

Spotting a leak?

When a meter is first fitted, we check for leaks and advise you of any repairs necessary on your side of the meter. If there are leaks on the outlet joints of the meter, we will repair them free of charge.

You can identify if there are any leaks on your supply by checking your meter regularly. Any unusual increase in consumption could mean there is a leak. Alternatively, turn off your internal stopcock and check if the meter is still recording. If so, there is possibly a leak between the meter and your property. If you would like any further assistance or advice with identifying a leak, please contact our Customer Service Department on 01737 772000. They will also be able to provide you with details of our free leak detection and repair scheme.

Can I read the meter myself?

Most meters are fitted in an underground PVC box which includes the Company's principal stopcock. You can read the meter at any time by lifting the lid. A digital read-out of the amount used is shown under the transparent panel on top of the meter. The black figures are the important ones - they are used to calculate your bill. The red figures are not used for billing purposes as they represent less than one cubic metre.

What happens if I think the meter is inaccurate?

Water meters are very accurate, but if you have serious doubts about its accuracy contact our Customer Service Department on 01737 772000 and ask for the meter to be tested. If it is found to be faulty, your bill will be amended. But if it is operating within allowable tolerance, we will charge you for carrying out the test.

Can I change back to an unmetered supply?

It is not possible under this scheme to revert to being charged on an unmeasured basis.

Sewerage charges

If your property is connected to mains drainage, your meter reading is also used to calculate sewerage charges. When setting the sewerage charge, the company concerned (either Southern Water or Thames Water) takes into account that not all the water supplied will be returned to the public sewer. If you believe that, in your case, considerably more than the average amount of water is not returned to the public sewer, a further allowance may be made. Contact our Customer Accounts Department on 01737 764444 if you want to know more.

Your peace of mind

All Sutton and East Surrey Water staff, and contractors working on our behalf, carry identification. We urge you to challenge our representatives to prove their identity if you have any doubts. If you are concerned about the validity of somebody working on your water supply, please contact our Customer Service Department on 01737 772000, and we will advise you accordingly.

CHANGE OF OCCUPANCY METERING SCHEME

Introduction

Where practical it is the Company's policy to install a water meter at domestic properties when there is a change of occupier. Your property is within the scope of this policy.

This leaflet explains the reasons for the installation and the effects this could have on your household. The information is based on the questions our customers ask most frequently, but if you want to know more, please contact our Metering Section on 01737 785828.

What is a water meter?

A water meter is a simple device fitted to your service pipe. It records the amount of water passing from the mains into your home. Like a gas or electricity meter, it shows how much you use on an easy-to-read display.

Why are we metering on change of occupancy in your area?

Water meters are recognised as being the fairest way of charging for water as you only pay for the amount of water that you use. Industry investigations have shown that meters also provide an environmental benefit, as they tend to encourage customers to avoid wasting water. Given the pressure on our already limited resources, conservation by consumers will benefit everyone.

All homes built since 1991 already have a water meter. However, many older properties do not and it is these properties that will be included in our programme of metering on change of occupancy.

Important notice on earthing of electrical installations

Installing meters in properties built before 1966 may require the replacement of old metal pipework and fittings. If your property uses the metal water service pipe as a means of electrical earthing, the meter installation may render it unsuitable for this purpose. Although using the service pipe as an electrical earth is no longer regarded as a safe method of installation and has been prohibited by the Institution of Electrical Engineers Wiring Regulations since 1966, it is possible that buildings built before that date may still be earthed in this way.

As the earthing to your property is unknown to us, we strongly advise that you contact your local Electrical Supply Company or an approved electrician. They may recommend that you have your earthing checked and they are entitled to charge you for this service. Such charges will not be reimbursed by Sutton and East Surrey Water.

The earthing of a property is an essential safety requirement and is the sole responsibility of the owner of the property. We cannot accept liability for damage or injury resulting from the use of a water pipe as an electrical earth.

If you are not responsible for the electrical earthing of this property, please ensure that the owner or other appropriate person is informed.

Which properties are included in this programme?

Any unmeasured domestic property within the area designated by the Company for metering that has had a change in occupier. Prior to installation we will carry out a survey to confirm whether the property you occupy is suitable to have a water meter. If it is not, then we will write to advise you that the property will be excluded from the programme.

Do I have to pay to have a meter installed?

No. The meter will be installed completely free of charge.

What legal powers to we have to install a meter?

The Government supports the need for the installation of water meters. Our powers are defined in the Water Industry Act 1991 as amended by the Water Industry Act 1999. Where we have decided to install a meter, we are allowed to enter on to your land to do so, provided we have given you up to seven days notice.

Where are meters fitted?

Meters are normally fitted at our preferred location, that is in the footpath or verge in the public highway, or alternatively just inside the boundary of the property. Where we cannot meter the supply at this position, we will consider alternative locations. Any meter fitted under the scheme remains the property of the company.

When will the meter be installed?

Firstly, we check if a meter can actually be installed. In some cases, particularly in some flats where all the water does not enter through a single pipe, it is not possible to install a meter without plumbing alterations, in which case we will not install a meter. Water meters will be installed on a rolling geographic basis, and should be installed within eight weeks of the date of moving. In the meantime, you will not receive a water bill. Once your meter has been installed, we will open an account for you and include in your first bill a charge for the intervening period from the date of occupation to the date the meter is installed

What if I am a tenant?

If you are a tenant, you should inform your landlord of our intention to install a meter. Please pass on this leaflet to them or alternatively advise them that they may obtain further information by contacting our Metering section on 01737 785828.

About your bill

Bills are very similar to those for gas, electricity or telephone services. There is a standing charge, plus a consumption charge, calculated on the number of cubic metres of water you have used. The standing charge is based on the financial year and is payable in advance. We offer a number of payment options, including a budget plan scheme where regular monthly payments are agreed that should cover the year's charges. To find out more, contact our Customer Accounts Department (Meter Team) on 01737 789700.

How often will I get a bill?

If you have a metered supply, we read the meter every six months, and you will receive a bill twice a year. You will be billed for each complete cubic metre used.

How much will I pay per year

The amount that you will pay will depend on how much water you use. The table below shows typical annual water charges for High, Average and Low water users, generally consistent with the number of water using appliances and the size of the garden etc.

Number of occupants	1	2	3	4	5	6
High user	£78	£121	£163	£205	£248	£290
Average user	£70	£107	£143	£180	£216	£253
Low user	£59	£87	£116	£143	£172	£200

Note: This table is for water charges only, calculated using the 2005/06 charges. Thames Water sewerage charges are typically 80% of water charges.