



WI-FI OR CELLULAR ENABLED WATER SENSOR SYSTEMS

LOSS CONTROL BULLETIN

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Each year water damage is one of the top two insurance claims for property owners nationwide, costing insurers and building owners over \$10 billion. The water damage can be caused by bursting pipes, sprinkler system leaks, faulty plumbing, appliance line leaks, sewer backups, sump pump failure, or other causes.

Contributing to the problem are aging buildings and plumbing systems and additional use of coffee makers, ice makers, dishwashers, water fountains, water filtration systems, and bottle fillers. Buildings that are only occupied a few days a week or that are closed during winter months are especially vulnerable to severe damage because water may continue to flow for days or weeks before being discovered.

The time invested and cost of cleanup, repairs, and the amount of damage to the structure can be dramatically reduced if early notification of an issue is received and actions are taken to stop water flow. The use of a remote monitoring UL- listed* Wi-Fi or cellular water sensor systems can limit the severity of the water damage and many systems can be purchased for less than the insurance policy deductible.

An alert within minutes of a leak could be the difference between a \$500-\$1500 property loss or a \$30,000-\$50,000 loss.

HOW WATER SENSOR SYSTEMS WORK

Water sensors monitor and notify if standing or pooling water is detected. Once the sensor is activated it can notify two or more people of a problem that needs immediate attention. This can be done with a Wi-Fi signal or a cellular network. Many sensors will also monitor water flow, air temperature, and relative humidity.

WI-FI/CELLULAR WATER SENSOR LOCATIONS

- High-risk areas with floor drains or sumps or that have no heat source, or a minimal heat source.
- Utility rooms where water heaters, boilers, and/or floor drains are present
- Near sinks, toilets, or where other water piping is present, especially if the area is uninsulated with minimal or no heat
- Where past leaks have occurred or water pipes have burst due to inadequate heat or insulation and/or where temporary rather than permanent repairs were performed
- Areas of a building where old, galvanized piping has leaked and repairs were made to only the leaking pipes with much of the older galvanized piping in use
- In uninsulated areas like garages and unfinished storage rooms or attics that don't have sufficient heat but have water lines
- In older sections of buildings where the original plumbing, especially galvanized piping, is located
- In sprinkler control rooms, laundry rooms, and kitchens

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LCB 24 (8-23)

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GRINNELL MUTUAL'S GUIDELINES FOR A WI-FI OR CELLULAR WATER SENSOR SYSTEM INCLUDE:

- System must be UL-Listed or listed by some other nationally recognized testing lab.*
- System must have a communications hub or smartphone app that can send multiple notifications.
- A minimum of two responsible people must be notified by text or phone call when a sensor is activated.

The estimated average cost of systems that meet Grinnell Mutual's eligibility and underwriting guidelines is \$100-\$400.

We do not recommend any particular manufacturers or brands for leak sensors. An internet search for "commercial wireless water detectors" or "commercial cellular leak detection" will return many options to choose from.

**In addition to Underwriter's Laboratory, other nationally recognized testing laboratories include Canadian Standards Association (CSA), Edison Testing Labs (ETL) and Warnock Hersey (WH).*



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