

PROCUREMENT & CONTRACT MANAGEMENT FACTSHEET

How to check for possible water leaks

These notes have been prepared to assist site managers, caretakers and SCC contractors in carrying out an initial investigation into high water consumption.

IMPORTANT: water meters are usually located in chambers set into the ground. Chambers are often located in the street or other pedestrian areas and are covered by steel or concrete lids. The lids can sometimes be heavy and difficult to lift. Please do not attempt to read your water meter unless you are completely confident you can do so without exposing you, your staff or others to risk or injury. If in doubt please arrange for a contractor (via the Property helpdesk) to do the check for you.

All water bills are checked and monitored by the Energy Team – normally we will contact you if we receive a high bill and ask for the following check to be carried out.

To be effective the check can only be carried out early in the morning, at weekends or any time when the building has not been used for at least 4 hours. Taking readings when the building is in use can create a false impression of a leak.

1. Check the location of the meter and make sure you can carry out the check safely and have the right equipment to do the job. If possible try and have an assistant on hand to help.
2. Recommended equipment:
 - 2 large flat blade screwdrivers (useful if cover is stuck)
 - 2 meter chamber lifting keys (available very cheaply from builders merchants)
 - A wooden stick and clean rag/ cloth (useful if the meter is dirty)
 - A bright torch
 - A digital camera (optional)
3. Before locking up the night before (or before you do the check) visit all areas where water is used to make sure nothing has been left on and there are no dripping taps, overflowing cisterns etc. Do NOT isolate or turn off the water or any electric supplies to urinals.
4. If the check is to be done in the early morning please take a meter reading as you leave the premises the night before (this will help us assess overnight usage).
5. Make sure the check is done before the building opens or before any water is used. Lift the chamber cover and note the full meter reading including fractions/ sub digits/ red digits. If the meter is difficult to read you may have to use the rag/ cloth to clean the meter face. If you have a digital camera, take a couple of photos of the reading.

6. If the meter is moving (going round) take a second reading (and photo if applicable) 10 minutes later, again noting all the numbers.

7. If meter is moving and you are able to turn off the water supply to the building (rising main) try repeating the test to see if the meter still goes round. If it does you may well have an underground leak. If it stops the problem is within the building. Further investigations are best left to SCC contractors.

IMPORTANT – NEVER leave an unattended meter chamber with the cover removed

8. If you've been asked by the Energy Team to carry out this check please contact us as soon as possible and we will advise you on your options and what to do next

9. If the test was not requested by the Energy Team but you discover the meter is going round please contact us as soon as possible as it's likely you've discovered a problem

What happens next?

1. If the meter is going round and the loss is significant we will probably advise you to call the property helpdesk or call out a contractor to investigate the site and carry repairs.

2. If the loss is very small (less than £150 pa) we will probably advise you to monitor the situation (take monthly readings). Leaks this small are very difficult to find and it is not cost effective to carry out further investigations.

3. Once the contractor has completed any repairs THEY MUST carry out the above checks again to ensure the site is watertight. Ask them to provide you with the meter readings. Please pass these readings to the Energy Team.

4. Please notify the Energy Team when repairs have been completed. Wherever possible we will put in a claim for the lost water sewerage charge. Before we can do this we will need two further meter readings taken at least 7 days apart. These are an essential part of the claims process. You may be able to persuade the repair contractor to do these readings for you. Note: we only require single meter readings (e.g. we don't need a 10 minute check or the fractions/ sub digits). Readings can be done at any time even if the building is in use.

PLEASE NOTE: The internet link below gives information from Anglian Water on the conditions applicable when a customer has experienced a water leak for making a claim. If you need to discuss, please contact a member of the Energy Team.

www.anglianwater.co.uk/business/water-supply/leakage/

Energy Team contact details

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