

Precious resource...



Comhairle Contae Fhine Gall
Fingal County Council

A Guide to Water Services & Water Conservation

How you can make a difference

See inside

Information, updates and service contacts

Water conservation tips

How to get rid of airlocks

Reporting leaks and bursts

Water hardness scale for electrical equipment

Save water...

Where does our water come from?

Fingal County Council delivers a high quality drinking water supply to all homes and businesses in Fingal from two water treatment plants at Leixlip and Bog of the Ring. The primary plant on the Liffey at Leixlip can produce 168 million litres per day, half of which is used in Fingal and the remainder going to Dublin City, Kildare, South Dublin and Meath. The second plant at Bog of the Ring produces 3 million litres per day from groundwater. Drinking water is distributed in Fingal using a combination of pumped mains, gravity mains and reservoirs. Water is tested regularly throughout the treatment process and the distribution system to ensure that it meets European and National drinking water standards for human consumption.

Water is a precious resource

Treated water is easily taken for granted. It is a scarce and precious resource. We should all be aware of how much water we use and how to reduce the amount we waste. An average home uses 450 litres daily but this volume can be reduced if everyone plays their part with the following simple daily lifestyle changes.



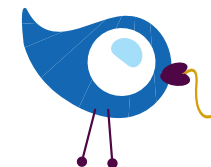
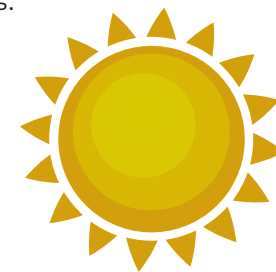
In the house

- 💧 Only use the washing machine/dishwasher when full.
- 💧 Leave a jug of water in the fridge rather than leave the tap running.
- 💧 Do not leave the tap running while washing your teeth.
- 💧 5 minutes in a regular shower uses 25 litres of water. A power shower uses 125 litres in the same time.
- 💧 Use less water flushing toilets by putting a full plastic bottle in the cistern.
- 💧 Use a basin to wash vegetables and fruit and use this water to water your plants.
- 💧 Have internal leaks (dripping taps or running toilets) repaired as soon as you find them.
- 💧 Know how to turn off your water internally to save water and protect your home if there is a burst.



In the garden

- 💧 Do not use a hose to water the lawn, shrubs or flower beds. Collect rainwater and use that instead. Water butts are available in most hardware shops.
- 💧 Re-use kitchen water in the garden, where possible and practical.
- 💧 Use mulch to maintain moisture and reduce the need for watering (and weeding!).
- 💧 Avoid using a hose to clean driveways, paths and decking. Try a brush instead.
- 💧 Use a bucket and not a hose to wash the car or windows.



Report leaks and bursts

There are over 1,900km of watermain in Fingal. The age and type of pipes in some areas mean that leaks and bursts are unfortunately a common problem. Work is ongoing to replace old pipes but the scale of this job means it will take several years to complete. The sooner leaks and bursts are reported, the more water can be saved. If you see a burst or leak don't assume someone else has reported it. Call our **Water Services Department 01 890 6210** so that repairs can start as soon as possible. Bursts and major water disruptions are always given priority before leaks can be attended to.

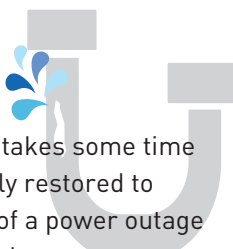


Finding leaks

Water is not only lost through visible bursts or leaks above ground but also through leaks underground in the network. To reduce this loss of water the Council has a dedicated leakage team who use telemetry and a Geographical Information System (GIS) to monitor unusual water consumption to target possible underground leaks. If leaks are found on the network, repairs are carried out to avoid continuous water loss and future bursts.

Leaks on private property

Leaks that happen on private property are the responsibility of the owner to have repaired. Once a property owner has been notified by our Water Services Department of a leak on their property they can be liable to a fine or prosecution if repairs are not carried out within a specified time.



Restoring supply after a burst

When the water supply is turned back on after a disruption, it takes some time for pressure to build up in the network and for water to be fully restored to homes and businesses. (This is somewhat unlike restoration of a power outage which is instantaneous). Supplies in higher areas usually take longer to come back. If there is water back in the kitchen cold tap but not in the other taps, there may be an airlock. Please check that this may be the problem before calling the Water Services Helpline.

Insulate your pipes

Frozen pipes leave households without a water supply and often cause leaks and bursts when they defrost. **NEVER** leave your taps running to prevent them from freezing. This wastes vast quantities of water and is often the cause of long disruptions.



Insulate or lag attic cisterns and any pipes likely to freeze with a suitable insulation material. Service pipes should be 60cm below the ground surface to prevent freezing during cold weather. If you lose water during cold weather, start by defrosting the stopcock by pouring hot water (not boiling water) slowly over it. Make sure there is soakage of this water or otherwise it will create further ice around the area.

Water hardness

Hardness is a measure of the concentration of calcium carbonate in water. This appears in the form of scaling and deposits in kettles. Most of the water in Fingal is mildly hard with the exception of the Balbriggan area which is considered to be hard. When installing electrical equipment that use water such as dishwashers make sure they are set in accordance with the hardness scale of water in the area. The following table summarises the various hardness scales described in dishwasher handbooks and the values in different parts of Fingal.

Hardness Scale	Most of Fingal	Balbriggan Area
mg/l of CaCO ₃	200	350
Clarke or English (* eH)	14.6	25.6
German (* dH)	11.3	19.7
French (* fH)	20	35
American (ppm)	200	350

Planned or prolonged water outages

Where the Council has advance warning of a water supply outage or where we become aware that water will off for a prolonged period (e.g. over 4 hours duration) we offer an e-mail update service. This service is contingent on the availability of resources and is not fully guaranteed. Any consumer wishing to receive notifications by way of e-mail can send their e-mail contact details to waterservices@fingalcoco.ie and please indicate which of the general areas listed below you would be interested in receiving information about. You may choose more than one area. You should also receive a confirmation e-mail from the Council.

1. Balbriggan	6. Kinsealy/Balgriffin	11. Skerries/Loughshinny
2. Naul/Ballyboughal	7. Malahide/Portmarnock	12. Donabate/Portrane
3. Garristown/Oldtown/Rolestown	8. Baldoyle/Sutton	13. Turnapin/Airport
4. St. Margarets Area	9. Howth	14. Dublin 15
5. Swords	10. Rush/Lusk	

Sewerage / Drainage

The Council is responsible for the main sewer pipelines and these are generally located in the public road. Responsibility for the sewer pipeline that connects to the main sewer is a matter for each individual householder. In housing estates, particularly, it is often the case that a number of houses are served by a shared or combined sewer pipeline. Should there be a blockage or other problem with this it would be a matter for all those served by the sewer to resolve.

Householders should note that flushing items such as baby wipes, disposable nappies or other such bulky materials down the toilet may and often will cause sewage blockages.

If you have any questions relating to blocked sewers please contact our **Drainage Section** on **01 890 5963** or email drainagedepot@fingalcoco.ie

How to get rid of an airlock

Make sure all hot taps in the house are in the closed position.

For separate kitchen taps

Turn on the hot tap. If there is an airlock, no water will come out. Use a short length of hose to connect the **hot and cold taps in the kitchen only**. Turn on the cold tap to force cold water through the hot water system pushing the airlock back into the water tank in the attic.

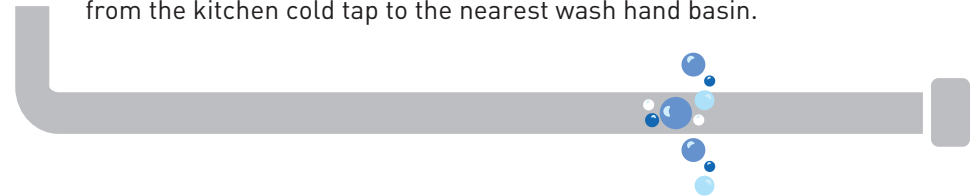
For mixer kitchen taps

Turn on the hot tap. Block the mixer tap with a cloth and turn on the cold water tap gently. This should force cold water through the hot water system pushing the airlock back into the water tank in the attic. **Be very careful carrying out this exercise to avoid accidental scalding with hot water.**

Once you've turned on the cold tap

Let it run for 1-2 minutes, then turn off the cold tap and let the hot tap run for 1-2 minutes to confirm that the airlock is cleared. If the airlock is not cleared, repeat the procedure one or two more times and if the problem is still not resolved you may need to call a plumber.

When an airlock happens in cold taps in wash hand basins or baths the same process will work but is more difficult as you'll need enough hose to reach from the kitchen cold tap to the nearest wash hand basin.



Information and updates

Fingal County Council Water Services Department does its utmost to keep all customers up to date on any disruption to water supply through the following:

www.fingalcoco.ie

Aertel P624

Twitter

Where possible we will explain the cause of the disruption and the expected time of restoration of water supply. Unfortunately it is not always possible to have this information in the case of unexpected disruptions or when we are trying to locate underground leaks. Some disruptions can also last longer than we first estimate.

In advance of a planned disruption to water supply, we ask customers not to stockpile water in pots or baths. This puts a huge demand on water storage reservoirs and leads to a greater delay in the supply coming back and possible further problems within the network.



Service contacts

Water Services Department (all queries/reports)	01 890 6210
Drainage Depot (queries/reports)	01 890 5963
Water Depot (queries)	01 869 4900
Out of Hours Service	01 873 1415
Water/Drainage Connection (queries)	01 890 6202
Housing Department (for Council owned homes)	01 890 5588

