



**Scottish
Water**

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Your guide to noise in pipes

Noise in pipes

Occasionally you may hear noises or banging coming from the water pipes inside your property. Unless there has been any activity on our water network such as a burst water main or planned works near your property, these noises are normally caused by issues with your internal plumbing which is the homeowners responsibility. It can often be possible to identify the source of the issue, depending on the type of noise. Please note that the guidance in this document provides examples of the causes of different noise, however we recommend using a licensed plumber to correctly diagnose any plumbing issues you may have.

Typical types of noises from your water supply system include:

- Banging sound from pipes
- Clunking, rattling or vibrations from pipes
- Humming noise from pipes

Water hammer (banging sound)

Water hammer is the banging sound your pipes can make when moving water comes to a sudden stop. It's important that you locate the area of your plumbing causing the water hammer and fix as the shocks and vibrations over time can weaken your internal plumbing, making it susceptible to loose joints, leaks and other issues.

Possible causes of water hammer

Water hammer is more prominent in properties built since the late 1990's due to modern plumbing appliances such as ceramic discs and quarter turn valves. If you can hear banging in the water pipes inside your property, possible causes include waterlogged air chambers or high water pressure.

Waterlogged air chambers

Modern pipework systems are fitted with air chambers which are designed to prevent water hammer from occurring. Air chambers are located where valves are found so when a tap is turned off, the air softens the blow of the water running into the tap, reducing the amount of noise.

Occasionally these air chambers can start to fail, and over time water will begin to replace the air in these chambers. With no air to absorb the blow, the water within the pipe is now free to crash into the blockages that are placed in its way, resulting in water hammer.

To fix waterlogged air chambers, the air needs to be resupplied to the chambers. This can be done by turning off the water supply coming into your property at your stop valve, normally found under your kitchen sink. Once you have done this, turn on all the taps to drain any remaining water from the system. When this is complete, slowly turn the stop valve back on at 1 quarter turn every 15 seconds, allowing water to run out of your pipes and then turn the taps off again. The chambers should now be full of air, and the noise should no longer be an issue.

High Pressure

Water hammer can also be caused by high pressure in your pipework system. Many boilers allow you to adjust the pressure manually. It is worth referring to your manual for further information. If you do experience high pressure, Pressure Reducing Valves (PRVs) can be installed which help regulate the pressure and reduce the chance of water hammer occurring. Most properties built since 2001 should have a PRV installed.

Clunking, rattling or vibrations from pipes

If you hear clunking, rattling or vibrating from your pipes, it may be caused by loose fittings. If pipes are not clipped correctly, they may move over time and hit against walls or flooring. It's important to get these fixed as they can lead to bigger issues.

Humming noise from pipes

Faulty or vibrating ballcock valves in a water storage tank can cause a humming noise to come from pipes when the storage tank is refilling, normally after you have used water from the system. This can often be rectified by replacing the ballcock valve.

Copper pipework

If you experience noise after using hot water taps, it can often be caused by copper pipework expanding and contracting due to the heat. As the metal is designed to handle this type of stress it is not normally an issue, however we would still recommend getting it checked out by a licensed plumber. There are ways to minimise this type of noise by either insulating the pipes with foam rubber or adjusting the temperature.

Contacting a plumber

If you are experiencing noise in water pipes and you aren't aware of any work on our network, we recommend contacting a Licensed Plumber.

To find a licensed plumber in your area visit WaterSafe at www.watersafe.org.uk

*Scottish Water supports and promotes the WaterSafe scheme. WaterSafe is a dedicated online search facility to help customers to find the nearest qualified plumbing and heating professionals in their area.

Water Byelaws

To ensure the safety of your water supply, it's important to ensure any work carried out in your property complies with Water Byelaws. You can find out more information about water byelaws on our website at: www.scottishwater.co.uk/byelaws

Contacting us

If you suspect the noise coming from your pipes is due to any activity on our water network such as a burst water main or planned works near your property, please contact us and we can investigate further for you.



We want to make it easy to **contact us** – here's how:

We always have someone here to take your call, you can write to us or alternatively you can contact us through our website.

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0800 0778778

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