



**Cracking  
down on  
illegal  
connections.**

# Cracking down on illegal connections.

Our illegal connections team have been working to reduce and put right the number of illegal connections made to our network. An illegal connection is where developers, homeowners and criminals dig up the road or lift manhole covers and attach illegal pipes to the clean water supply.

## Background.

It's against the law to dig up the road, find our water mains and illegally connect to our network. Over the last six years the number of unauthorised connections to our pipes has sky-rocketed from 33 in 2011 to over 700 in 2017.

It's vital we find and stop people illegally connecting onto our network for several reasons:

- water supply can become contaminated
- water pressure can drop in the area
- our network can be damaged
- thousands of litres of drinking water can be lost every day which is then classed as leakage
- it's unfair on our customers if some people are not properly paying for water services.

## Our detective team.

Since our illegal connections team was established in late 2014, we've completed around 40 disconnections, created accounts for hundreds of illegally connected properties and provided evidence for three prosecutions.

We've also supported many property owners in applying for new connections, recovered evaded infrastructure charges, removed unauthorised assets and produced a training package for a range of groups including our employees, contractors and local authorities. We encourage people to follow the correct procedures, not strike cash-in-hand deals with rogue traders.

- Millions of litres of water are lost from our network every year due to illegal connections
- Illegal connections compromise our network, can affect the quality of drinking water and affect local water pressure.



**Rogue traders making an illegal connection.**

## The action taken.

If we're notified of an illegal connection or any illegal activity, we will investigate and work with customers or developers to put things right and how they how a connection should be done. We may potentially have to disconnect the supply but we will help them with a new connection. However, if the customer or developer continues to abuse the network we can prosecute.

## Converted property connections.

Many households that are converted from commercial to residential properties use an existing water supply and don't let us know.

When we identify these properties, we recover the infrastructure charges from converted properties that have used existing supplies. We make sure these properties are appropriately metered and then set up an account.

## Get in touch.

We encourage anyone who thinks there might be suspicious water usage taking place near them to join our fight against water crime and contact us. To report any water network abuse, email [illegalconnections@thameswater.co.uk](mailto:illegalconnections@thameswater.co.uk) or call our customer services on 0800 980 8800.