

1 Metering of Business Properties

A water meter is a simple device fitted to the water service pipe that records how much water is used. Our policy is to install a water meter for all business properties, as long as this is practical. We do not charge for the installation if we have requested the meter to be fitted.

This factsheet answers the questions we are most frequently asked by customers and also includes the terms and conditions which apply when having a meter installed.

Why are we fitting water meters?

Our supply area is classed as being in an 'area of water scarcity' - based on the water available and the amount abstracted. Metered customers are more careful of how much they use and by monitoring how much is used over time we are able to detect leaks more easily. Fitting more meters helps to reduce demand and so the amount we take from the environment.

Most of the businesses we supply already pay for their water by meter – that is, according to the amount they use. Under the provisions of the Water Industry Regulations 1999, all water companies can install meters where the principal use of the premises is not a home. We can also meter business or household properties in specific conditions, such as where there is garden watering other than by hand or automatic top-up of selected swimming pools.

In 2019 we are starting a programme of installing water meters on the remaining unmetered business properties. We expect this programme to be largely complete by April 2020.

Will my water bill go up?

This depends on how much you currently pay, how many staff or customers you have and whether you use water as part of your process, as well as how water efficient your fittings are and how users behave. For example, a shower can use from 20 to over 150 litres depending on the type of shower, the flow of the showerhead and the length of time spent by the user.

With a meter you can control the size of your bill and help protect the environment as you are more aware of the water you use.

How is water typically used in businesses?

Type of Use	Cubic Metres	Litres
Shower	0.06	60
Toilet	0.007	7
Washing machine	0.055	55
Dishwasher	0.018	18
Hose (per hour)	1	1000

Each cubic metre is equivalent to around:

- 10 baths
- 17 showers
- 142 toilet flushes
- 18 washloads
- 56 dishwasher loads

2 Metering of Business Properties

For information on using less water in the workplace go to www.seswater.co.uk/saving.

Installing a meter

We normally fit the meter in the road just outside your property boundary.

If this is not possible we try to fit the meter inside your premises which may require some alterations to your plumbing (we do not charge for this). If you are a tenant you should ask discuss this with your landlord. All meters remain the property of the Company.

Before fitting the meter we will contact you to arrange a survey. If you would like to be kept informed of the progress of your application, we offer a free text and email notification service.

Reading your meter

Most meters are fitted outside in an underground box so you can read it by opening the lid using a screwdriver. The red figures are not used for billing purposes, so for example a reading of 000432189 is 43.2189 cubic metres and we record 43 cubic metres.

Meters are very accurate and are designed not to over-record consumption. If you ask for an accuracy test we can arrange this, but if it is found to be operating within the normal tolerance range you will be charged the cost of the test.

What happens if I have a leak?

It's a good idea to check for any leaks in your property before having a meter fitted. This could include dripping taps, faulty tank overflows, leaking toilets or a leak on your underground pipework.

We check for leaks when the meter is installed. If the meter is moving when it is first fitted we will contact your retailer.

The best way to check for leaks is to check your plumbing regularly and check your bills for any unexplained increase. Remember, you are responsible for all pipes and fittings within your property boundary. We are responsible for the pipes laid in the public highway.

In some cases, the water supply pipe can be shared between neighbours, in which case parts of the pipework are jointly owned. Also, some customers are responsible for pipes under land that they do not own. The route of your water supply pipe is on your property deeds.

What about sewerage charges?

If your property is connected to mains drainage your meter reading is also used to calculate sewerage charges. When setting these charges, your sewerage provider 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 your retailer for further details.

3 Metering of Business Properties

Electrical earthing in older buildings

If your property was built prior to 1966, it is possible it still uses the metal water service pipe for electrical earthing which is no longer considered safe. If this applies to your property we strongly recommend contacting your electricity company or an electrician who may recommend checking your earthing. We will not reimburse this cost as it is an essential safety requirement of the property's owner. We do not accept any liability as a result of using a water pipe as an electrical earth.

Contact Us

Our Wholesale Service Desk is available on 01737 772000. You can also email meterenquiries@seswater.co.uk.

Office Opening Hours:
Monday – Friday: 8am to 5pm