

Essex & Suffolk Water
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www.eswater.co.uk

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Getting water

to your home

The facts about your water supply

Meeting your expectations

Every day, Essex & Suffolk Water customers use enough water to fill half a million baths, or to flush over five million toilets.

It's our job to ensure that this water meets the rigorous quality standards set down by the Government and the European Union. It has, for example, to meet standards for chemical and bacteriological quality, colour, taste and odour. Our aim is to exceed these standards wherever possible.

The source of our water

In the Essex area, most of the water we use comes from river sources. Much of this water is imported from outside the region through a river transfer system that supports the low yield Essex rivers. We also have a small supply from boreholes in East London that draw water from the underground rock aquifers. These aquifers are layers of rock that store rainfall that has filtered down into them through the soil layers above.

In the Suffolk and Norfolk area, about half of the water we use comes from surface sources, with the remainder coming from underground. Boreholes throughout the Suffolk area pump water from the region's aquifers.

Making your water safe

To make sure that water coming into your home is safe, we take thousands of samples for testing. These samples are taken both from taps in customers' homes and directly from our underground water mains. Over 100,000 scientific tests are taken each year to ensure that drinking water quality standards are met.

The results of these tests are held on record and can be inspected, free of charge, at Hanningfield water treatment works, or at our Customer Accounts Centre in Rectory Road, Lowestoft. Alternatively you can call us on **0845 782 0999** and request a copy of the report that covers your specific area.

The Drinking Water Inspectorate (DWI) ensures that water companies meet more than 50 legal standards for drinking water quality. Each year the Inspectorate issues reports on the performance of each water company. These reports are available on request from the DWI, call **0870 850 6506** or email enquiries@environmentagency.gov.uk for more information.



However, the actual build up of scale will not normally exceed one millimetre before it falls harmlessly away. The best examples of this can be found in electric kettles.

If you purchase a dishwasher, you may need to know the hardness of the water to set the softening control correctly. If you call us on **0845 782 0999**, we will be happy to confirm the level of hardness for your supply.

Domestic water softeners can use salt for regeneration. This can result in a high level of sodium, and these softeners should not be fitted to your drinking water tap.

Water quality is strictly monitored by ourselves and the Drinking Water Inspectorate. Minute amounts of minerals, metals and other substances are expected to be present in water and these must be below regulatory standards.

Chlorine

Chlorine is used in water treatment to ensure the water reaching your tap is completely safe to drink. The addition of chlorine to our water supplies is essential and there is no health risk at all associated with the very low and controlled levels of chlorine in your tap water.

In some areas the use of chlorine may result in a slight odour. This can be stronger during colder weather as the chlorine dissipates more slowly at lower temperatures. If you notice a smell, simply leaving a jug of water in your fridge for an hour or so will allow the chlorine to evaporate.

Water hardness

Due to the geology of the area, raw water throughout East Anglia is generally hard. This means that it contains dissolved minerals of calcium and magnesium.

Hard water can lead to scale forming in kettles or storage cylinders. At temperatures in excess of 60°C minerals are deposited within the vessel in which the water is heated.



The most common of these are:

Iron and Manganese

These are harmless metals found naturally in the environment. Although iron is used in water treatment, its level in water leaving the treatment works is very low. The most common reason for iron in drinking water is sediment from the corrosion of unlined cast iron mains. This sediment can cause discoloured water and is easily removed by flushing water mains and running taps.

Lead

There is virtually no lead in drinking water as it leaves our treatment works or our mains. Any lead in drinking water usually comes from lead service pipes or domestic plumbing, mainly found in older properties. If you are concerned about lead in your drinking water, please contact us on **0845 782 0999** for advice about replacing lead pipes.

Pesticides

The use of pesticides by farmers, amenity users, rail and road service providers and other sources all contribute to the presence of pesticides in the environment. These are subsequently detected at minute levels in drinking water and the levels detected are not a risk to public health. We have embarked upon a programme of work to ensure pesticide levels in our drinking water always meet the legal standards.

Nitrates

These occur naturally in the environment and can also be attributed to intensive farming practices. However, nitrate levels are below the current official standard.

If you're not happy with water quality...

If you have any concerns about the quality of your water, please let us know as soon as possible by calling us on **0845 782 0999**.

If you are concerned that your water is not fit to drink, call us immediately and do not drink the water until you have spoken to us. We promise to contact or visit you within four hours of your call, if we cannot provide appropriate advice at the time of your call. If we take a sample as part of our investigation, we will provide details of the analysis and help you compare it to the relevant quality standards.

If we identify that the water is unfit to drink, we will issue immediate advice, such as - do not use it, or boil before using it for drinking or cooking. This advice will come to you through notices posted to you, local media news bulletins, personal visits or by phone – whichever is the quickest and most effective way to get the message to you.

If you need special assistance for a medical condition which could be a problem if you are advised not to use your tap water, we can arrange to have bottled water delivered to you free of charge. Please register your details with us by calling **0845 782 0999**.



Getting the water you need

We make sure that you have enough water for daily use such as drinking, washing, cooking, central heating and sanitation. We also make provision for garden watering and car washing.

Occasionally, however, it may be necessary to impose some restrictions on hosepipes and garden sprinklers. In very serious and prolonged drought conditions, we may have to apply for a Drought Order banning non-essential use of water.

We aim to avoid all water restrictions through the efficient management of our water supply by:

- managing demand through metering and reducing leakage
- developing additional resources for use in the medium and long-term
- encouraging the efficient use of water through education
- promoting the use of water efficient devices.



We are committed to promoting the wise use of water, and leaflets explaining water conservation are freely available. Please call us on **0845 604 8071** to request a copy, or to order a free save-a-flush which fits neatly in your cistern and saves a litre of water each time you flush.

If we do need to turn off your supply due to emergency drought restrictions, you can claim £20 for each day, or part of the day that your home is without water (or £50 for each day or part of the day that your business is without water). Full details of this and all our other standards of service, are available in a leaflet called, Our promise. Please call us on **0845 604 8071** if you would like a copy.

Under pressure

Our job is to ensure that water pressure is enough to reach the top storey of every building we supply, with the exception of buildings that are too tall for water to flow by gravitation from the reservoir or water tower. Currently, there are a few places where pressure does not meet minimum requirements, and we are investing in new schemes to increase pressure.

We are expected to provide water pressure that will normally fill a storage tank at second floor roof level, and enable the cold-water tap in a ground floor kitchen to fill a 4.5 litre container in 30 seconds.

In technical terms, this means ten metres head at the boundary of your property (a flow of nine litres per minute.) Pressure and flow rates can be affected by many things, including:

- the height of the property above the water main, and its height relative to the reservoir or water tower
- the condition of the pipe supplying a property and the plumbing inside it
- the shared use of a service pipe with another property
- heavy demand upon the network at certain times
- essential maintenance work.

If you are considering the installation of an unvented hot water system in your home, ask your plumber to contact us for details of pressure in your area, as this requires a relatively high pressure to operate effectively.

The pressure of water in your area is constantly measured and if it falls below seven metres static head* for more than one hour, twice in any 28 day period, you are entitled to £25 from us. This is an automatic payment as long as we know about it. However if you suspect you fall into this category, please let us know and we will investigate your claim straight away.

*sufficient to fill a ten litre bucket in one minute.

If you think that your water pressure is too low, we will look into it. We will remedy the problem if it is our responsibility. If not, we will advise you on any action you need to take.

When the supply is interrupted

Although we aim to provide you with a constant supply of water, occasionally a burst main, pump failure or electricity supply problem can disrupt the service.

We will restore supplies as quickly as we can. For customers who need special assistance we will ensure a free emergency supply is available at all times, for instance, by delivering containers of water. For further details please call us on **0845 604 8071** and ask for a copy of our leaflet, Can we help you? – a guide to our services for customers who need extra help.

Where local mains have failed we aim to restore supplies within 12 hours. If we do not we will provide an emergency supply and pay you compensation. Repairs to our major trunk mains may take longer. If we fail to restore supplies within 24 hours we will pay you compensation. Full details of our compensation policy appear in the leaflet Our promise.

Please call us for further advice at the time of the incident on **0845 782 0999** or visit our web site www.eswater.co.uk and we will give you the latest information that we have available.

Occasionally we have to turn off your water supply to carry out essential planned maintenance work. We will give you written notice of this, letting you know the date, time and how long the interruption should last.

If we do not inform you or if the water supply is off for longer than planned then you may be eligible for compensation. This will be sent to you automatically.

If we need to turn off the water supply to your property for between one and four hours we will let you know in writing at least 12 hours beforehand. If we need to turn off the water supply to your property for more than four hours we will let you know in writing at least 48 hours beforehand and tell you when it will be turned on again. We will also give you a telephone number to ring for extra help if you need it.

As part of our regular programme to check for leaks, we occasionally need to turn off sections of the mains network. We try to do this overnight to cause minimum disruption and as it only lasts for about half an hour, we do not normally inform our customers. However, if such an interruption is likely to cause you difficulties, please let us know so we can note this on our records. We will then let you know in advance if any work of this nature is planned.

Getting your new property connected

If you are constructing a new property, our developer services team will advise you on the connection procedures and whether there is a need to install new mains in addition to the service connections required. (The need to install new mains is usually only a requirement where there are a number of properties to be developed and there are no existing adjacent and accessible mains of adequate size available.) To contact us, please ring us on **01245 212 006** or log onto our website at www.eswater.co.uk. Where you can download a new connection application form.

For service connections, once we have received your completed application form, we will visit the site and provide a quotation for the work to be carried out. We will also provide advice to help you:

- lay your part of the service pipe, including details of the specification for this
- comply with Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations 1999
- ensure supply pipes are laid correctly on contaminated site

- correctly size the supply pipe and meter to the property
- obtain permission from other landowners who may be involved.

Our charge for service connections will include:

- making the connection and the disconnection of any redundant supplies to the site
- laying our section of the service pipe and installation of a meter and chamber
- a contribution towards the overall cost of our making supplies available to new customers – known as an infrastructure charge.

If required, we are able to offer a full design and installation service for your part of the service pipe through our Pipeline Solutions service.

Once you have completed all necessary work to the correct standard, we will connect the supply – normally within 15 working days. Please note this is subject to the local authority granting permission to excavate the public highway.

If it is necessary to lay a main in addition to service connections the financial arrangements are:

- for mains providing water for domestic purposes - the developer is required to pay, prior to the commencement of the work, a non returnable contribution calculated by reference to the cost of the new main and the potential income over a 12 year period
- for mains providing water for non-domestic purposes - the developer is required to pay the full cost of the work, prior to its commencement.

The Water Industry Act 1991 provides customers with two payment options:

- they can make yearly payments to water and sewerage companies for up to 12 years, the relevant deficit option
- a statutory commuted single lump sum, the discounted aggregate deficit.

If we cannot agree on the amount you must pay, either party can refer the matter to Ofwat.

There is also an option to self lay mains relating to development sites. This includes the provision to design the mains layout, install service connections onto the new main and to install associated water meters. Further details for this option are available on request, or on our website.

If you are dissatisfied with the service you have received you can refer the matter to Ofwat at:

Ofwat
Centre City Tower
7 Hill Street
Birmingham
B5 4UA

Tel: 0121 625 1300
Fax: 0121 625 1400
Minicom: 0121 625 1422



Pipes

Responsibility for pipes

Water supply pipes are a joint responsibility.

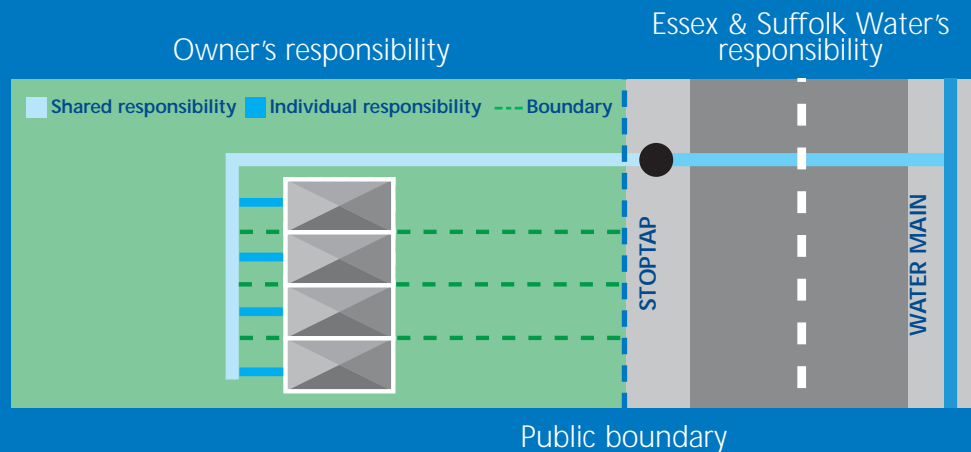
Essex & Suffolk Water normally looks after the water main in the street, the pipe that runs from the water main to the stop tap at the boundary of your property, and the stop tap itself.

You will normally have responsibility for any pipework from the stop tap into your home and the plumbing inside your property. You are responsible for the pipe even if it runs under other properties before reaching your own. In some cases, two or more properties may share a pipe and responsibility is usually determined by the principle that a property owner is wholly or partly responsible for any pipe that their water flows through.

In some circumstances, we may offer to repair or replace pipework supplying multiple properties (shared or common supplies) at a subsidised rate. If the pipework is at the end of its useful life and requires replacement, then the cost will usually be shared equally between all of the properties supplied.

Pipelaying

On occasion, we may need to lay water mains through your land. In this instance, we observe a code of practice for pipelaying to protect the interests of the landowner, details of which are available by calling **0845 604 8071**.



Problems with pipework

Leaks

You are responsible for any leak on your section of pipework. If there is a leak on your pipe, we may ask you to repair or replace the damaged pipe. However we do operate a scheme for free repairs on certain underground leaks, which applies to the majority of domestic properties. We may also give an allowance for water recorded through a meter as a result of leakage.

We do not limit you to one free repair. However if your supply pipe is in very poor condition or has reached the end of its useful life, we will not continue to carry out repairs indefinitely. In some circumstances, if you prefer, we can arrange the renewal of your supply pipe at a subsidised rate instead of a repair. In extreme cases, where a leak poses a danger to other people and property, we may have to cut off the supply until repairs are complete. For further information please refer to our code of practice Dealing with leaks which contains full details of our free repair service. To request a copy of this leaflet please call **0845 604 8071**.

Lead

If your home has water supplied to it by lead pipes it may be possible for some lead to be present in the water supply. If you are concerned about the level of lead in your drinking water supply please contact us on **0845 782 0999** and we can arrange for a sample to be taken if necessary. If you intend to replace your lead supply pipe, we may in some circumstances replace our part of the same pipe free of charge. However, please contact us before you begin any work as we will require a water quality sample and this will determine whether you qualify for a free replacement. For further details of this service, and information on how to reduce lead in your water supply please call **0845 782 0999**. Our free leaflet 'Water quality standards and replacing your lead pipes' can be requested by calling **0845 604 8071**.

In the following situations we may insist that each property has a separate water supply:

- the properties are converted into a larger number of properties
- the shared pipework has been tampered with.

If we cannot agree about separate pipes, the dispute can be referred to Ofwat.

Rust

Old iron pipes can become badly rusted, which restricts flow and may discolour the water. In such a situation we would replace our part of the pipe and suggest you do the same.

Electrical earthing

Never earth anything to your water supply pipe.

The safe earthing of electrical appliances in your home is your responsibility and you should consult your local electricity company or an approved electrical contractor for any advice.

Many houses built before 1966 rely on their water pipe as an earth, but the increasing number of plastic pipes reduces the effectiveness of such an earth. If in doubt seek advice.

Curbing contamination

There are strict regulations to prevent contamination, waste, misuse and undue water consumption. Free advice about the Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations 1999 and the use of approved fittings can be obtained from our technical representatives. Please call us on **0845 782 0999** for more information.

Preventing bursts

Water leaking from a burst pipe in your home can cause significant damage. An uninsulated pipe can freeze overnight, even if it is inside your home. However there are several simple steps you can take to help avoid this happening to you.

Background heating

If possible, set your heating to come on for short periods every day to help prevent pipes freezing.

Check for draughts around windows and doors, insulate where possible.

If you are going away from home, and cannot take any of these steps, you should turn off your water supply at the stop tap and drain your pipes and tanks.

If you are leaving your home empty over the winter, ask a neighbour or friend to visit your home regularly to turn your heating on and off.

Inside and out

Make sure all pipes and tanks in the loft are insulated. Do not lag under the tank as this will prevent heat rising from the house warming the bottom of the tank.

Make sure your loft tank has a lid and that it is fitted properly and insulated.

Lag pipes in unheated outhouses and garages.

If possible, turn off the supply to your garden tap and drain the pipe.

Replace the washers in any dripping taps or ball valves, otherwise the overflow pipe may freeze and cause flooding. Make sure taps are properly turned off before you go out or go to bed at night.

Make sure you know where your stop taps are both inside and outside of your home, and that they work. If you need assistance locating your external stop tap, please call us on **0845 782 0999**.

Water main records

All water companies are legally bound to hold maps that show the approximate position of their water mains. Essex & Suffolk Water's Geographical Information System (GIS) records detailed information relating to our water mains and you have a right to see our records. To arrange this please contact **0845 782 0999**.

Powers of entry

We have statutory rights of entry to your premises or land to investigate compliance with Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations 1999, to take samples and to carry out surveys or work.

Except in an emergency, we will call at a reasonable time and, if exercising our statutory right of entry, we will give you prior notice. If we fail to provide the appropriate notice you have the right to refuse us entry.

Bogus callers

Please be aware that BOGUS CALLERS (that is people who claim to be employed by Essex & Suffolk Water or "the water board", but who are only interested in stealing from your property) are known to operate in our supply area. If you are in any doubt about the validity of a caller claiming to be from Essex & Suffolk Water, DO NOT let them into your property. All of our representatives carry an identity card with the Essex & Suffolk Water logo and a Braille strip. Ring the number on the card to confirm the caller's identity if you are still unsure. The number of our Customer Centre is **0845 782 0999**. You can also ring this number to register a password with us for extra security. Genuine Essex & Suffolk Water employees will not object to you checking their identification while they wait outside.

Finding out more

This leaflet forms part of our code of practice for domestic customers, which provides customers with essential information about our company. All our codes are approved by Ofwat

Customer views are represented locally by Consumer Council for Water Eastern. They are based in Cambridge and can be contacted on **0845 795 9369**.

**Consumer Council for Water Eastern
Ground Floor
Carlyle House
Carlyle Road
Cambridge
CB4 3DN**

email:
eastern@ccwater.org.uk

Minicom:
A minicom text facility is available for people with speech or hearing difficulties: **01245 212 239**

We also accept calls from RNID Typetalk

Language Line:
If English is not your first language, we offer a free translation service on **0845 310 9900**

Other leaflets within our code of practice are available:

- Our promise to you (our service levels and how we will compensate you if things go wrong)
- Getting answers (who to contact and how we will manage your complaint)
- Can we help you? (a range of services we offer for customers who need extra help)
- Dealing with leaks (our code of practice on leakage, guidance on pipe ownership and our repair policy)
- Your water meter
- Paying your water bill
- Managing debt (our code of practice on debt)
- Water and sewerage watchdogs (who to contact for additional information)

To order any code of practice leaflet in Braille, large print, CD or on audio tape, please call **0845 604 8071**.

We also offer information leaflets on protecting the environment and water efficiency in the home and garden.