



Insulate your business from bursts

Water Plus's Advanced Services Project Manager and leak detection expert, Mark Taylor, shares his top tips to help prevent your business operations grinding to a halt from avoidable water supply losses.

Winter is the time when you really should be thinking about how you're going to protect your business. Water Plus has helped businesses of different sizes with leak repairs since April 2017 – saving more than 2 billion litres of water along with more than £5m in costs that the businesses would have incurred had their leaks had not been stopped. And we've completed more than 200 water efficiency site surveys to help our customers identify how to save and use water more wisely.

It doesn't need to reach the point where repairs are needed. Businesses can avoid having problems with their site infrastructure by becoming more proactive with their water management. There are eight main ways businesses can do this:

- regular leak checks;
- check the heating;
- check the weather;
- keep in touch;
- make a contingency plan;
- check insurance cover;
- check who to contact in an emergency; and
- understanding the water system.

Understanding the water system

This is key. Understanding your water infrastructure will save you precious time if an incident happens. As a minimum, ensure facilities or property managers know where to find stop taps and look out for any weak points in the system like loose fittings. Small leaks like drips from taps or a leaking cistern can stack up – resulting in additional costs, which you can avoid with regular checks.

Leak checks

This isn't a daily task but you should check as often as possible. During the chilly time of 21 December, 2017, and 21 February, this year, we found leaks at business sites were wasting just over 1.3 million litres of water a day (1,363.53

cubic metres a day). Some were small leaks of 3,000 litres a day – but it just shows that catching a leak early could save you both money and hassle further down the line.

Signs there may be a leak:

- your water bill has increased for reasons you do not understand – check out the four-step guide on what you can do to check for leaks on our website water-plus.co.uk;
- the pressure of your water has dropped; and
- visible signs of a leak around pipes or on exterior walls.

Wrap your business pipes, so they are protected from freezing during periods of low temperature.

Heating

Shutting down your premises' heating system completely could increase your risk of a frozen pipe. Leave the heating on a low setting and you'll reduce this risk.

The weather

Ensure your business is ready for cold spells, particularly across the early months of 2019, by insulating tanks, cisterns and external pipework. A burst pipe is damaging and inconvenient and will inevitably cost you money to repair. Real-time weather updates can help you stay one step ahead and plan accordingly.

Keep in touch

Make sure the correct people within your business are contactable. The longer a leak goes unreported, the more damage it will do. By making sure the correct person within your business is easily contactable, the less time it will take to get the problem fixed.

Contingency plan

Preparing for the worst will mean you are ready for any situation that comes your way. Make a detailed plan and ensure all your employees are

aware of it. So, that way, no matter who is on site when a problem occurs, they'll know what to do.

Insurance

Check your insurance and make sure you fully understand what will be covered in the event of an incident, burst pipe or any other water damage. If you don't pay for the insurance, check with the managing agent or landlord to see what you are covered for. Make sure you know where financial responsibility lies.

Emergency contact

Make sure you, and your teams, know who you should be contacting. Having the numbers ready will save you valuable time.

It's also useful to take the time to understand the difference between whether it's the responsibility of your water wholesaler or retailer to help you in times of crisis.

If you have a problem with your water supply or water quality, your wholesaler will be able to help you – make sure you know the water wholesaler for your site's location.

If you have a problem on your site such as a leak, then it's your responsibility to get it fixed. Maintenance and repair of private water pipes within the boundaries of your site, whether they're below or above ground, are up to you. You will be billed for water delivered to your site, even if it is lost through a leak on your business site pipes.

At Water Plus we offer a leak detection and repair service. You can email

AdvancedServices@water-plus.co.uk

to ask about the cost of this service.

These tips may seem simple but with colder weather comes the potential for problems – finding your business flooded due to a frozen or burst pipe is never a good way to start the day.

Make sure you're prepared and have a plan in place, so that if the worst does happen you can minimise your risk.

For more water efficiency hints and tips for your business go to <https://www.water-plus.co.uk/our-services/large-businesses/advanced-services>

Figures for amount and value of water savings are estimates based on a 12-month period if the water loss or leak was not stopped. Figures cover the period 13 April, 2017, to 12 October 2018, when leaks were identified along with estimated water loss. Repairs on the identified leaks were carried out or the supply to the leaking area isolated, during the period 13 April, 2017 to 16 October, 2018.

Between 21 December, 2017, and February 21, 2018, during our leak identification visits to business sites, we found that 1,363.53 m³ (1,363,530 litres) of water a day estimated loss was taking place.