be given.

If we repair the leak and you have not previously claimed a leakage allowance, we will automatically adjust your next bill to take account of the leaked water on the basis of an excess over average usage. If you repair the leak, you will need to complete an application form to apply for the leakage allowance. To obtain an application form, or if you have a query about your account and the adjustment of charges following a leak, please contact our **Customer Accounts Department**. Even

if the leak repair is not covered by our *Leak Repair Scheme*, you are still entitled to a first time leak allowance.

If your property has an internal meter, we will not give a leakage allowance for any leaks or defective fittings located after the internal meter.

## **LEAKAGE ALLOWANCES**

### **Household Customers**

Household customers and customers with mixed use premises are entitled to a leakage allowance. This allowance is for excess over average use for both water and sewerage. To qualify for an allowance:-

- you must have a meter
- you must ensure that any leak has been repaired in a timely manner (normally within 21 days from the date the leak was detected); and
- you must claim for the leak allowance as soon as reasonably practicable but always within six months of the leak being detected; and
- only one allowance can be claimed per customer per property.

Once a leakage allowance has been made, no future allowances will be made to you whilst you are the account holder for that property.

### **Non-Household Customers**

Non-household customers are entitled to a 50% allowance for excess over average use for water. To qualify for an allowance:-

- you must have a meter
- you must ensure that any leak has been repaired in a timely manner (normally within 21 days from the date the leak was detected); and
- you must claim as soon as reasonably practicable but always within six months of the leak being detected; and
- only one allowance can be claimed since the last change of occupancy.

You may also be eligible for a 50% sewerage allowance. Although we do not provide sewerage services, we do bill customers on the sewerage company's behalf. At your request, we will contact the relevant sewerage company and request that they make an allowance. The allowance must be claimed within six months.

Once a leakage allowance has been made, no future allowances will be made to you whilst you are the account holder for that property.

## **NEW METERS ON AN EXISTING SUPPLY**

When a water meter is first installed, we will check for leaks on your supply pipe and will let you know if you have a leak. We will repair the leak free of charge if no additional excavation is required.

If additional excavation is required, then you are responsible for the repair and will have to pay for any water that passes through the meter even if it is lost through leakage. However you may be eligible for our *Leak Repair Scheme* (details can be found at the end of this document or by contacting our **Control Room**). If you are not eligible, we will explain the options available to you.

## **NEW CONNECTION TO A PROPERTY**

When a new connection is made to supply water from the mains for the first time, we are not always able to check for leaks. In these circumstances, we expect that the supply pipe has been correctly installed by a competent person and we will not make any free or subsidised repairs to the supply pipe until a period of one year has elapsed from the date of the new connection.

If you request a new connection from us, you must ensure that the supply pipe is laid in accordance with the Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations 1999. For details of the requirements and any further information about new connections, contact our **Control Room**.

## **METER POSITION**

In line with Government regulations, meters are installed in one of three locations:-

- outside the street boundary of your property (i.e. in the footpath) in a combined chamber with the stop tap;
- in the ground inside the boundary of your property;
- in a wall box or inside a building.

Our preferred location is in the footpath, so that we can measure the amount of water supplied at the limit of our responsibility and also so that we can take meter readings without disturbing you.

If you have an existing meter and wish to relocate it, you will normally have to pay for it to be moved. However, we will consider waiving this charge for customers who have difficulty in reading their meter, for example, through age or illness.

If you have difficulty reading your meter, you may qualify for our Additional Services Scheme. If eligible, we will provide an additional meter reading per year. For more information, please see our *Additional Services* leaflet, or contact our **Customer Accounts Department**.

## HOW TO CONTACT US

Dee Valley Water plc  
Packsaddle  
Wrexham Road  
Rhostyllen  
Wrexham  
LL14 4EH

**Control Room**  
(Operational Enquiries  
and Emergencies)

Tel: 01978 846946

**Leakline**

Tel: 0800 2987112 free phone

**Customer Accounts Department:**

Tel: 01978 833200

Fax: 01978 844586

Email: [customer.services@deevalleygroup.com](mailto:customer.services@deevalleygroup.com)

Developer Enquiries:

Email: [developer.services@deevalleygroup.com](mailto:developer.services@deevalleygroup.com)

Our website address is:

[www.deevalleywater.co.uk](http://www.deevalleywater.co.uk)

## COMPLAINTS

If you have a billing issue or complaint, please call our Customer Accounts Department on 01978 833200, between Monday and Friday 8.00am - 6.00pm. For all other supply issues or complaints please call our Control Room, on 01978 846946. Our Control Room is manned 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Alternatively, you can complain in writing to our Managing Director, Mr Norman Holladay at the following address:-

Dee Valley Water plc  
Packsaddle  
Wrexham Road  
Rhostyllen  
Wrexham  
LL14 4EH

You can also email your complaint to [customer.complaints@deevalleygroup.com](mailto:customer.complaints@deevalleygroup.com)

We have produced a Customer Satisfaction Leaflet which provides information on our complaints process. Our Code of Practice for Domestic Customers also provides more details. Both of these documents can be obtained by contacting us on 01978 846946.

If you are not satisfied with the way in which we have responded to your complaint, you can contact the Consumer Council for Water Wales, the independent body which represents the interests of customers.

The address for correspondence is:-

Consumer Council for Water Wales  
Room 140  
Caradog House  
1-6 St Andrews Place  
Cardiff  
CF10 3BE  
Tel: 08457 078 267  
Fax: 0292 023 9847  
Email: [wales@ccwater.org.uk](mailto:wales@ccwater.org.uk)  
Website: [www.ccwater.org.uk](http://www.ccwater.org.uk)

## **OTHER CODES OF PRACTICE AND SOURCES OF INFORMATION**

The following Codes of Practice have been approved by Ofwat, the regulatory body for the water industry:-

- Code of Practice for Domestic Customers
- Guaranteed Standards Scheme
- Code of Practice for Collection of Unpaid Charges (Household Customers)
- Code of Practice for Leakage (Household and Non-household Customers)
- Scheme of Charges

We also operate the following Codes of Practice:-

- Code of Practice for Pipelaying on Private Land
- Code of Practice for Self Lay

All of the above documents can be obtained by contacting us using the details given in the How to Contact Us section above.

## LEAK REPAIR SCHEME

Customers are normally responsible for the supply pipe, which leads from their properties to our stop taps or meters. In most situations, this responsibility extends from the building to the street boundary. It is vitally important that leakage is reduced to acceptable levels in order to protect the environment and reduce energy costs. We offer a leak detection service which is free for the first two man hours for household customers and customers with mixed use premises and free for the first man hour for non-household customers. This service is available for each leak that occurs, provided we have not deemed the pipework uneconomical to repair. Subject to the following conditions we offer a subsidised leak repair for household customers and customers with mixed use premises. You will be entitled to a free repair if the cost is less than £220 and you ask us to carry out the work. These services are subject to the following conditions:-

1. If you have received a Waste Notice (LL3), you must contact us within 7 days.
2. The supply pipe must be no larger than 32mm in diameter and less than 1.5m deep.
3. Part or all of the property must be used for domestic purposes (council, housing association and private landlord properties are not included), the property must be over 12 months old and not under any commercial redevelopment.
4. We will not offer this service if your insurance policy covers the repair of leaking underground pipes, you should claim on your insurance.
5. Only the first two leaks are covered in the lifetime of the property, irrespective of how many owners there have been. We will also only make one repair in any one calendar year.
6. We will carry out the repair free of charge if the cost is estimated as being below **£220** (including any associated works). If the cost is likely to be above **£220** we will tell you before work commences exactly how much you will need to pay towards the Company repairing the leak. At this stage we will ask you if you wish us to continue with the work or whether you wish to appoint a private contractor. When we carry out the repair, any costs above **£220** will have to be met by you.
7. We will not offer this service if we deem that a pipe is uneconomical to repair due to its poor condition.
8. We will not offer this service where the leak is under or immediately adjacent to a permanent structure or where we cannot readily identify the leak, for example on a long length of pipe.
9. The supply pipe can be traced successfully using the equipment available to us.
10. Full access to the indoor stop tap, which must be operable, must be readily available for us to use our leak detection equipment.
11. Access to the pipe should be readily available, temporary structures such as sheds, trees, shrubs, ornaments and potted plants etc must be removed and put back by you.
12. We will back-fill the excavation with the excavated material, but the final reinstatement will be your responsibility. Any hard surfaces will be finished in temporary tarmac.
13. If we determine that your supply pipe is in poor condition or uneconomical to repair it will be your responsibility to employ a contractor to repair or replace the pipe at your own cost.
14. We may replace up to 5 metres of supply pipe using a moling technique if excavations facilitating the moling are already open and there is no risk of damaging drains or other services whilst carrying out the moling process.
15. If any of the pipework is in someone else's property or the property boundary cannot be clearly defined, we will not carry out a repair.
16. We reserve the right not to carry out a subsidised repair if it is uneconomical to do so, due to its position or condition of the pipe.

If you do not wish to use our free or subsidised repair service or the leak does not qualify for our scheme, you will be expected to repair the leak as instructed by the Waste Letter (LL3) entirely at your cost.

**Please Note:** Unless we have been found to be negligent, we will not be held liable for any claims for injury to persons or damage to property (including customer's fittings) which arise as a result of our work.

**We will guarantee our workmanship and repairs for twelve months, however if subsequent to the repair, leakage occurs which is attributable to the poor condition of the pipe, we will not be held accountable. If a separate leak occurs, you will be liable to pay for its repair.**