



your meter option 2016-17

code of practice

www.wessexwater.co.uk

*Wessex
Water*
a YTL company

switching to a meter

Why have a meter?

More and more of our customers are switching to a meter and only paying for water they use.

It makes sense because it could lower your bill if:

- you live on your own
- have a small family
- live in a house with a high rateable value.

Is a meter right for me?

It could be, but you need to think about how much water you use.

Water use is affected by:

- the number of people in your house
- how often you use your appliances
- the condition of your internal pipework and appliances.

All you need to know to help you decide is in this leaflet. Follow our simple step by step guide.

We normally fit meters for free and if you decide within two years it isn't for you, you can go back to paying unmetered charges*.

Applying is easy, simply complete the application form inside, or apply online at www.wessexwater.co.uk/meteroption

*This option lapses after you have been billed for two years on the metered charge. You can only make this change once.

step 1 - work out how much water you use

Fill in the table opposite to work out your daily water use. Remember:

- different appliances use different amounts and we've used average figures in the checklist
- don't underestimate how many times you use each appliance and for how long
- consider everyone in the house
- will your circumstances change, eg, are you planning a family or is someone moving away?

Hosepipe use is affected by:

- garden watering during the year
- washing cars
- jet washing patios or slabs.

If you find you're using more water than you thought, a water meter might not be for you.



House	Average use in litres	How often a day?	Daily total in litres
Dishwasher*			
Normal	18	x	=
Water efficient	12	x	=
Washing machine*			
Old (pre 2000)	70	x	=
New	55	x	=
Water efficient	31	x	=
Bath*			
Bath	80	x	=
Shower †			
Normal shower	45	x	=
Power shower	80	x	=
Eco shower	32	x	=
Toilet			
Standard flush	7.5 to 9	x	=
Dual flush	5 (on average)	x	=
Miscellaneous			
Cooking, cleaning, drinking, washing up and personal hygiene (not bathing or showering)	50 litres per person daily	x	=
Garden/outdoor use			
Watering can	9 litres per can	x	=
Hosepipe	9 litres per minute	x	=

* If you do not use daily, add up the number of times you use it in a week and divide by seven to get a daily average.

† Assumes a five-minute shower based on average flow rates.

Total household daily water use	litres
Convert your daily water use (litres) into annual use (m ³)	x 365 ÷ 1,000
Estimated annual water use	m ³

step 2 - estimate your bill if you had a meter

The charges below are for household customers only.

Water charges	
Your estimated annual water use (Use the figure you calculated on page 3)	m ³ A
Charge per m ³	£2.1005 B
Your water use charge A x B	£
plus annual standing charge	£24
Total	£ C

One cubic metre (1m³) is equivalent to 1,000 litres or about 220 gallons.

Your metered charges

If you receive both water and sewerage services from us, ie, your property is connected to the public sewer, your bill is made up of four charges.

These are:

- a charge for each m³ of water you use
- a charge for each m³ of waste that leaves your home
- a standing charge for your water service
- a standing charge for your sewerage service.

Sewerage charges	
If you receive sewerage services from another water company you must use the sewerage charges used by that company.	
Your estimate of water returned to the sewer Use 95% of your water use A (To calculate this, multiply your water use A by 0.95)	m ³ D
Charge per m ³	£1.7966 E
Sewerage use charge D x E	£
plus annual standing charge	£54
Total	£ F
Your total estimated metered bill C + F	£

Your metered sewerage bill is based on 95% of the water you use returning to the sewer. The 5% allowance covers all household use, eg, drinking, cooking, watering the garden and washing the car as well as taking into account wet and dry years.

If considerably less than 95% of the water you use returns to the sewer, you can apply to have your charges reduced. Call 0345 600 3 600 (Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm).

Standing charges

What do the standing charges cover?

Standing charges cover the cost of maintaining the meter, reading it and producing your bill. In addition the sewerage standing charge covers the cost of surface water and highway drainage.

Are standing charges payable even if I don't use any water?

Yes, we still have to read the meter and maintain the service and you still need to pay for surface water and highway drainage.

Why is the metered sewerage standing charge greater than the unmetered standing charge?

Sewerage bills include a charge for taking away surface water from roofs, drives and patios, and for highway drainage. This charge is included in the sewerage rate for unmetered properties. For metered properties it is included in the standing charge, not in the rate per cubic metre.

Now compare your estimated metered bill with your current unmetered bill to see if you'll save money by having a water meter.

step 3 – apply for a meter

Make sure you have checked points 1 and 2 below and read the *need to know* information before you apply.

- 1 Check your plumbing system for obvious signs of leaking water – once you switch to a meter, wasting water will increase your use and your bill.
- 2 Check things like cistern overflows, dripping taps and header tanks. If you find any problems put things right before you apply for a water meter.
- 3 Complete and return your application form, see opposite.

need to know

Tenants

If you have a fixed term tenancy of less than six months, you can't request a water meter without your landlord's approval. You will need to send us copies of your landlord's written permission and tenancy agreement.

Other types of tenancy may not require that approval.

If you're a tenant and want a water meter we suggest you contact your landlord before applying.

Shared pipework

If your property shares pipework with others we may have to do some work to make sure we fit the meter where it will measure your water use only and that we can read it. We may need to install a device that allows us to read the meter remotely.

When it's impossible to put the meter outside we may have to fit it inside your property. If so, we'll normally need access to read the meter twice a year unless we can fit a remote reading device. Where we can't gain access to read a meter, we may have to go back to charging on an unmetered basis.

In some cases it may be too expensive or physically impossible to fit a meter. If so, we may be able to offer you another way of charging. See FAQs on page 8.

Leaks

When we fit a meter we check for leaks and we'll repair one on your service pipe free of charge under our household customer leakage policy.

It's a good idea to check your meter readings regularly for unusually high water use.

And if you're worried you might have a leak, see our website for more help: www.wessexwater.co.uk

Water in the meter chamber doesn't necessarily mean there is a leak – the chamber allows rainwater and water in the soil to get in.

Earthing

Properties built before 1966 sometimes use incoming metal water pipes as an earth for their electrical systems.

Fitting a water meter to your supply may mean that this system will no longer work.

So if you're in any doubt about how your property is earthed contact a qualified electrician for advice.

If work needs to be done you'll have to pay for it so think about this when you're deciding whether to have a water meter fitted.

Fill in the form below or apply online www.wessexwater.co.uk/meteroption

About you

Title, ie, Mr, Mrs, Miss, Ms: First name:

Surname/company name:

Address:

..... Postcode:

Preferred contact number: Best time to call:

Alternative contact number:

Email address:

Customer reference number (as shown on your bill):

About your property

Address of property to be metered (if different from above):

..... Postcode:

We do not normally require access to your property to carry out the survey or fit the meter. If we do need access, please indicate any days of the week or times (am or pm) you prefer us to visit:

.....

.....

If we need to contact you to discuss the meter installation, how would you like us to do this?
(Please tick box)

Phone Email Letter

Type of property (please tick box)

Household – house/bungalow Domestic – flat Listed building Office

Household & business Shop Other

Please state the approximate age of your property

Pre 1945 1945 – 1961 1962 – 1982 1983 – 1991 Unknown

Do you share a supply with your neighbour?

Yes No Don't know



application for a meter *(continued)*

Is there an external tap that turns off the water to your property only?

Yes No Don't know

Please let us know if you have one of the following covers outside your property *(please tick)*:

Cover type 1  Cover type 2  Cover type 3 
Round lid, plastic in appearance Square hinged lid, hole in middle/side. Approx 235mm (9 inches) Hinged lid with concrete surround. Approx 150mm (6 inches)

Other Don't know

Are you:

The property owner? Part owner with a housing association? A tenant?

If you are a tenant, do you have a tenancy agreement of less than six months? Yes No

If yes, please obtain your landlord's written permission to have a meter fitted before you apply. Please send us copies of the written permission and your tenancy agreement.
If no, we still recommend you contact your landlord to let them know before you apply.

About your household (household customers only)

How many people live in your property?

What type of water user would you say you were? High Medium Low

About your business (business customers only)

How many people work in your property?

To help us process your application, please explain the main function of your business.

.....
.....

Signature (all customers)

I have read, understood and accept the terms and conditions of the meter option scheme.

Signature/s:

Date:

Please check that you have completed the relevant sections on this form and return it to:
Wessex Water, 1 Clevedon Walk, Nailsea, Bristol BS48 1WA.

what happens next

Thank you for applying for a meter. You don't need to do anything else, we'll look after the rest.

What we'll do

We'll send you a letter to say we've received your application.

We'll visit your property to check if a meter can be fitted.

No | Yes

We'll send you a letter to explain why we are unable to fit a meter and may be able to offer you an alternative method of charging.

We'll fit your meter on the same day as the survey or within 30 working days of receipt of your application form.

Normally we fit the meter as near the property boundary as possible – sometimes just outside the boundary in the pavement. If this isn't possible we'll discuss alternative locations with you.

We'll have to turn the water off for a short period while the meter is being fitted.

We will leave a guide to your meter leaflet for you to read.

Once we've fitted your meter we'll automatically change your account to a metered one. We'll write to advise you of any refund you are due or send you a final bill for your unmetered account.

If you have a payment plan we will transfer it to your new metered account and adjust your monthly payments if we need to. You must pay any charges owing up to the date the meter was fitted.

Your first metered bill will normally arrive within six months of your meter being fitted.

Our promise

If we don't install your meter within 30 working days of receiving your application, and it is our fault, we'll stop your unmetered charges at the end of that time and start your metered charges from the date we fit the meter.

This won't apply if the installation has been delayed at your request or that of a third party.

FAQs

How often do you read the meter?

We'll normally read your meter every six months if you are a household customer – as long as we can gain access.

If we send you an estimated bill you can leave your actual meter reading by calling 0345 600 6 600 (24 hour automated service) or submit it online at: www.wessexwater.co.uk

Can I read the meter?

If you have a meter we recommend you regularly check the water you're using.

Reading a meter is easy to do and when we fit your meter we'll leave you a leaflet with more information about how to read it. Please only read your meter if it is safe and practicable to do so.

Are water meters accurate?

Yes, they are manufactured and tested to a British Standard specification (BS 5728/1) and International Standard ISO 4064/1. If you think your meter isn't recording accurately you can ask us to test it. If the meter is recording accurately you'll be liable for the cost of the test, which will be no more than £70 plus VAT (total £84).

If we find a fault and this has affected readings, we'll revise your bills based on your normal usage level.

Who owns the water meter?

It's our property and tampering with it is a criminal offence. If you damage the meter or any device connected to it, such as remote reading equipment, you'll have to pay the repair or replacement costs. We will be responsible for its maintenance, repair and eventual replacement.

Can I go back to unmetered charging?

After having a meter fitted household customers sometimes want to go back to paying on an unmetered basis. This option won't be available after you've been billed for two years on the metered charge.

If you do go back to unmetered charging you'll have to pay for water and sewerage services you've used up to date.

We won't normally physically remove the meter.

What if my sewerage services come from another water company?

You may be on the border of our area and receive your water supply from us and sewerage services from another water company. If so we'll forward details of your water use to the other company so your sewerage charges can be billed in relation to the volume of water on the meter.

What happens if you can't fit a meter?

If we can't fit one, we may be able to offer an alternative charge called an assessed charge. This is an annual charge based on the number of occupants in the property. Assessed charges will apply from the date of the survey. An assessed charge can only be applied if it is too expensive or physically impossible to fit a meter.

WaterSure Plus

If you have a meter and need to use a large amount of water for reasons you can't control, WaterSure Plus may be able to help – it puts a limit on the amount you have to pay.

To qualify, you must receive one of the means-tested benefits or tax credits, such as:

- income support
- income-related employment and support allowance
- working tax credit
- housing benefit

- universal credit.

In addition, you must either:

- receive child benefit for three or more children under 19 living in your household, or
- have someone in the household with a medical condition that causes them to use significantly more water.

Our website has more information:

www.wessexwater.co.uk/watersureplus or call 0345 600 3 600 (Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm).

saving water

Save water in your home by trying our top three tips. They'll help you save water in the place you use it most – the bathroom.

Brushing teeth



Turn off the tap when brushing teeth, washing or shaving – you'll save up to nine litres per minute.

Showering



Showering adds up to 25% of water you use in your home. Try to take shorter showers and aim for four minutes – on average a shower uses 10 litres of water a minute.

Using the toilet



Flushing the toilet adds up to 22% of water you use in your home. Try to only flush your toilet if you need to or flush once less a day – on average each flush uses seven litres of water.

Following these three simple tips will really make the difference to you, your wallet and the environment - as you'll save up to 13,000 litres of water a year!

For more advice and to order FREE water saving devices for your home visit www.wessexwater.co.uk/savingwater

have your say...

We value your opinion so join our online customer research panel. You can tell us what you think of our services, how we can improve and help us plan for the future. Visit www.wessexwater.co.uk/haveyoursay

contact us

Billing enquiries

- Payment arrangements • Metering • Moving house • Problems paying
- High water use • Customer Care Plus

0345 600 3 600 (Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm)

Email us: customer.services@wessexwater.co.uk
(please quote your customer number and telephone number)

Write to: Wessex Water, 1 Clevedon Walk, Nailsea, Bristol BS48 1WA

Water supply or sewerage enquiries

- Loss of supply • Leak • Water quality problem • Sewage flooding
- Blocked sewer

0345 600 4 600
(Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm, emergencies only at other times)

Email us: operational.enquiries@wessexwater.co.uk

Write to: Operational enquiries, Wessex Water, Claverton Down,
Bath BA2 7WW

www.wessexwater.co.uk

We welcome calls via the Text Relay service.

Calls to 0345 numbers usually cost the same as standard UK landline numbers. Please check with your telephone service provider. To protect our customers and staff telephone calls may be recorded.