



Preventing costly leaks within your home

Leaks and blockages within your home can not only cause damage to yours or a neighbour's property but can also be extremely costly and result in large insurance claims. Below are some ways in which you can take some precautionary action:

Preventing blockages

- **Blocked toilets** - Blockages to toilets are very common but in most cases they can be prevented. Do not put wet wipes down the toilet even if the manufacturer states that the wipes are flushable. Only toilet paper should be flushed.
- **Blocked sinks or wash hand basins** - You should not dispose of food, oil or grease down the sink as this will eventually result in a blockage or leak and you may be charged for the clearance.
- **Gully drains** - Keep kitchen and bathroom gully drains clear from waste, leaves etc. to prevent blockages.

Preventing Leaks

- **Stopcocks** – on the rare occasion a leak is just unavoidable and you need to act fast. Your first response should be to isolate the water to your property to stop the leak. Ensure you know the location of your mains water stopcock and that you do regular checks to ensure its working. Be mindful that stopcocks within flats can sometimes also isolate the water to neighbouring properties.
- **Pipework** – Regularly check all pipework for signs of leaks so as to prevent any major or costly leaks in the future. Copper pipework can be susceptible to leaks following an increase in mains water pressure. Even if the leak is minimal you should report it to the repairs and maintenance team or arrange for a plumber to attend if your property is leasehold.
- **Leaks to baths or shower trays** – Check the sealant to your bath or shower tray to ensure it has not perished and is allowing water through. You might not be able to see any water but your neighbour below might be catching the drips!
- Check the wall tiles around your bath or shower tray for defective grouting which may be letting water into neighbouring rooms or properties.
- Shower attachments to bath taps – Do not fit shower attachments to bath taps if your bath area is not designed to be used with a shower.
- If using a bucket to wash, ensure that you use a shower curtain or screen to contain the water within the bath. Wipe down walls/ floor after bathing.
- Ensure that you have a shower screen or curtain fitted if you do have an over bath shower installed.
- **Washing machines and dishwashers** - Washing machines and dishwashers should be installed by a qualified plumber. A professional installation will ensure that the machine not only works correctly but does not develop a leak.
- **Damp patches and water stains** - Damp patches or water stains on ceilings and walls could be early signs that you or your neighbour have a leak. If you are unsure of the cause then contact the repairs and maintenance team ASAP or arrange for a plumber to attend if your property is leasehold.
- **Roof and guttering leaks** – Check your roof and guttering regularly for defects. If left, roof leaks can cause substantial damage to properties and possessions. Check the guttering for leaks during heavy downfalls and report any leaks for broken sections of guttering immediately.

Cold water storage tanks

- Cold water storage tanks are usually located in the loft space and can cause severe water damage to properties should they fail. Regularly check the tank for splits or leaks to the associated pipework. If you notice the external water tank overflow pipe leaking then contact the repairs and maintenance team ASAP.

Boiler and central heating systems

- Regularly check the pipework to your boiler and radiators for leaks. Green residue on pipework or a reoccurring loss of pressure to the boiler could indicate a leak.

Repairs & Maintenance team – 01322 343800 (during office hours) and 01322 343434 (out of hours)

Further information, including this guidance, can be found on the Council's website www.dartford.gov.uk/housing

NB – Leaseholders will need to arrange for their own Plumbers for works within Leasehold flats.