

Do you know where your stop tap is?

In an emergency or for repairs you'll need to know where your stop tap is. The internal stop tap - which is your responsibility to maintain - is usually under the kitchen sink on the main incoming water pipe, but it could be near your front door or in a downstairs cloakroom.

Check your stop tap occasionally. If it is jammed or leaking, get it repaired or replaced by a reputable plumber. If there is no stop tap, your plumber will have to clamp the pipe before carrying out repairs.

You may also have an external stop tap - usually near your front boundary wall. Although this is the property and responsibility of the water company, they may not be prepared to replace or repair it unless there is an emergency. It will need to be shut before the supply pipe, for which you are responsible, can be repaired or replaced.

How do I fix a dripping tap?

A tap dripping at the rate of one drip a second will waste 15 litres of water a day. Drips can stain your sink or bath, and damage the tap seating. You can buy replacement washers from hardware stores or plumbing merchants. Take the old washer to the shop to make sure you get the correct replacement.

How do I know if there is a leak in my supply?

Because your supply pipe runs underground, leaks

are not always obvious. Damp spots in dry weather on a path or particularly green patches on a lawn may indicate a leak. If so, you could be wasting up to 14,000 litres of water a day.

If you see water bubbling up through the ground or suspect an underground leak, contact your water company immediately. Most companies have a free Leakline number and a 24-hour emergency number. The company will be able to confirm whether there is a leak. You are responsible for repairing any leaks within 14 days, unless it is in the company's equipment (external stop tap, meter or meter joints). Some companies offer to repair leaks on customers' pipe work free of charge (first time only) or will replace old pipe work at a reduced cost.

How can I use less water at home?

There are several easy ways to cut the amount of water you use without compromising on hygiene and cleanliness. These include:

Saving water in the bathroom:

- Install a 'Save-a-Flush' device in the toilet cistern - sometimes called a 'hippo' or 'bog hog'. Every time you flush, you'll save one litre of water. These are designed for older cisterns which hold more than 7 litres, not slim-line or dual-flush cisterns. Check if your water company can give you one.

A family of four can use up to two baths of water just flushing the toilet every day. Cutting down on this is environmentally friendly and, if you pay



metered charges, will save you money.

- **Take a shower instead of a bath.** Except for power showers, showering uses less water and heating energy than a bath.
- **If you do take a bath, avoid overfilling it -** you'll save heating energy as well as water.
- **Use a glass of water rather than leaving the tap running while you clean your teeth.**
- **Use the plug when shaving or washing -** don't just leave the tap running.

Saving water in the kitchen:

- **Avoid overfilling the kettle -** use just enough water for what you need. This will also reduce your electricity bill.
- **Use a bowl of water for washing or peeling vegetables**
- **Don't leave the tap running when washing up -** use a bowl instead.
- **Don't run half loads in the dishwasher or washing machine.** You could save up to 20 litres of water every time. When buying a new machine, look for models that are labelled water and energy efficient.
- **Waste disposal units are big water users -** recycle your vegetable waste on a compost heap instead.
- **Avoid running the cold tap for a long time to get a cold drink -** fill a lidded jug and keep it in the fridge for no more than one day.

Saving water in the garden

- **Collect rainwater from the roof in water butts -** a convenient supply of water for your plants, which prefer rainwater.
- **Consider buying drought-resistant plants -** also use bark chippings or gravel around your plants to reduce water lost through evaporation after watering. Use gravel as an alternative to a lawn.

- **Don't over water -** this makes plants weaker and more vulnerable to dry weather because it encourages shallow root growth. A good soaking once a week is preferable - in the morning or evening is best, not when it's hot.

- **Consider reusing 'grey water' in the garden -** water that has been used for bathing or washing can be reused, provided you:
 - Allow the water to cool first.
 - Don't always use grey water in the same part of the garden.
 - Don't use water containing chemicals, strong detergents or household cleaning agents.
 - Never use it on edible crops (e.g. vegetables, fruit) and only water the roots, not the leaves.

You can buy diverter kits to channel grey water from your bath or shower directly to a hosepipe, but don't store it for long or mix it with rainwater from your water butt.

What you can do now

- Decide how you can be water-efficient by using one or more of the suggestions above.
- Address water leaks and other wastage as soon as possible.
- If you are a metered customer, read your meter regularly to check for leaks.

You have a right to have a water meter installed free of charge and a responsibility to find out how to use water wisely and how a meter may help.

There is a range of printed fact sheets available from the Consumer Council for Water or visit www.ccwater.org.uk.