

TAPPED IN

Bringing you news, updates and information from Watercare



A high water bill prompted Noel and Marion Forrest to check for leaks.

Wasted water adds up

Half Moon Bay couple Noel and Marion Forrest received an unexpected high water bill caused by a hidden leak below the driveway.

The waterwise couple are careful with their water usage. So when the orange notice arrived with the high bill – costing five times more than their previous one – they were determined to find the cause.

Noel and Marion located their water meter and noted down the numbers. Two hours later, they were amazed to see that the numbers had increased significantly.

“The dial kept ticking as we were reading the digits and we weren’t using any water,” says Noel.

They immediately called in a plumber, who found that a pipe had burst beneath the driveway. Thankfully, it was an easy fix. A new pipe was seamlessly inserted through the driveway to replace the old leaking pipe, avoiding any surface damage.

The couple says they are relieved that there was no long-term damage to their property. They encourage everyone to act promptly to avoid water wastage and expensive bills.

“While discovering a leak on our property was unfortunate, we were lucky we had time on our side and were able to resolve the issue so quickly,” says Marion.

They are also grateful for the assistance they received from Watercare – from providing water leak detection tips to receiving credit on their account through our leak allowance.

A study on water use in Auckland found that people typically use between 140 and 175 litres of water a day. On average, leaks can equate to 3 per cent of total water usage in the home. That’s up to 150 litres of water per month wasted!

In this newsletter, we look at the importance of detecting and fixing leaks to avoid property damage and wasted water. See inside for more information.



Thank you, Auckland!

Over winter, we called on customers to reduce their water use to help our dams recover from record-breaking dry weather.

We received a great response with total water demand dropping by around 2.5 per cent.

With summer just around the corner, we encourage you to continue your waterwise ways.

We have lots of tips available on our website. Visit www.watercare.co.nz and search ‘Be waterwise’.



Detecting a leak

A leak on your property can waste thousands of litres of water.

If we notice a big jump in your water usage compared to your previous actual reading, we will send you a letter or leave a high water use notice with instructions on what to do next.

However, it is also possible that you may have a slow leak that has not been picked up by us as high usage. A leaking toilet cistern could have been going unnoticed for a long time and become part of what you think is your normal usage, which is why you should carry out regular leak tests.

There are steps you can follow to identify whether there is a leak – big or small – on your property.

How to spot hidden leaks

This simple leak test can help you identify hidden leaks on your property. Before you start, here are some important tips to remember:

- Pick a time when no water will be used for at least two hours – overnight is a good time.
- During the test, don't use any water. This includes flushing toilets, running taps or using the dishwasher or washing machine.
- Do not turn off the tap on the meter during the test – you need to be able to see if the meter dial still moves while you are not using water, as this helps indicate a leak.
- Your water meter is usually outside your property boundary in the ground in a timber, plastic, concrete or metal box.

- 1 Find your water meter.**
You may need to remove leaves and debris, or flip up the protective cover to read the water meter.
- 2 Read the numbers from left to right, and note them down.**
This is your first reading. Wait for at least two hours (or overnight) and then read your water meter again. Remember to replace the water meter lid securely once you have done this.
- 3 Compare the two readings.**
If the numbers are different, you have a water leak. You may need to call a registered plumber to check further.

The example below shows that about 25 litres of water were used during the night. This indicates a leak.



Previous night's reading
10:00pm

Early-morning reading
7:00am

How to spot obvious leaks

To check for obvious leaks on your property, here are some key tips to get you started:



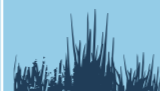
Look for dripping taps.



Check behind your dishwasher and washing machine for any signs of water.



See if the hot water cylinder expansion relief valve is letting water drip into the gully trap.



In dry weather, look for damp patches in the garden, lawn or driveway.



Listen for running water inside your home when no taps, hoses or showers are turned on.



Check your toilet for leaks by putting a few drops of food colouring in the cistern. If colouring ends up in the toilet bowl without flushing, you have a leak.

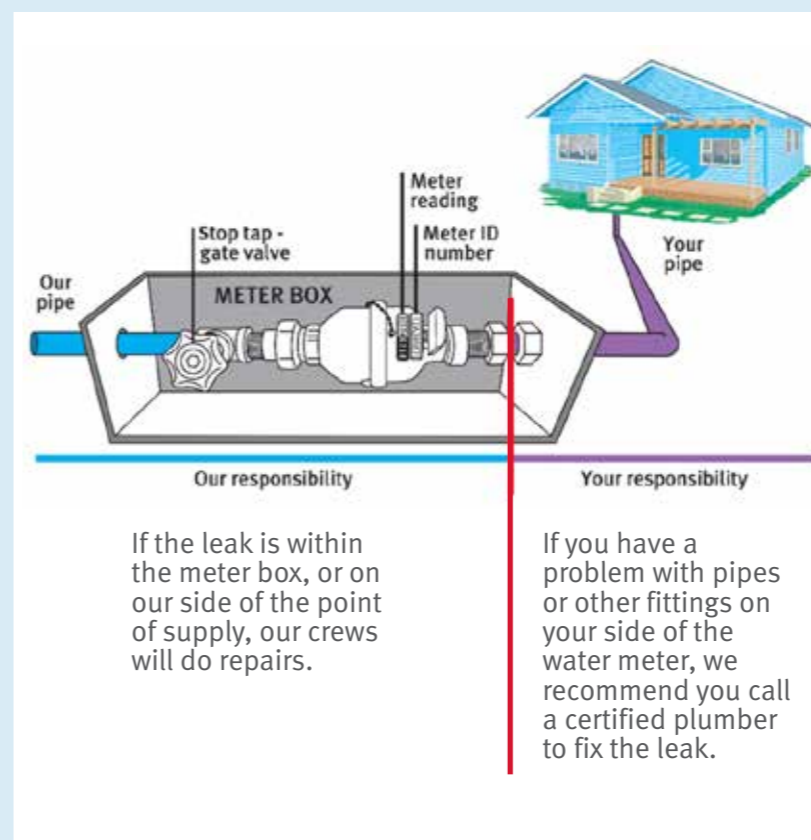
Fixing a leak

Responsibility for fixing a leak depends on whether the leak is in our pipes or yours.

The exact location where responsibility passes from us to you is known as the point of supply. The point of supply is the outlet of the meter fitting closest to your private pipe.

This applies regardless of whether the meter is inside or outside the property boundary.

See diagram below.



If the leak is within the meter box, or on our side of the point of supply, our crews will do repairs.

If you have a problem with pipes or other fittings on your side of the water meter, we recommend you call a certified plumber to fix the leak.

Choose a certified plumber

Here are some top tips to help you find a licensed plumber for the job:

- ✓ Shop around – get a handful of written quotes before committing to any plumber.
- ✓ Ask to see their tradesperson authorisation card.
 - Check the expiry date to make sure it's current.
 - Check the authorisation class. This tells you if they are permitted to do the work you want them to do.
- ✓ If the work is being done by someone who isn't a certified plumber, you need to make sure the person certifying the work is registered. Find out more at www.pgdb.co.nz.



Noel and Marion Forrest checking their water meter



Did you know?

A tap that drips once every second will waste up to **33 litres** each day!



Educator Sally Smith and children from Room Seven at Long Bay Primary School celebrate the milestone.

Education programme reaches 100,000th student

Watercare's education programme reached a major milestone in August with the 100,000th pupil participating in the hands-on science lessons.

Our free education lessons for Auckland school students began in 2001. The original programme was called 'Adopt A Stream', which involved freshwater sampling. Educator Sally Smith joined Watercare five years later, and as more lessons were added, the service was renamed Watercare's Education Programme.

Over the years, Sally has visited a number of students and schools around Auckland. Her

science-based lessons include a range of lively practical sessions, field trips and experiments.

Many of the water lessons involve learning how to catch and identify freshwater macroinvertebrates or finding out about the effects of pollution on waterways. In wastewater lessons, students find out how waste solids and liquids are treated and where they end up.

Last year, Sally expanded her talents by bringing the water cycle to life in the form of a storybook: *Sam and Flo's Amazing Watery Adventure*. Two free copies were given to every

primary and intermediate school in Auckland. She is now working on a follow-up to the book, detailing how wastewater is treated and safely discharged.

The historic 100,000th lesson took place at Long Bay Primary School on the North Shore. The special day was celebrated with a giant cake followed by water activities in the playground with the children from Room Seven.

For more information about our education programme, visit www.watercare.co.nz and search 'School Education'.

Register or log in to **MyAccount** for a chance to win monthly prizes.*

- 55" Samsung televisions
- 7.5kg Front-load washing machines
- Methven showerheads

* Visit www.watercare.co.nz for more details. T&Cs apply.

See online for the announcement of our September winners!

KEEP IN TOUCH

Tapped In is your newsletter. If you would like to talk to us about any stories from this edition or your ideas for future issues, we'd love to hear from you. To get in touch, please email our communications team at communications@water.co.nz.

You can learn more about what we do at www.watercare.co.nz.