

TAPPED IN

Bringing you news, updates and information from Watercare



A notice of high water use prompted Wendy and Ken James to check for leaks.

Regular leak testing the key to wise water use

North Shore couple Wendy and Ken James had no idea the water pipe beneath their driveway was leaking until they received a little orange notice from us in their letterbox.

The notice – left by one of our water meter readers following a regular meter reading – informed the couple that high water use had been recorded at their property.

“The smallest number on the water meter was going so fast you couldn’t read it. That’s how bad it was,” says Ken.

Following the instructions outlined on the high water use notice, Wendy and Ken found no obvious leaks on their property or inside their home so they contacted a plumber. The plumber found that the galvanised iron pipe below their driveway had given way, causing a constant stream of water to soak into the surrounding clay ground.

The couple says, while the fix was expensive, they were “very lucky” to have had the issue identified so quickly.

“Basically, it was down to being proactive on Watercare’s part; the fact that they told us what to do,” says Wendy.

They say their experience has made them much more aware of the importance of checking for leaks.

In their case, luck played a part in the timing of the bimonthly meter reading as their leak had begun shortly before the meter reading.

However, many leaks are not immediately visible and could go unnoticed for up to eight weeks between meter readings. This is because, every second month, your water bill is based on an estimation of your water usage.

Carrying out a leak test is simple and a guaranteed way to know whether you have a leak before your next meter reading.

The couple say they have carried out a number of leak tests since their pipe was replaced, for peace of mind.

“We have checked it three times since the high usage.”

They are also grateful to have received a credit on their account through our leak allowance.

SEE INSIDE FOR MORE INFORMATION ON HOW TO CARRY OUT A LEAK TEST ON YOUR PROPERTY.

Have you recently had a leak repaired? You may be eligible for a leak allowance too.

Visit www.watercare.co.nz and search for ‘leak allowance’.

DID YOU KNOW?

IF YOU DRINK 8 GLASSES OF WATER A DAY FOR A YEAR, IT WILL ONLY COST YOU \$2.40



Wasted water adds up

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, or our water meter reader identifies high water usage at your property during a meter check, we will send you a letter or leave a high water use notice with instructions on what to do next – just like the process Wendy and Ken James followed.

However, it is also possible that you may have a slow leak that has not been picked up 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.

Summer usage

Sometimes high usage is as simple as using more water during the summer months or having more people staying at your property than usual.

How to spot obvious leaks

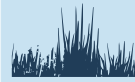
Here are some simple tips to find obvious leaks:



Look/listen for dripping taps.



Check your appliances for any signs of a leak. Look behind your dishwasher, hot water cylinder and washing machine for leaking hoses, seals or taps and check for water pooled underneath.



Look for damp patches in the garden, lawn or driveway during dry weather, or parts of lawn that are always green, no matter how dry the weather has been.



Check for overflowing toilet cisterns 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. You may also hear your toilet cistern constantly filling.



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

If you do not find anything obvious, there may be a hidden leak.



Wendy and Ken check their water meter after carrying out a leak test.

How to spot hidden leaks

Here is a simple test to find out if you have a hidden leak:

1. Once your household has finished using water for the evening, check that your dishwasher and washing machine are off. Make sure everyone knows not to flush the toilet or use the taps through the night. If you prefer to carry out a leak test during the day, make sure you do not use any water for at least two hours.
2. Find your water meter. Lift the meter box lid to reveal your meter.
3. You may need to remove leaves and debris, or flip up the protective cover to read the meter dial.
4. Do not turn off the tap inside the meter box! All you need to do is note down the reading on the meter dial, from left to right.



Check all taps for drips.

5. Replace the meter box lid securely. Remember not to use any water overnight or for at least a few hours if you are doing the test during the day.
6. Read the meter again in the morning and replace the meter box lid securely.
7. Now compare the two readings. If there is a difference between the first and second readings, this confirms you have a leak. We recommend you contact a licensed plumber to fix it – and if you are unable to find the leak, they should be able to detect and repair it for you. Do it as soon as possible to save money and reduce water wastage.



Network leaks

If you see a burst pipe, seeping water or wet ground during dry weather outside your property, let us know by calling (09) 442 2222 and we will send a crew to investigate.

Finding your water meter

Your water meter is usually near or just outside your property boundary, either in a timber, plastic, concrete or metal box.



Reactive Works Supervisor Tony Higgins and Serviceperson Joe Cox.

A TAP THAT DRIPS
ONCE
EVERY SECOND
CAN WASTE UP TO
33 LITRES
OF WATER PER DAY!



We provide a free water advice and audit service to households in Auckland.

Contact us on (09) 442 2222 or info@water.co.nz to sign up.



Left to right: Dylan Budler, Jacob Whitford, Aishwarya Nair, Igor Prenski, Shen Tay, Florence Hinder, Josie Stevens, Gabrielle Ip, Steven Hale, Alex Safran, Kelly Turei, Annie Lines, Vi Hausia, Caitlyn Tapp, Matt Sullivan-Brown, Joseph Findley, James Taylor, George Barlow, David MacKenzie. Absent: Inna Baraquio.

Investing in the future of business

Giving talented young people real industry experience is vital for the future of local organisations, and we are committed to investing in them with our summer internships.

Late last year, we welcomed 20 interns, who will be kept busy in various departments all around the Auckland region until university begins again at the end of February.

Working in the procurement team, third-year conjoint engineering and commerce student Dylan Budler has been analysing data to improve productivity within the company's fleet of vehicles, and has added a huge amount of value to the team, procurement manager – finance Stuart Bird says.

“My manager asked me what skills I could offer the company,” Dylan explains, “and I’ve been able to work on tasks that really play to my strengths.”

Caitlyn Tapp and Inna Baraquio have been working in the GIS (Geographical Information Systems) team, which collates and analyses geographic data and is central to the management of Watercare’s assets. Caitlyn is in her final year of a Bachelor of Science in geography and environmental studies and has been helping to clean up the database to create a more efficient system. Third-year Bachelor of Business student Inna has been

involved in creating and running scripts to clean the database used for the public viewer, which enables her to utilise her information systems major.

“It is very different compared to part-time work,” Inna says, “but my manager is really supportive and the team is very friendly.”

Caitlyn agrees: “It’s great to be in such a professional environment.”

Further afield, James Taylor has spent his second summer here, working on the Mangere Biological Nutrient Removal Upgrade project. He is in his final year of a Bachelor of Engineering (Hons) in civil and environmental engineering and has been able to gain experience across a range of engineering fields, thanks to the multidisciplinary nature of many of Watercare’s projects.

“Working on such a large and broad project has allowed me to be a part of many very interesting jobs and to be witness to some very impressive engineering. The things I have learned here at Watercare, the contacts in the industry I have gained and the engineering I have been able to be a part of have been invaluable.”

Our summer internships are popular, with 356 applications for the 2015/16 intake. Students gain real industry experience as well as an understanding of professional business skills – a start that should help them to go far in their careers. In fact, a number of our current staff began their careers as summer interns!

Green Lane West crossing complete

The Hunua 4 project, which involves the construction of a 32-km water pipe from Manukau to central Auckland, has already been and gone across Green Lane West.

Work at the intersection of Green Lane West and Wheturangi Road began on 27 December and the crossing reopened on 11 January – an impressive 15 days ahead of schedule.

Watercare project manager David Moore is especially pleased with the early completion of this challenging and critical piece of work because it involved reducing one of Auckland’s busiest roads from four lanes to two in order to excavate a deep trench and lay a huge pipe, as well as working around existing infrastructure.

“Ultimately, it was down to very good planning and a bit of luck with the weather and ground conditions,” he says.

Construction now moves down Wheturangi Road so we can continue to cater for population growth and increase the security of water supply for the Auckland region.

For more information on Hunua 4 and our other projects, visit our interactive story viewer at www.watercare.co.nz. Just click on “Work in your area”.



DID YOU KNOW?

At 105 years old, Waitakere Dam is the oldest of five water supply dams in the Waitakere Ranges. Today, it supplies over four billion litres of water to Auckland a year.

Laying the foundations for the Waitakere Dam.

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 phone our communications team on (09) 442 2222 or email info@water.co.nz. You can learn more about what we do at www.watercare.co.nz.