

We treat and test to ensure the water we send to your home meets all the relevant standards. However, sometimes it can fall down at the last hurdle, in your home. If your property was built before 1970 you may have lead or iron pipes. Small traces can find their way into the water from these pipes.

Additionally the older pipes are more prone to leakage and, being smaller than modern plastic pipes, can result in poor water flow. If you have a leak, phone our Leakline number free of charge, 0800 801011, between 8am and 4pm, Monday to Friday. If you do decide to replace all your lead or iron pipes this leaflet gives you all the information you need.

You're responsible for all the pipes within your property and up to the boundary of the street in which our main is laid. See the diagram right for details. In exceptional circumstances, for example where your property is situated beyond the end of our main, you may also be responsible for the pipe between your property and our

If you share any part of your pipe with a neighbour you are jointly responsible. In this situation you may have to pay for a new connection to our pipe. Please try to establish the route of your existing pipe before contacting us.

Find the point where the water service pipe enters your property – it's usually under your kitchen sink, in a cupboard or under your stairs. Unpainted lead pipes are a dull grey colour and if scraped with a coin you will see a shiny, silver-coloured metal underneath.

Fill in the form online or complete the one at the back of this leaflet and we will arrange a visit from one of our staff.

- check if you share your supply pipe
- advise you if any payments will be needed
- advise you where to lay your new pipe
- check your water supply system complies with the Regulations
- specify the point to which your new pipe should be laid (normally to the position at the edge of your property nearest to the stop tap in the pavement)

This depends on individual circumstances. In all cases you pay for the cost of buying and installing a replacement for your pipe in accordance with our standards. You may wish to get some quotes from plumbers for the work.

If our pipe is made of lead or iron but you do not lay your pipe to our preferred location, we may not connect. However, if we do agree

It will normally be a blue-coloured plastic pipe made from MDPE of a minimum of 25mm external diameter as far as the internal stop tap, then it will normally be copper.

Your pipe must be laid in a trench between 750mm (2ft 6in) and 1200mm (4ft) deep (maximum depth 850mm at position of boundary box). It must enter the property and remain at that depth for a minimum of 750mm from the external face of the wall, before it rises to your internal stop tap, otherwise it must be insulated to 750mm below ground level. You will need to replace the section of pipe from that point to your first tap for drinking water if it also is made of lead or iron.

One of our staff must be given the opportunity to inspect your pipe when it has been laid and before the trench has been filled in to make sure it has been laid correctly. If you have any problems in complying with any of our requirements you should contact us as soon as possible.

Once your pipe has passed our inspection we will connect your pipe to ours. If our pipe is made of lead or iron we will also lay a new Medium Density Polyethylene (MDPE) pipe to our main and may install a new stop tap box, normally at the point where our pipe joins yours. This will normally be done within 10 working days unless there are specific difficulties (in which case we will let you know).

The pipe buried in the trench at the required depth does not need to be insulated, however, in common with all your water pipes, the pipe must be insulated where it passes through any unheated area such as under a suspended floor or through a garage or out-house. For guidance on the minimum requirements please see reverse.

When buying insulation, check that it complies with the Regulations, which will ensure that it is designed for frost protection. Most insulation commonly available is designed for copper pipe, which has a thinner wall than MDPE.

To ensure that the insulation fits the MDPE pipe, you will need to use that designed for the next larger size in copper.

Please send me a water meter leaflet ☐





afix  
postage  
stamp  
here

New Supplies Team  
Bristol Water Plc  
Bridgewater Road  
Bristol  
BS13 7AT

### Backfilling your trench

When backfilling the trench, care should be taken to ensure that no stones, bricks or other sharp objects are within the backfill material. Leaks in new pipes are sometimes caused by stones and other sharp objects pressing against the pipe. Even though they may be in an area of backfill well above the pipe, over a period of time they can gradually work their way down as the ground settles. The base of the trench should be clear of any sharp objects and the pipe should be covered with clean soil (no stones etc.).

Where, due to the nature of the ground, this is not possible, the pipe should be laid on a 100mm bed of sand or stone dust. The pipe should then be covered with 100mm of sand or dust, the remainder of the backfill should, as far as possible, be kept clear of any aggressive material. In

very poor ground conditions it may be necessary to duct the pipe throughout its length.

### What about a meter?

Having a water meter fitted may save you money. If you wish, a meter can be fitted free of charge when we connect your pipe, just let us know. Further information can be found on our website.

Insulation required for MDPE pipe	
MDPE Size	Minimum insulation required
25mm	19mm thickness
32mm	13mm thickness

### Electrical Earthing

Properties built before 1966 may use incoming metal water pipes as an earth for their electrical systems. Fitting a water meter to your supply may mean that this kind of earthing system will no longer work. If you are in any doubt about how your property is earthed you should contact a qualified electrician for advice.

Bristol Water staff and contractors are not qualified to advise you about electrical matters and cannot accept any legal liability for damages or injury resulting from the use of a water pipe as an electrical earth.

If you are not responsible for the electrical earthing of the property, please make sure the owner of the property or the appropriate person is aware of this information.

**address:** New Supplies Team  
Bristol Water Plc  
Bridgewater Road  
Bristol  
BS13 7AT

**tel:** 0345 602 8022

**website:** [bristolwater.co.uk](http://bristolwater.co.uk)

### Warning

If your installation does not comply with our standards we will ask you to alter it and will make a further inspection free of charge. If it still does not comply we will make further inspections until it does, charging a fee for each additional inspection.

If you ignore the connection point specified by our staff and bring your pipe to another position we may not connect your pipe. If we connect in the new location, other charges may apply.



# replacing your lead or iron water supply pipe

