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Why turning off a tap could save you thousands these holidays

AAMI is issuing an urgent warning to homeowners to prepare their home for the holidays, revealing that the simple act of turning off the main water supply could save thousands in damages from bursting hoses this festive season.

The call to action follows two horrific accounts from AAMI customers who returned home to find their properties ruined by burst plumbing while they were away.

One customer, who wished to remain anonymous, told of the shock of returning from a two-week break to find their home flooded from the inside.

"Before I walked in, I could smell something off. My husband went to go and see where the smell was coming from—the bathroom upstairs had a pipe burst, and water was just pouring through. The ceiling collapsed, there was water everywhere, and the timber flooring was warped."

Another devastating incident involved a flexi-hose connected to a washing machine that burst over the Christmas holidays last year. The resulting cascade of water swept through the Queenslander in Brisbane, causing widespread destruction.

"Water went through from the laundry room to the four bedrooms and into the living and dining area. We had damage to timber flooring, skirting boards, and possible wall damage," the customer said.

AAMI Head of Home Insurance Josh Kelland said flexi-hoses, commonly found under sinks and connected to dishwashers and toilets, were a major culprit for this kind of unexpected, costly damage.

"Insights gathered during a six-month investigation into flexi-hoses found on average two flexi-hoses in every household are ready to burst," Mr Kelland said.

"What many people don't realise is that it only takes 24 hours for a burst flexi-hose to release enough water to fill a household pool, so imagine the damage caused over days, even weeks."

Mr Kelland said like the simple ways you unplug appliances like your computer, kettle, and TV to reduce the risk of an electrical fire or power surge, there were straightforward ways to help prevent water leaks while on holidays.

"The most effective defense is to turn off your main water supply before you leave," Mr Kelland said.

"If that's not possible, make sure you turn off the taps connected to your appliances and toilets to prevent potential leaks, assess your flexi-hoses under the sink before you go and repair them if they show signs of deterioration."

With summer disaster season now in full swing, AAMI is also urging customers to take proactive steps against potential storms and fire risks.

Mr Kelland said homeowners were encouraged to complete essential property maintenance before heading on holiday. This includes trimming trees and branches that could potentially fall onto your home or car, cleaning gutters, downpipes, and drains of leaves and debris, and inspecting the roof for damaged or loose tiles.



“Most importantly, don’t forget to secure and put away loose items around your backyard such as outdoor furniture and trampolines as these can turn into dangerous projectiles in a storm,” Mr Kelland said.

“It’s also a great idea to review your sum insured amount in your policy to make sure your home and belongings are appropriately covered if something happens while you’re away – like a fire, storm or theft.”

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*Suncorp Group claims data from 1 July 2024-30 June 2025 analysed more than ~21,600 Home claims involving water damage.