Escape of water prevention



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Helping your customers to prevent escape of water in their homes can reduce costly damage, and help with unnecessary water waste, too.



Here's our top customer education tips:

1. Label your stopcock/shut-off valves

Quick labelling allows fast emergency response to leaks, minimising water damage. Check valves regularly to see if they turn on/off easily and make sure all adults know their location.

2. Protect against winter freezing

Cold weather is one of the biggest triggers for escape of water. Frozen water expands and splits pipes. Prevent this by:

- Keeping heating at lower background level of 12-15°C during cold spells.
- Opening internal doors and cupboards to circulate warm air to pipes.
- Insulating exposed pipes and water tanks in unheated spaces.

3. Quick home checks

During the year, there are quick checks you can do to make sure everything is working as it should:

- Renew cracked grout and sealant around baths, showers and sinks.
- Inspect flexible hoses for wear; replace every few years.
- Arrange a service of your boiler and heating annually, by a qualified professional.
- Place drip trays under sinks and appliances.
- Check for moisture under kitchen and utility room appliances like washing machines and fridges.
- Keep gutters and downpipes clear, especially during heavy rain.

4. If you're leaving your home unoccupied

If you're planning a holiday, turn off the water supply at the internal stopcock before you leave, so a leak can't keep feeding itself.

Consider asking a trusted neighbour, friend or family member to check the property regularly for any sign of water. Also, make sure someone can contact you quickly, and has access to your home, if a problem is found.

Please let us know if you're planning to leave your home unoccupied for longer than the time we allow (30 or 60 days, depending on the type of policy).

5. Look for tell-tale signs

There are some obvious signs that will help you detect a leak, such as:

- Damp
- Condensation
- Ice on outside tap
- Low water pressure on your boiler
- Temperamental heating
- Suspicious smells coming from your plumbing system
- Cracks or gaps on plastic plumbing joints
- Green colouring on copper pipe joints

You should also check your water meter readings, as a significantly higher reading could indicate a leak somewhere.

6. Check high-risk areas

Keep an eye on the most common problem areas in your home, which are the bathroom, toilet, kitchen, boiler, radiators and washing machines, as well as ceilings, internal walls, under-floor pipes and leaks from any neighbours' homes.

It's also worth checking that your customers know what 'escape of water' means in real terms, so they know what is (and isn't) covered. Please make sure they're also unaware of what's excluded, especially when the home is unoccupied.