Introduction

Our aim is to deliver an excellent standard of service. In order for us to do this and to make sure that your application runs smoothly we ask that you take the time to read the information supplied below.

Domestic household properties currently fed via a shared supply or lead water pipe can benefit from a separate water service connection. This leaflet explains the procedure together with identifying the exclusions where a free connection will not be provided.

You are responsible for maintaining and replacing the part of the service pipe in your ownership. This can vary, but in most cases your part of the service pipe will be the length from the boundary with the highway, in which our water main is laid, through your garden if you have one, and into your house (See diagram 1).

You are also similarly responsible for any part crossing any neighbouring land, including any length of private service pipe in the public highway.

By replacing all your part of the service pipe and complying with our requirements, we will replace the company owned service pipe in the footpath and highway, and make a new 25mm connection to our water main.

DIAGRAM 1
Section 1: Exclusions for free shared supply or lead replacement connections

Free replacement connections can only be considered if the property is a domestic dwelling and has a current Severn Trent Water (STW) account in the name of the occupier and is not in arrears.

Exclusions:
- Your account is in arrears or we have no occupier account for the property
- The existing service pipe is not shared or is not lead
- You have not separated from the previous shared supply
- You have not removed all lead from the new service pipe
- The connection cannot be made in a straightforward manner (e.g. we encounter obstacles and difficulties such as utility apparatus, trees, drains, bus stops, road junctions etc. near to where the new customer pipe has been laid). This will occasionally incur a charge.
- Replacing your supply involves STW laying a length of pipe significantly longer than our existing connection. Over 12 metres incurs a charge per metre.
- The connection is required in a different position to the original company owned service pipe.
  (We recommend a pre-inspection so this can be discussed, once the application has been received and accepted.)
- The required company owned service pipe exceeds 25mm outside diameter
- It has to be laid in a material other than Medium Density Polyethylene (MDPE)
- The building is undergoing renovation by a developer or the building is undergoing a change of use
- The building is a non domestic property

Section 2: Severn Trent Watermark approved plumbers scheme

Replacing your service pipe yourself can be difficult. It is also important that you ascertain the pipe is either on a shared supply or lead before undertaking any work as you may not qualify for a free replacement connection. We strongly recommend that you employ a qualified plumber, such as a member of STW’s ‘Watermark’ approved plumber scheme.

Watermark approved plumbers will:
- Confirm the supply is shared
- Confirm the material of your existing service pipe
- Ensure the work is done safely, in accordance with the Government’s ‘Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations 1999’
- Connect your new service pipe to your existing internal pipe work
- Save time by not having to wait for an inspection.

Watermark approved plumbers are not employed by STW, nor do we gain any financial benefit from you using them. However, to gain membership they have been audited for workmanship and compliance with the regulations. In this respect all warranties expressed or implied are excluded and we cannot accept any responsibility for their work or charges.

The relationship for the provision of a lead replacement is between the property owner and STW.

A list of Watermark approved plumbers in your area is available on request. Alternatively, please visit our website (www.stwater.co.uk).
Section 3: Making your application

Once you have confirmed that your existing pipework is either shared or made of lead, you can make your application to us following the simple steps below. In addition you should refer to our technical guidance notes to ensure that the new service pipe is installed correctly.

Step 1 You fully complete the application form and return with a location map, if necessary. The form **MUST** be signed by the property owner.

Step 2 We will assess your application against our free replacement policy. A letter will be sent to you, usually within 10 days, confirming your eligibility to proceed and providing a job reference number for your future communication.

Our offer, valid for six months, may be withdrawn at any time if we find that the connection does not comply with our policy requirements.

Step 3 Contact us, quoting the job reference number, before starting any work. Our Technician will then discuss the replacement connection arrangements with you, and subject to our free replacement policy, agree that you can proceed with your work.

Step 4 After our verbal approval you can lay your new replacement service pipe. Please refer to ‘Section 4: Technical guidance notes’ for installation information.

Before we arrange a connection you must:
• install your new service pipe and arrange the necessary inspection approval
• pay any costs notified to you.

Step 5 You must contact us again once you have installed the new pipework to arrange for our Technician to visit and approve the work. Please allow a minimum of five working days notice, leaving trenches open until the inspection has been made.

STW has a duty to enforce the Water Supply (Fittings) Regulations 1999 (‘The Regulations’), and reserves the right to inspect internal and external plumbing before a connection to the public supply can be made. If you have employed an approved Contractor i.e. a member of the Water Industry Approved Plumber Scheme (WIAPS) or STW’s ‘Watermark’ approved Contractor scheme such inspections may not be necessary, but we will still need to visit the site to trace and mark up where our main is for connection. Irrespective of the use of an ‘approved Contractor’ we also randomly audit plumbing as part of our statutory duties. If any contraventions are found they must be rectified at your expense.

Step 6 Once the work has been approved and any costs paid, connection will usually be made within four to six weeks. In some circumstances we may be unable to meet this timescale due to highway opening or other restrictions. We will contact you to agree the installation date a few days before we intend to make the connection. It is not necessary for your plumber to be in attendance whilst we undertake the replacement connection to our main.

Step 7 Following completion of our work, you will need to arrange with your plumber, for any internal plumbing and disconnections that may be required. We reserve the right to inspect disconnections.
IMPORTANT NOTICE
The earthing of the electrical system in your home is an essential safety measure, and may be earthed to your old pipe work. After the final installation of the new pipes we recommend you get the earthing of your property checked by a qualified electrician, as the earth path may have been cut off, and your electrical system could be dangerous.

For an information leaflet please contact New Connections on 0800 707 6600 or email new.connections@severntrent.co.uk

Section 4: Technical guidance notes

These notes have been produced to offer practical guidance. Whilst every attempt has been made to take on board the full range of legal and technical issues involved, there will always be particular circumstances which are not accommodated and the guidance is given on the understanding that STW does not accept any liability for actions arising from the information supplied.

4.1: Where must my new service pipe be laid?
The new service pipe should be laid as adjacent to the old pipe as practically possible. The replacement pipe position should facilitate our connection to be made safely and easily to our nearest suitable water main.

You must avoid laying service pipes close to obstructions (such as trees, lamp posts, telegraph poles, utility boxes etc) near the point where the connection will be made. We will offer advice where to lay services pipes when installations are close to road junctions, traffic calming measures etc.

Service pipes should be laid below any gas pipes, electricity and telephone cables and above any drains or sewers. If the service pipe passes under a foul sewer for any reason it must be ducted (covered in a protective sheath) for a metre either side.

4.2: How deep should the service pipe be laid and how should it come into my house?
The new service pipe should be Blue Medium Density Polyethylene (MDPE) 25 mm outside diameter minimum. You should advise us if the route of the new supply crosses contaminated ground, as the pipe should be of a material suitable for such conditions. We will make a charge if we have to use any material other than MDPE for the company owned part of the replacement supply pipe.

There must be a minimum of 750 mm (2'6") clearance from the top of the pipe to the surface of the trench. In addition, surround the top and bottom of the pipe with 75mm of sand to prevent damage from sharp stones.

The pipe tail should be capped off to prevent the ingress of dirt and marked with the house number it serves.

The new service pipe must enter your property at a depth of 750mm, through a duct and suitably insulated within the duct to protect your supply from frost damage. The above information is demonstrated in Diagram 2.

If you have not employed a Watermark approved plumber, STW must inspect the trench, pipe and related fittings before you backfill.
4.3: Solid Floors
If the pipe is laid through a solid floor, it must be laid in a continuous suitably sized sleeve pipe (see Diagram 3).

4.4: Suspended Floors
If the new service pipe is laid under a suspended floor it must be suitably sleeved and insulated along its entire length (see Diagram 4).
4.5: How should the service pipe be connected inside my house?
Your plumber must fit a new stop tap to the new incoming supply followed immediately by a gland type drain valve before the connection to your existing internal pipe work. This must be left shut until STW has made the new connection to the main. Your plumber must ensure that they disconnect your existing internal pipework safely from your new pipework in accordance with the regulations, after your new connection is made. There could be health risk if they do not disconnect your old pipe from the new pipe.

4.6: What happens if I share a service pipe with my neighbours?
This is quite common in older properties. Your plumber will need to trace your existing service pipe, and disconnect it safely from your neighbour’s pipe in accordance with the regulations, after your new connection is made. It is a requirement of the regulations and there could be a health risk if they do not disconnect your old pipe from your neighbours at the branch to the source of the supply. This will most probably be outside, if it is then it is not acceptable to simply cap off the old supply inside the property.

Water which is left in the redundant pipe will stagnate and may get back into the drinking water supply. You must ensure that as a result of your work your neighbour’s water supply is not affected.

STW cannot accept liability for any loss of water supply to your neighbour’s as a consequence of the work carried out by yourself or your contractor.
4.7: What do I do if I would like a water meter fitted?
If you currently pay for your water based on the rateable value of your house, you may wish to consider Severn Trent Water’s free meter option scheme. You will need to contact Severn Trent Metering Services separately on 0345 7090646.

A leaflet is available which explains the procedures and you will also be given advice regarding your decision to change to a water meter.