

# Important safety information

Danger from using metal water service pipes as an electrical earth.

**We are going to do some work in your area to improve your water supply and it may affect the electrical earthing of your property.**

You need to read this if you, United Utilities or anyone else is going to do any work on the water mains in your street or on the metal water service pipe feeding your property.

The service pipe is the pipe that runs from our water main to your property.

## Safe electrical earthing

- Where the incoming water service pipe is not made of metal then our work will have no effect.
- Correct earthing and bonding is vital for the safety of a property's electrical installation.
- If your property just relies on the old metal water service pipe as an electrical earth, it might not be earthed safely when the work is finished.

## Metal water service pipes

- Until 1966 some earthing connections were made to an earth electrode buried in the ground. However, in many cases the incoming metal water service pipe was used as an alternative to an earth electrode.
- This method of earthing was seen as safe, as long as the incoming metal water service pipe remained intact.
- From 1966 it has been unacceptable to rely on the incoming metal water service pipe as the only earthing point for a property's electrical installation.

## New plastic water pipes

- New and replacement water pipes are made from plastic.
- A new plastic pipe will give you a better supply of water and it will reduce the risk of a leak.
- Any alterations to your service pipe will involve fitting a plastic pipe, for example repairing a leak, fitting a meter or a new service pipe.
- Plastic pipes cannot provide an electrical earth.

## Electrical earthing

- In all modern houses electrical installations are connected to an earth point, usually at the electricity meter.
- The metal casings of boilers, cookers, storage heaters etc, and even the gas and central heating pipes, should also be cross-bonded together and connected to this earth point. This is to minimise the risk of an electric shock or fire if an electrical fault develops.
- If an earthing point is available at your electricity meter, you are advised to use it.

## Property owner's responsibility

- Property owners are responsible for making sure that the earthing and bonding is safe and effective without relying on the incoming metal water service pipe.
- We cannot accept responsibility for your electrical installation, or for the cost to bring your property's earthing and bonding arrangements up to the safe standard needed by current regulations.
- Please note that United Utilities water employees and contractors are not qualified to advise on electrical matters.

## If you need more advice

- You should get a competent electrician to inspect your electrical installation and advise you about any work needed to bring your property's earthing and bonding arrangements up to the standards needed by current regulations. There is normally a charge for these services.

**If you do not own this property, please pass this notice to the owner or landlord.**

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