

Tap into better risk protection

Water damage can be catastrophic to many businesses. The biggest single factor in the amount of damage is the time between when the leak occurs and when it's actually discovered. Consequently, water damage can be more severe during extended business shut down periods – for example over the summer holidays. The good news is, with regular checks and a proper plan, the risks can be seriously reduced.



What are the most common causes?

These can include:

- Burst flexi-hoses which are often used in mixer taps, toilets, washing machines, dishwashers, plumbed fridges, and water filters as these are pressurised and can result in serious water damage. Poor installation, wear and tear, or degradation from exposure to cleaning products can also result in failures.
- Water escaping from plant, equipment or appliances that are connected to a water supply e.g. air conditioning units, water cooling loops in production equipment or appliances such as washing machines.
- Failing pipes in older buildings. These can be a big – and costly – issue due to a lack of maintenance.
- Gutters and drainpipes can become clogged by leaves, moss, windswept plastics etc. and can result in water collecting or ultimately overflowing down internal walls causing damage to the building, carpets, curtains, furnishings and stock.
- Tree roots, silt or leaves can result in blocked drains. Internally, paper towels and other similar products can block toilets and drains and lead to flooding.
- Drought and soil movement can also crack pipes and lead to water damage.



Must haves

- ✓ Know where the water shut off valve(s) for the water supply are. Where possible, shut off the water supply during extended shutdowns or when not needed e.g. over the summer holidays or in an unoccupied building.
- ✓ Make sure all water valves are identified, accessible, clear for use and regularly exercised so that they can be closed and opened easily.
- ✓ Ensure flexi-hoses are checked regularly and replaced if showing signs of damage – or every 10 years otherwise.
- ✓ Inspect plumbing, water pipes and waste lines for leaks, damage or corrosion. Check that all basins, tanks, etc. have overflow facilities. Process tanks containing liquids should be bunded.
- ✓ Check hot water cylinders for leaks, and replace as needed. Cylinder lifespan is normally 7 to 10 years.
- ✓ Check under-sink plumbing regularly for tap/waste pipe/waste master leaks.
- ✓ Inspect the roof regularly. This is important before the winter season and after storms. Clean the roof as needed.
- ✓ Check for blocked gutters and downpipes, and clear regularly by removing leaves and other debris from exterior drains. Install overflow openings in box gutter header units. Fit grilles over downpipes to prevent bottles and other waste from going down them.

Good advice

- Plumb washing machine and dishwasher outlets into the wastewater pipe, not simply with the waste pipe hooked over a sink.
- Check shower enclosures for signs of deterioration, especially to the wall boards/tiling. Waterproof sealing around the tray and walls must be in good condition.
- Check building walls for cracks that could all allow water seepage, and for poor soil drainage. Repair where necessary.
- Replace plumbing products that have been recalled, or are known to be problematic. You can check for recalls at www.recalls.govt.nz
- Check membrane-style roof coverings as these have a limited life and can be affected by exposure to things like sea air or high-country climates.
- Check flashings where the walls and roof meet, and also pipes and skylights where they penetrate the roof covering.
- Grade the land away from the building walls.

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