

**ICOSA WATER SERVICES LIMITED**

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**CODE OF PRACTICE ON LEAKAGE**

**INFORMATION, HELP AND ADVICE FOR OUR  
CUSTOMERS**



## INTRODUCTION

Icosa Water Services Ltd (Icosa Water) has a duty to promote the efficient use of water and to reduce leakage. As a customer you share in this duty in that you are responsible for a certain part of the network that delivers water supplies to your home. We provide you with more details on this in the section headed 'Who is responsible for repairing leaks'.

This Code of Practice on Leakage (we will refer to it as the Leakage Code in the rest of this document) has been prepared in accordance with our conditions of appointment (these are standard conditions written and enforced by the Water Services Regulation Authority (Ofwat), our regulatory body). This Leakage Code has been approved by Ofwat.

It can also be made available to customers in Braille or large print on request by calling our Customer Services Team on **0330 111 0780**.

The purpose of the Leakage Code is to explain how we can help or other actions that you can take in the event that you discover that you may have a leak. It also gives you some ideas on how to look for the source of a leak. This Leakage Code applies to domestic customers, although we are able to provide assistance to our business customers in the event of a leak.

### What are the main causes of leaks?

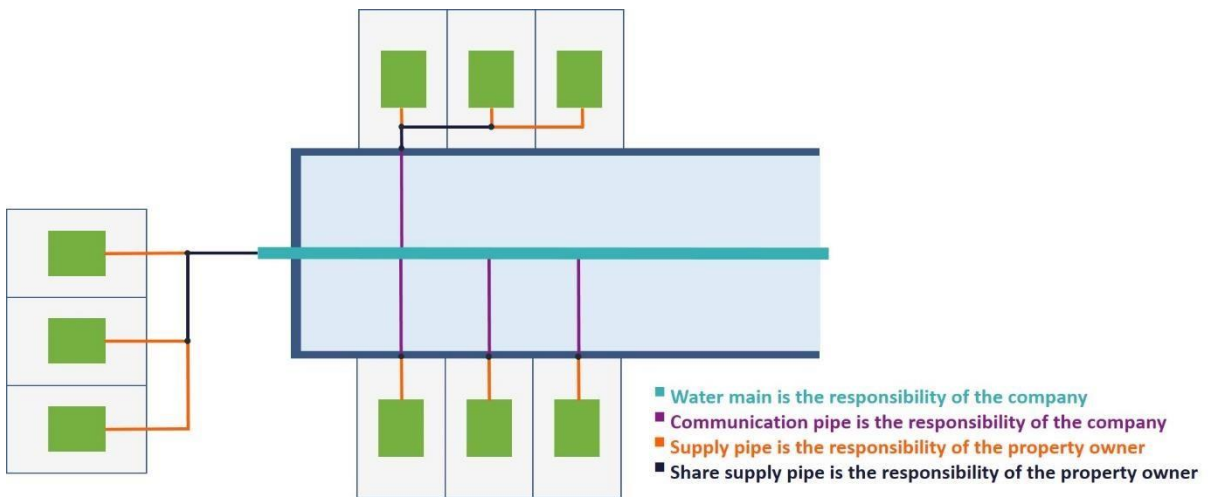
Although Icosa Water networks are relatively new and thus less likely to have significant leaks, such leaks are still possible. The most common causes of water leaks include the following:

- Corrosion: This can take many forms and may be the result of a chemical reaction, water quality, or age
- Rust: Rust is the most common form of corrosion which is routinely found in older galvanized steel pipes. Newer PVC (such as your supply pipe) are not susceptible to rust, but many different parts of the plumbing fixtures in your home are
- Cracks: Cracks are relatively rare in modern plumbing fixtures, but still possible. A crack can occur in most aspects of any plumbing fixture
- Leaky Pipe Joints: The joints in your pipe work can degrade and develop leaks with time. The most notable effect of leaky pipe joints is a lack of water pressure
- Temperature changes: Large temperature changes also can cause your pipes to crack and leak. This is common in extremely cold climates, but it can also happen in warmer areas if there's a sudden cold spell and pipes aren't properly insulated
- Accidental damage: This can include damage caused by contract workers digging up the roads
- Tree roots: Tree roots cause problems when water and sewage pipes connected to your home crack, releasing small amounts of water vapour into the surrounding soil. This attracts tree roots, which burrow their way into pipes and eventually cause blockages



## Who is responsible for repairing leaks?

We share responsibility with you for maintaining the network and repairing leaks, although we are each responsible for separate sections of the network. The diagram below provides a useful visual guide to the different sections of the network outside your home and shows that part of the network for which we are responsible and that part of the network for which you are responsible.



## Our responsibilities

We are responsible for the water main under the highway and the communications pipe that runs from the water main to the boundary of your property. We have a legal duty to operate an efficient network and to reduce water leakages. You can work with us in reducing leaks on our system by notifying us as soon as you become aware of any such leaks so that these can be repaired quickly so as not to waste water. You can call us at any time on **0330 111 2014** to notify us if you become aware of any leaks on our network. This line is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

## Your responsibilities

You are responsible for maintaining the supply pipe (even though it is installed underground) and all the internal plumbing in your home. The water supply pipe is the pipe which brings water into your home from our main in the street and is the pipe that runs from the boundary of your property into your home up until the first water fitting or stop-tap inside your property. The supply pipe will typically be beneath your garden, driveway or path.

You should be vigilant in monitoring your water usage and identifying leaks as these can be costly to repair if not dealt with immediately, particularly as they can cause damage to your property. Also remember that leaks on your supply pipe and internal plumbing cause you to use additional water for which we are entitled to charge you.

## Leakage inspections on installing new meters

As previously indicated, we have a duty to reduce leakage and at the same time promote the efficient use of water. We know that a substantial amount of water escapes from unidentified leaks on customers' underground supply pipes. When we are fitting an external meter, we will check to see whether your private supply pipe is leaking by confirming that the meter flow indicator is not moving when you are not using any water in your home.

If the leak can be repaired without any further digging, we will repair it free of charge. If the leak cannot be repaired without further digging, we will advise you of all the possible options available to you.

If the leak is more likely to be internal, we will let you know so that you can call a plumber to help you fix this.

You pay for the volume (quantity) of water you use by reference to the meter that records the volume of water passing through it. The meter will be installed on the supply pipe. As you have access to this meter you should use it to control your water usage and bill. Reading your meter can also assist in determining whether you have a leak on your supply pipe or internal plumbing. See the section headed 'How to test for leaks'.

## Position of your water meter

The location of your meter is determined by us in accordance with regulations set by Government. Meters can be installed either internally or externally in a meter box against your wall or in a meter chamber near to the boundary of your property.

If you have particular physical needs that mean you cannot check your meter reading when you need to because of its location, we will consider moving the meter only if:

- We can find a location for it that makes it more accessible for you to read



- This alternative location is one which will allow the meter to measure all the water you use and only the water you use
- Significant alterations to your household fittings or plumbing are not required

Where we do agree to move a meter in these circumstances, you may need to cover the costs associated with moving it.

## How to test for leaks

### Wet areas and lush vegetation

Water escaping from a leak on your underground supply pipe may not be obvious above ground, but wet areas or patches of lush vegetation in your garden during dry spells could indicate a leak. It is important to keep a regular check on your meter readings to help you identify an underground leak at an early stage. We would recommend that you check your meter reading at least once a month. Your meter will typically be installed in a meter chamber situated in the pavement outside your house.

This is an image of what a standard meter chamber cover will look like:



Follow these simple steps to read your meter:

- Look at the meter location and serial number on your water bill.
- Lift the metal lid on the water meter chamber.
- Remove the foam or polystyrene disc which acts as frost protection
- Check the serial number on the top of your meter – this should match the number on your bill
- Read the five figures in the black boxes
- These indicate the amount of water used in cubic metres (one cubic metre = 1,000 litres)
- Ignore the red boxes – these are 10 litre units and are not used for billing
- Replace the polystyrene disc and close the lid

### Higher than normal bills

If your bill is showing higher than normal consumption this may also be an indication that you have a leak on your supply pipe. If you suspect that you might have a leak, you can check the situation by noting the reading on all the dials on the meter; turning off all water using apparatus in your house for a couple of hours and checking the meter reading again. If the dials have moved, then you probably do have a leak.



If you have internal water storage there may continue to be some inflow to the storage tank during this period. To counter this, take several readings during the period of the test, this may indicate an initial flow stopping when the storage tank is full.

To check if a leak is on your underground pipe and not inside your property, you should then turn off your internal stopcock and check the meter again. If the dials have moved again, or are moving while the stopcock is turned off, the leak is probably on your underground pipe.

### **Repairing a leak**

If you have a leak on your private supply pipe, it is yours, or your landlord's responsibility to arrange for it to be repaired. Once the leak has been confirmed, the leak will need to be repaired within 30 days.

If you require any assistance, you can call our Customer Services Team who can give you a list of Icosa approved plumbers or contractors in your area who may be able to carry out the repair work for you.

Alternatively, you can find a plumber in your local area on the internet, local paper or Yellow Pages.

### **Once leaks are repaired**

Please let us know once you have had the leaks repaired. You may be able to apply for a one-off leakage allowance as a result of the leak. See the section headed 'Allowance for leaks' on page 5 to 6 for further details.

### **If you don't repair your leaks**

Water escaping from a leak is a loss of a costly and valuable resource, so if a leak is reported or detected on your pipework, you will be required to repair it. If you fail to comply with this request, we can serve a legal notice requiring a repair to be carried out. We have a legal duty to prevent wasted water and will therefore commence enforcement proceedings against you under sections 75 and 170 of the Water Industry Act 1991. If you don't then carry out the repairs within the time specified in the notice, we will either:

- Carry out the repair ourselves and recover our costs from you; or
- Prosecute you under Section 73 of this Act for allowing your water fittings to be or remain in a defective condition. The maximum fine is £1,000

### **If you are on benefits**

Icosa may be able to carry out repair on your supply pipe if you receive any of the following benefits:

- Council Tax Benefit
- Housing Benefit
- Income Support
- Income-based Job Seekers' Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Working Tax Credit
- Child Tax Credit (except families in receipt of the family element only)
- State Pension Credit
- Universal Credit



You can call our Customer Services Team for further information. If the leak is an emergency and likely to cause any damage to your property you are strongly advised to call a plumber to assist with the repair. We are under no circumstances liable for any damage to your property.

### **Allowances for leaks**

If you are on a metered supply, the meter will record all of the water we supply to your property, which will include any leak on your supply pipe or from appliances in your home. However, if the cause of the leak is fully repaired, you will qualify for a one-off leak allowance, where we will adjust your charges back to their normal levels. Where we have no record of previous usage, e.g. you have recently moved into the property, we will estimate your normal usage. If subsequent meter readings show your actual usage to be lower than our estimate, we will make a further adjustment to reflect this.

If you are worried that you may have a leak on your supply pipe, please contact us and we will arrange for a Technician to visit and check your supply. If our visit confirms that there is a leak, we will advise you to contact your plumber for this to be repaired.

If the repair is completed within 30 days of the date of our Technician's visit, we will make an allowance for the leak as a credit to your water bill. If the repair takes longer than 30 days, the value of the allowance may be reduced. Time to repair 30-60 days allowance reduced by 33%; 60-90 days allowance reduced by 66%. More than 90 days no allowance.

You should apply for the leak allowance once the leak has been satisfactorily repaired and within one month of the repair being carried out. Please contact our customers services team on 0330 111 0780 or email us at [customerservices@icosawater.co.uk](mailto:customerservices@icosawater.co.uk).

A copy of the invoice for the repair work will be required. If you are unable to provide this, we may need to visit your property to inspect the repair. Leak allowances are not made where the leak is due to customer negligence. Customers may receive one leak allowance per property.

### **Adjustment of water supply charges**

Where we agree to make a leak allowance we will adjust your water charges, on the basis of past normal consumption. Where there is no record of previous consumption, we will take a meter reading after the leak has been repaired and base an allowance on the consumption recorded. We will not ask you to pay until we have calculated your allowance. If you need to apply for a leakage allowance, please call our Customer Services Team

### **Consumer Council for Water**

If you remain unhappy with our response to your complaint you can contact the Consumer Council for Water.

Contact details:

By phone: 0300 034 2222

Website: [ccwater.org.uk](http://ccwater.org.uk)



In writing: CCWater, 1st floor, Victoria Square House, Victoria Square  
Birmingham B2 4AJ

### **Ofwat**

You can also refer certain disputes to Ofwat for a decision or for arbitration.

Contact details:

By phone: 0121 644 7500

Website: [ofwat.gov.uk](http://ofwat.gov.uk)

In writing: Ofwat, Centre City Tower, 7 Hill Street, Birmingham, B5 4UA

### **Water Industry Redress Scheme (WATRS)**

If after completion of any mediation and investigation process by the Consumer Council for Water, you believe a dispute remains unresolved an application can be made to the Water Industry Redress Scheme (WATRS). Details of which will be provided to you by The Consumer Council for Water following an unsuccessful resolution.

For more information on this process see their website: [watsr.org](http://watsr.org)

Contact details:

By email: [info@watsr.org](mailto:info@watsr.org)

In writing: WATRS, International Dispute Resolution Centre, 70 Fleet Street, London,  
EC4Y 1EU

## **GETTING IN TOUCH WITH US**

If you would like to discuss any aspect of our service, please contact our Customer Service Team. There are a number of ways in which you can contact us.

### **You can write to us at:**

Icosa Water Services  
Sophia House  
Cathedral Road





Cardiff  
CF11 9LJ

**Telephone:**

If you have any queries, please feel free to call our teams:

Customer Service Team on **0330 111 0780**.

Billing Team on **0333 000 0113**

**Email us:**

billing@icosawater.co.uk

customerservices@icosawater.co.uk

**Our office hours for general and billing enquires are:**

Monday – Friday 8:30am to 5:30pm (Excluding Bank Holidays).

**Drainage Emergencies:**

For any drainage emergencies please call our 24-hour emergency number **0330 111 2014**.

Our website **www.icosawater.co.uk** contains further company information. If you do not have access to the internet, we can send you any relevant information that you require by post

