

CODE OF PRACTICE

Billing & Metering

for Non-Domestic Customers



As a non-domestic customer of Northern Ireland Water you are required to pay charges for water and sewerage services.

We primarily use the property classification assigned for rating purposes as the means to identify non-domestic customers.

You will only be billed for the services you receive e.g. a water bill if you only have a water supply, or a water and sewerage bill if you are connected to both mains services.

This leaflet explains in more detail:

- Responsibility for the bill
- Unmeasured billing
- Getting metered
- Assessed charges
- Measured billing
- Leakage and your metered bill
- Changes you should tell us about
- Water efficiency
- What to do if you are not happy with our services
- Outlines our promises to you.



**For more
information please
phone Waterline
03457 440088**

We hope that this Code of Practice covers most of the questions you have. For information on the level of annual charges or specialised areas such as flooding, please visit our website. Section 9.3 of this document provides some suggestions of useful further information.

All of our information leaflets and letters are available:

- in Braille
- in large print
- on CD and audio tape.

All information leaflets can be downloaded from our website.

Contents

	Page
1 Responsibility for the bill	6
1.1 Metered bill responsibility	6
1.2 Paying your bill	7
1.3 Budget (Meter Payment) plan	7
1.4 If you are having problems paying your bill	8
1.5 If you do not pay your bill	8
1.6 Adjustments to your bill	9
1.7 VAT	9
1.8 Customers with multiple accounts	9
1.9 Customer responsibilities	10
1.10 Our promises	10
2 Unmeasured billing	11
2.1 Your bill explained	11
2.2 Domestic allowance	11
2.3 Charges cap	11
2.4 Our promises	12
3 Getting metered	15
3.1 What is a water meter?	15
3.2 How do I get a meter?	16
3.3 Where will the meter be fitted?	17
3.4 Our promises	19
4 Assessed charges	20
4.1 Our promises	20

Contents

	Page
5 Measured billing	21
5.1 Your bill explained	21
5.2 Billing frequency & estimated bills	21
5.3 Water charges	24
5.4 Pipe size and your standing charge	24
5.5 Sewerage charges	25
5.6 Non-return to sewer allowance	25
5.7 Trade effluent	25
5.8 Private water supplies and your bill	26
5.9 Domestic allowance	26
5.10 High consumption alert	26
5.11 How to read your meter	27
5.12 Meter replacement	28
5.13 Meter accuracy	28
5.14 Can I go back to unmeasured charging?	29
5.15 Our promises	30
6 Leakage and your metered bill	31
6.1 Checking for leaks before we install a meter	31
6.2 Finding a leak on your supply	31
6.3 Liability for leakage costs on water	31
6.4 Liability for leakage costs on sewerage	32
6.5 Leakage on the domestic part of a mixed use supply	32
6.6 Our promises	33

Contents

	Page	
7	Changes you should tell us about	34
7.1	Building over infrastructure	34
7.2	Works affecting your meter	34
7.3	Change of use	34
7.4	Sub division of premises	35
7.5	Co-joining buildings	35
7.6	Moving or ceasing trading	35
7.7	Demolition	36
7.8	Customer requested disconnections	36
7.9	What if I want to use automatic meter reading?	36
7.10	Water Fittings Regulations compliance	36
7.11	Our promises	37
8	Water Efficiency	38
9	What to do if you are not happy with our services	39
9.1	Our promises	39
9.2	Independent help and advice from the Consumer Council	40
9.3	Further information	41
9.4	Other useful contacts	41

1 Responsibility for the bill

The occupier of the property is responsible for paying the bill, unless there has been another arrangement made with us. If your landlord is responsible for the bill you need to tell us this, even if this is included in your tenancy agreement.

Where properties are let for periods of less than 12 months, or are in multiple occupation, the owner may be regarded as the occupier.

Please phone us on Billing Line if you think you should be responsible for the bill for your property.

If you are the landlord or owner and you have been paying the bill we will not change this unless someone else accepts the responsibility for payment.

There is more information in our Scheme of Charges on what it means to be the occupier of a property.

1.1 Metered bill responsibility

We prefer to have a single meter for each separate property. Where there is a different metering arrangement, a named individual will be responsible for paying the charges.

We can bill an individual or a management company for properties with multiple occupants. The individual or management company must pay the bill and recover the costs from the occupiers as they see fit.

When a metered property is sub-divided the owner or developer should provide separate water supplies to each new separately occupiable part. If this hasn't happened and no individual has accepted, in writing, responsibility for the charges, we will bill the person considered to have the principle responsibility e.g. registered landowner.

Waterline
03457 440088

Billing Line
03457 770030

1.2 Paying your bill

All our bills are issued and must be paid in £ sterling. The tariffs that apply will be published in an annual charges scheme.

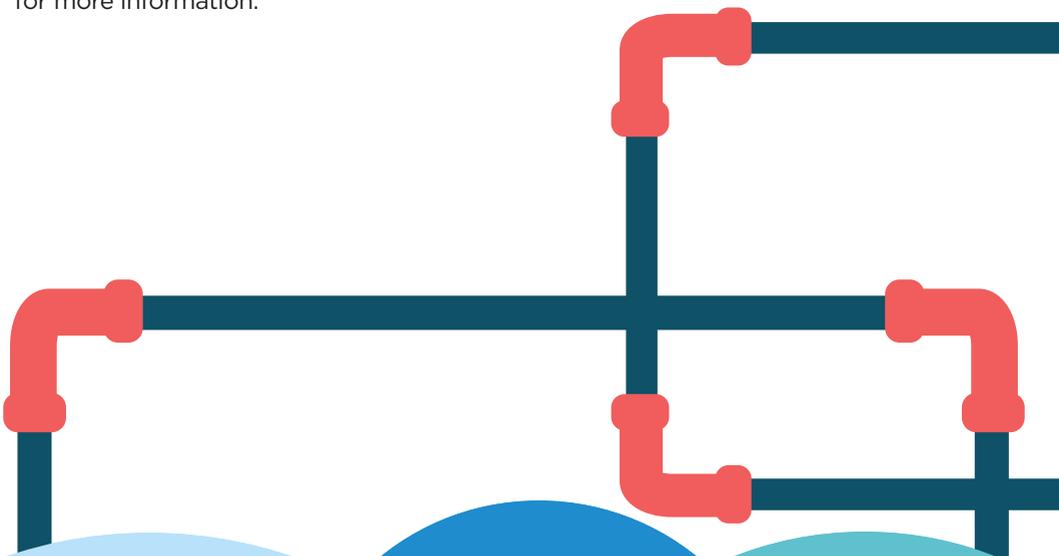
Payments can be made in a number of ways:

- By Direct Debit
- Web self service
- At any bank or building society or via your bank or building society internet or telebanking facilities. This is free in all branches of Danske Bank. Charges may be applied by other banks or building societies
- At Post Offices – charges may be applied by the Post Office
- Debit/credit card payments by phoning the Billing Line on 03457 770030. Credit card payments will be subject to an extra charge. Please see our Scheme of Charges for details. Credit card payments are only accepted against water and sewerage bills
- *BACS
- *Postal payments by cheque.

**Please include the payment slip from the bottom of your bill for these payment types.*

1.3 Budget (Meter Payment) Plan

Metered customers with no arrears can set up a payment plan with us. You will pay a fixed amount each month. At the end of each year we will tell you if your account is in credit or debit. We will either credit your account or bill you for the difference. Please see our section on measured billing (section 7) in this document or phone us for more information.



1.4 If you are having problems paying your bill

If you are having problems paying your bill, please phone us on Billing Line. We may be able to arrange a repayment plan to help you to pay your bill. We will not pursue other recovery methods while we are working with you on this and while you continue to make agreed payments on time.

1.5 If you do not pay your bill

Unmeasured bills are paid in advance and should be paid within 28 days. Measured bills are paid in arrears and are due for immediate payment.

If you do not pay within the time specified on your bill we will take the following steps:

- We will send you a reminder. This will tell you how much you owe and what will happen if you do not pay or respond.
- If you do not pay or set up a repayment plan we will send a final notice.
- We will then seek to disconnect your supply. If necessary we can separate your supply to allow us to disconnect. We will also do this if you do not stick to an agreed payment plan.
- A court claim may then be issued to recover the debt.
- Any costs associated with recovering the debt will be added to the amount you owe.
- We reserve the right to charge interest on outstanding debts.

If we disconnect your supply for non payment you will have to pay the amount you owe and a reconnection fee before we will restore your supply.

How quickly we take the steps outlined above will depend on whether you are a measured or unmeasured customer. We will explain what will happen next each time we contact you.

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03457 770030

1.6 Adjustments to your bill

Every effort is made to bill you correctly. If we bill you incorrectly because of an error by us we may choose to make a retrospective adjustment to your bill and will always do so where it is in your favour. This may result in a refund if we have overcharged you or it could be a bill for charges not previously applied. The maximum period for adjustments is 6 years. In accordance with the Limitations (Northern Ireland) Order 1989, the maximum period for adjustments is 6 years from the date the error was discovered.

If you are due a refund you can choose to have this applied as a credit to any of your Northern Ireland Water accounts or paid back to you by cheque.

We can also make retrospective adjustments where a customer intentionally provides or withholds information that affects their charges.

If you have a question about your bill, you can contact us by telephone or in writing and we will respond within 5 working days. If you have a complaint about your bill, these are usually more complex and we will answer within 10 working days. Please see our Complaints Procedure for greater detail on how we handle complaints.

If we need to investigate further, we will let you know what we are doing and when we will be able to give you a full answer.

1.7 VAT

VAT may be payable on the water part of your bill only. This applies to both measured and unmeasured bills. VAT applies to any business within Categories 1-5 of the Standard Industry Classification List 1980 (SIC). VAT is zero rated for domestic and other non-domestic customers.

Unless you tell us otherwise we will assume that you are liable for VAT on your bill. If this is incorrect please phone us on Billing Line.

1.8 Customers with multiple accounts

If you receive water and sewerage bills for more than one property, we may be able to combine these onto a single bill. If one of your accounts is in credit, you can ask us to transfer this to settle another account of the same type. Please phone us on Billing Line if you would like to discuss this. Payments received will be allocated against the oldest bill due for payment unless you instruct us otherwise.

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Billing Line
03457 770030

1.9 Customer responsibilities

Help us to bill you correctly for the services you use and avoid retrospective adjustments by:

- making sure your billing address details, supply address details and pipe size are correct
- checking that your consumption is being recorded and billed correctly
- notifying us if you have not received a bill and you think you should
- informing us of any changes which may affect your bill for water and sewerage services
- exercising responsible use of the services.

Further guidance on how to read the meter can be found on our website.

1.10 Our promises

- We will bill the occupier unless another arrangement has been set up.
- You will only be billed for the services you receive e.g. a water bill if you only have a water supply, or a water and sewerage bill if you are connected to both mains services.
- We will publish details of the tariffs that apply in an annual charges scheme.
- We offer a number of different ways to pay your bill.
- If you do not pay your bill or enter into a repayment plan we will send you reminders and may look to disconnect the supply if you still do not pay.
- If we bill you incorrectly because of an error by us we may choose to make retrospective billing adjustments and will always do so where it is in your favour.
- If you have a question about your bill we will respond within 5 working days.
- If you have a complaint about your bill we will answer within 10 working days.
- If it is going to take longer we will let you know what we are doing and when we will be able to give you a full answer.
- If you receive water and sewerage bills for more than one property, you can ask us to combine these onto a single bill. If possible we will do this.
- If one of your water and sewerage accounts is in credit, you can ask us to transfer this to settle another account of the same type.

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Billing Line
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2 Unmeasured billing

All unmeasured customers designated as non-domestic by Land and Property Services (LPS) will be liable for a bill, regardless of any rates exemption you may have. If you do not have a meter we bill you once a year, usually in April or May.

2.1 Your bill explained

You will only be billed for the services you receive e.g. a water bill if you only have a water supply, or a water and sewerage bill if you are connected to both. Water and sewerage charges are each made up of two parts:

- a standing charge which is fixed. This charge reflects the cost of providing water and sewerage services to your property (e.g. pipework and maintenance)
- a variable charge based on your Net Annual Value (NAV). This is set by LPS and is used by us as the basis for your annual rates bill.

The levels of standing and variable charges are published each year in our Scheme of Charges. Please check our website for more details.

2.2 Domestic allowance

The tariffs that apply to unmeasured customers are reduced by 50% as an equivalent to the domestic allowance available to measured customers. The tariff shown on your bill already includes this reduction. This discount may be withdrawn if domestic charging is introduced. Details of this can be found in our Scheme of Charges document available on our website or by phoning Waterline.

2.3 Charges cap

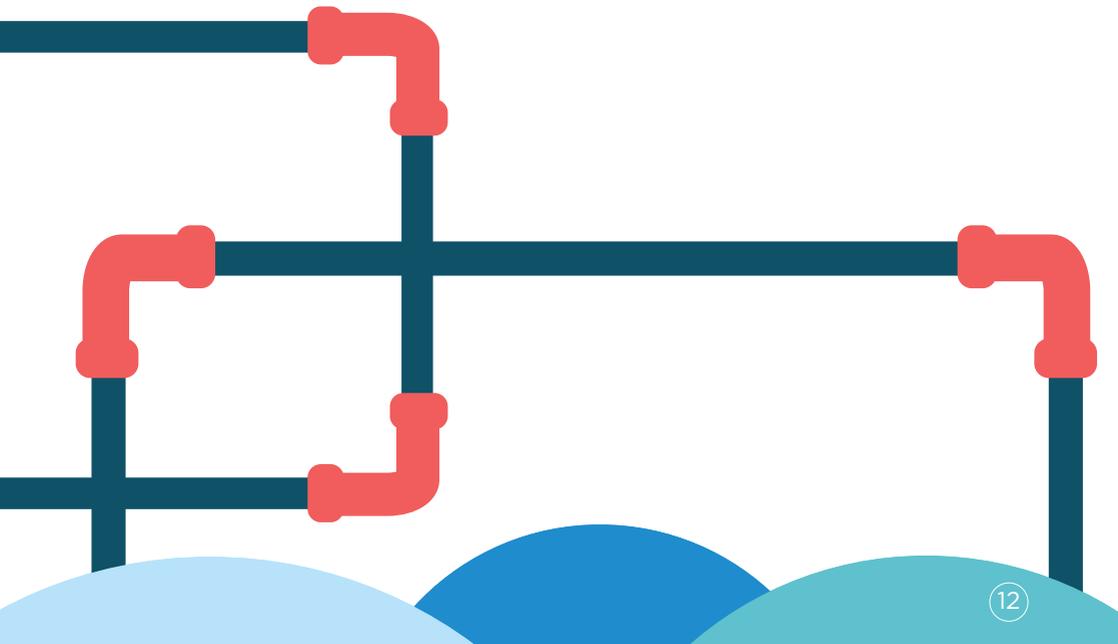
Unmeasured water and sewerage charges have a maximum cap published each year in our Scheme of Charges. Your bill will not be higher than this cap.

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Billing Line
03457 770030

2.4 Our promises

- We will bill the occupier unless another arrangement has been set up.
- You will only be billed for the services you receive e.g. a water bill if you only have a water supply, or a water and sewerage bill if you are connected to both mains services.
- We will publish details of the tariffs that apply in an annual charges scheme.
- We offer a number of different ways to pay your bill.
- If you do not pay your bill or enter into a repayment plan we will send you reminders and may consider disconnecting the supply if you still do not pay.
- Unmeasured customers will receive one annual bill based on the NAV as assessed by LPS.
- If we bill you incorrectly because of an error by us we may choose to make retrospective billing adjustments and will always do so where it is in your favour.
- If you have a question about your bill we will respond within 5 working days.
- If you have a complaint about your bill we will answer within 10 working days.
- If it is going to take longer we will let you know what we are doing and when we will be able to give you a full answer.
- If you receive water and sewerage bills for more than one property, you can ask us to combine these onto a single bill. If possible we will do this.
- If one of your water and sewerage accounts is in credit, you can ask us to transfer this to settle another account of the same type.



An unmeasured bill is made up of 2 pages and looks like this:

NNNNNNNNNN

Customer reference: UC09062620/01 1

Customer name: SAMPLE CUSTOMER 2

Supply address: 1 SAMPLE STREET, SAMPLE TOWN, AB1 2BC 2

Property reference: 05285114

Bill Date: 18 July 2016 **Bill Type:** Original Bill **Page** 1 of 2



niwater.com/paybill 3

Email: customer.billing@niwater.com

Address: PO Box 1026, Belfast BT1 9DJ

VAT number: 898 7465 37

0345 877 0030

8am-6pm Mon-Fri, 8am-6pm Sat, 12-6pm Sun

Moving premises or ceasing trading?

You are responsible for notifying us at least two working days before you leave; if you don't you may still be held liable for charges. We can update our records up to 30 days in advance of your move.

Unmetered water bill

Annual water and sewerage charges:
01 April 2016 - 31 March 2017

Previous Bill 4	
Charges	£0.00
Amount you paid - thank you	£0.00
This Bill - See page 2 for the detail	18 July 2016
Amount Carried forward	£0.00
Water charges	£279.35
Sewerage charges	£382.02
Total new charges	£661.37
VAT on water charges at 20.00%	£55.87
VAT on sewerage charges at 0.00%	£0.00
Amount now due	£717.24 5

Please pay within 28 days

How to pay 6

- **By Direct Debit.** The easiest way to pay, simply call **0345 877 0030**.
- **By Self Service.** You can now register your account on line. Go to niwater.com/paybill to view your account and pay your bill.
- **By debit or credit card.** Call **0345 877 0030**.
- **By internet banking or BACS.** Please use the following details: sort code: 95-01-21 and account number: 31064355. Please quote your customer reference (top left of this page). At any bank or building society or via their bank or building society internet or telebanking facilities. Free in all branches of Danske Bank, charges may be applied by other banks or building societies.
- **By cheque.** Make your cheque payable to **Northern Ireland Water Ltd** and post it to **PO Box 1025, Belfast, BT1 9DH**. Write your customer reference on the back and send it along with your payment slip (overleaf).

Sample Customer 2
1 Sample Street
Sample Town
AB1 2CD 7



- 1 Your unique personal reference number used for all contact with NI Water.
- 2 Your name, address that water is supplied to and that property's reference number.
- 3 Contact information for NI Water
- 4 Summary of charges, including previous bill information and VAT charges if applicable.
- 5 Total of all charges due in this billing period.
- 6 Information on different payment methods.
- 7 Your name and postal address for billing. Usually the same as the supply address.

If you have contacted us recently about your bill and we have made changes, the details will appear in the bill message window on the front of the bill.

Customer reference: UC09062620/01 Bill date: 18 July 2016 Bill type: Original Bill Page 2 of 2

New charges for this bill

1 SAMPLE STREET, SAMPLE TOWN Bill number: 7023965836	Unit	Rate	Charge
Water Variable Charge	NAV= £23800	0.01058000	£251.80
Water Standing Charge	365 days	27.55 per year	£27.55
Sewerage Variable Charge	NAV= £23800	0.01444000	£343.67
Sewerage Standing Charge	365 days	38.35 per year	£38.35
Total charges for this property			£661.37
VAT on water charges at 20.00%			£55.87
VAT on sewerage charges at 0.00%			£0.00
Grand total			£717.24

1 About your variable charges (NAV)
Your water and sewerage variable charges are calculated based on the Net Annual Value (NAV) of your property, as assessed by the Land and Property Service (LPS). The NAV for each property is multiplied by our standard rates for water and sewerage to calculate your charges.

2 Your Net Annual Value (NAV) for this property is £23800

3 **Codes of Practice**
View our Billing and Metering Codes of Practice and all of our other Advice Leaflets on our website www.niwater.com or call us on Waterline **03457 440088** to request your free copy.

Complaints
If you are unhappy with our service, please get in touch. Call **0345 877 0030**, email customer.billing@niwater.com, or write to: Customer Relations Centre, PO Box 1026, Belfast, BT1 9D1.

If you are not satisfied with our response, please contact the Consumer Council for Northern Ireland, an independent body:
0800 121 6022
www.consumerCouncil.org.uk
complaints@consumerCouncil.org.uk
The Consumer Council, Floor 3, Seatam House, 28-32 Alfred street, Belfast, BT2 8EN

Water leak or emergency
Emergency leakline: **0800 028 2011**

Water efficiency
Save water and money with our water efficiency tips. Visit our website: www.niwater.com or call us on Waterline: **03457 440088** to request your free leaflet.

Assessed charges
If we cannot fit a meter at your property, you can ask to be billed on assessed charges. Assessed charges take account of water using devices in your property instead of unmeasured charges, based on the NAV of your property. Visit our website for more information.



Reference Number: **0906262001** Credit account Number: **31064355** Amount Due (please see payable at PO number): **£ 717.24**

CHEQUE ACCEPTABLE

Signature: _____ Date: _____

5 Sample Customer 2
1 Sample Street
Sample Town
Sample
AB1 2CD

95-01-21 £

4

3

<0906262001< 950121+ 31064355< 78 X

- 1** Breakdown of charges.
- 2** Your property's Net Annual Value and the explanation of what this means.
- 3** Contact information in case of complaint or emergency.
- 4** Payment slip, used for payments at banks or for cheque payments via post.
- 5** Your billing name and address.

3 Getting metered

Having a meter fitted allows us to bill you for the water you actually use rather than basing your bill on your NAV. We have the right to install meters for charging purposes on non-domestic properties and we prefer to bill our non-domestic customers this way. We are continuing to survey properties to check if meters can be installed.

3.1 What is a water meter?

A water meter records the amount of water that you take from the public water supply to your property. The consumption is measured in cubic metres. One cubic metre is the same as 1000 litres.

The size of the meter we install depends on the size of the pipe supplying the property and the amount of water you will use. For many customers this will be a small meter, about the size of a bag of sugar, for others it may be a large single meter. Some customers with variable consumption requirements may have a combination meter. A combination meter is a single device containing both a small and a large meter. A switch inside the device sends the water through the appropriate size meter depending on flow rate. Each of the two meter dials are separately labelled, and the readings and consumption charges appear as separate lines on your bill, but because they are on a single supply pipe, a single standing charge applies.

Examples of the meters are shown here.



Small diameter Meter types

Waterline
03457 440088

Billing Line
03457 770030



Large Diameter Meter



Combination meter with 2 dials

3.2 How do I get a meter?

If you are not metered and would like to have one fitted please phone us on Waterline and we will:

- Tell you if we have already checked your property and why we have not been able to fit a meter

or

- Arrange to check if we can fit a meter and if possible have it installed.

We aim to complete our checks and write to you within 3 weeks. If we agree to install a meter this should be done within another 2 weeks.

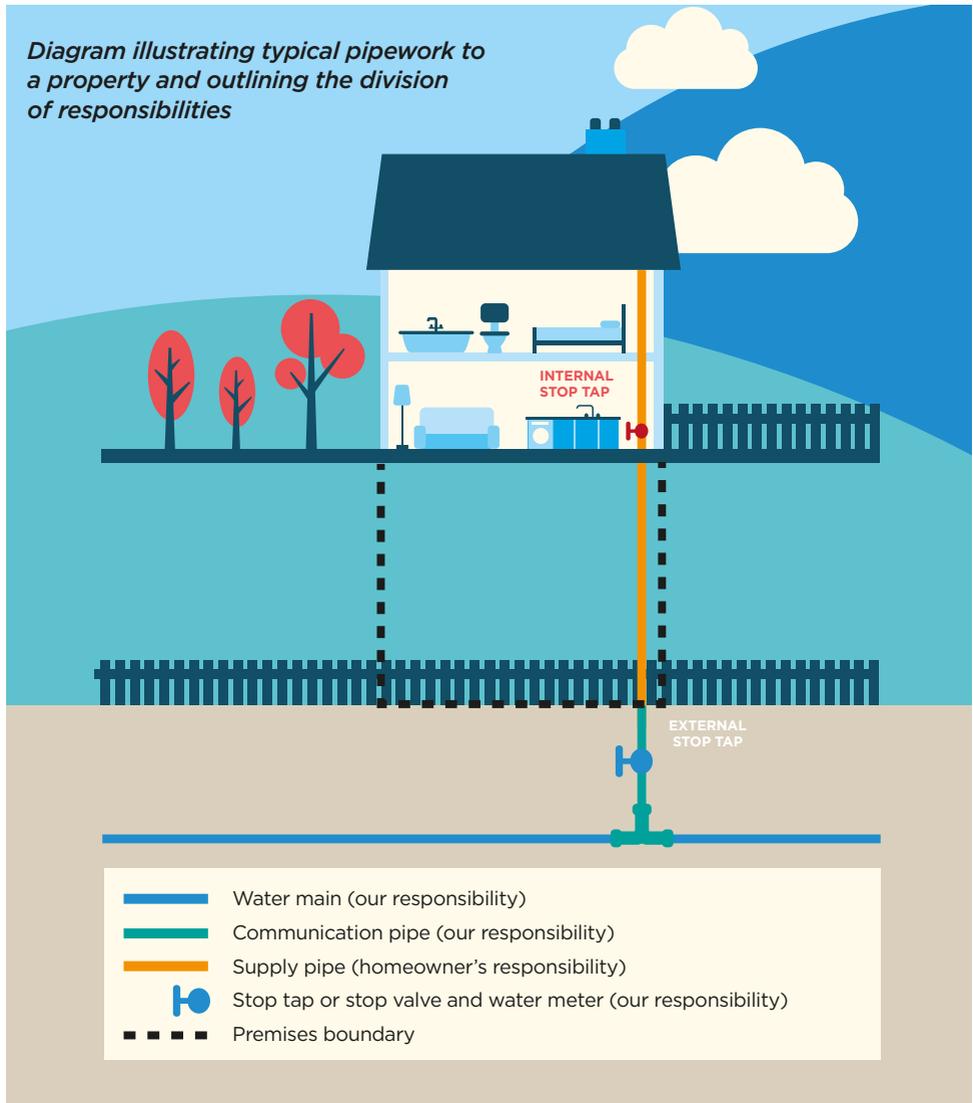
It is not always possible to fit a meter as this depends on the pipework supplying your property, but where possible we will fit a meter.

3.3 Where will the meter be fitted?

The meter must be installed where it will measure all the water you use, including any outside taps, outbuildings etc., and where it will be protected from damage and easily and safely accessed for reading and maintenance.

We try to fit meters where your stopcock is, and as close as possible to the boundary of your property, as illustrated below.

Diagram illustrating typical pipework to a property and outlining the division of responsibilities



Normally meters will be fitted to individual properties only, unless we have agreed otherwise with you.

The meter is usually fitted in an underground chamber, known as the boundary box, which is typically placed in the footpath or verge. The boundary box also contains the stopcock.

If we can fit the meter at the boundary we will normally go ahead and do this. If this is not possible we will check if the meter can be fitted inside your property if your pipework allows for this.

We do not charge for fitting a meter, however if you ask us to fit a meter in a different area to where we propose, and it is possible but is more expensive, you will be asked to pay any additional costs associated with this. No charge applies if this is to meet your needs as a customer with a disability.

It will not always be possible to fit the meter where you want. This depends on the pipework and our ability to access the meter. In some cases it may not be technically or economically possible to fit a meter on your supply pipe.

Once we have fitted a meter we will write to you and tell you where your meter is and when to expect your first bill. We aim to do this within 5 weeks of the work being completed. Your metered charges will commence from the date on which we fit a meter. We will not backdate charges if the meter installation was delayed because we couldn't access your property for survey or fitting. Unmeasured charges apply until the meter installation date.

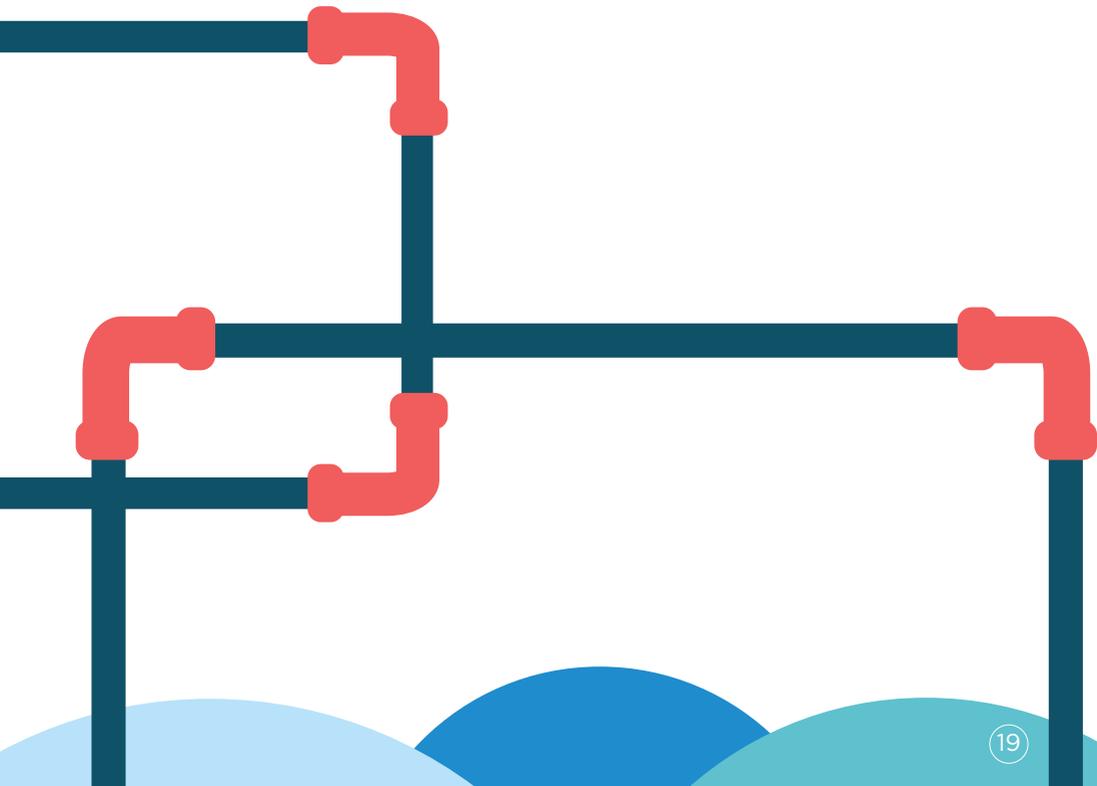
Waterline
03457 440088

Billing Line
03457 770030



3.4 Our promises

- If you are an unmeasured customer you can ask us to fit a meter. We will check if a meter can be installed at your property and fit it if possible. We aim to complete our checks and reply to you within 3 weeks. If a meter can be fitted we will do this within a further 2 weeks.
- If you ask us to fit a meter and we cannot, we will let you know why.
- We do not charge for fitting a meter in our chosen location at your property.
- We will try to contact you before we seek to survey your premises or install a meter. If we have not been able to do this you can ask us to come back at another time.
- If you would like to have the meter installed in a different location, we will try to do this. You will be asked to pay any additional costs for doing the work. This will be payable in advance. If the change is to meet your needs as a customer with a disability we will do this for free.
- Once your meter is installed we will write to you confirming the meter location and when you will receive your first bill. We aim to do this within 5 weeks of the work being completed.



4 Assessed charges

If you choose to be billed on the basis of assessed charges you will not be able to revert to unmeasured charges at a later date. If we cannot fit a meter at your property, you can ask to be billed on assessed charges. Assessed charges take account of water using devices in your property instead of unmeasured charges, which are based on your NAV as set by LPS.

Assessed charges are billed once a year, usually in April or May, and have two elements:

- the full unmeasured standing charge (without discount)
- a variable charge based on an assessment of water consumption at the property using loading units. Different water using devices have different load unit values. These are detailed in our Scheme of Charges.

If you pay rates for your property then a domestic allowance may be available in accordance with the Scheme of Charges.

We will send you an application form, and will calculate your assessed charges based on the information you provide within 5 days.

We will send you a letter showing what your assessed charge would be and you can decide to accept this or remain on unmeasured charges.

We reserve the right to check the details you provide by inspecting the property.

4.1 Our promises

- If you are an unmeasured customer you can ask us to fit a meter. We will check if a meter can be installed at your property and fit it if possible. We aim to complete our checks and reply to you within 3 weeks. If a meter can be fitted we will do this within a further 2 weeks.
- If you ask us to fit a meter and we cannot, we will let you know why.
- If it is not technically possible to fit a meter to your property you can ask to be billed on assessed charges. We will respond to your application within 5 days of you providing the details we need.

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Billing Line
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5 Measured billing

Once you have a meter fitted your bill will be based on the readings from it.

5.1 Your bill explained

Metered charges are billed in arrears and payment is due immediately. Details of when your meter is due to be read are sent to you after the meter is installed or when you let us know you have moved into a metered property.

You will only be billed for the services you receive e.g. a water bill if you only have a water supply, or a water and sewerage bill if you are connected to both mains services.

5.2 Billing frequency & estimated bills

Metered customers normally receive a bill every 6 months. We will let you know when to expect a bill from us after your meter is installed, or if we make any change to this.

We aim to read your meter at least twice a year. However, sometimes access issues prevent us from reading your meter. If we haven't been able to read it when it is time for your bill, we will use an estimate based on your past water use. The type of reading and the billed consumption will be shown on page 2 of your bill. If we do not have enough information to do this your bill will be based on the average for your industry classification.

A bill that is based on an estimated reading is valid and must be paid. You can, if you prefer, provide us with an actual meter reading by telephoning our Billing Line within 7 days of receiving the bill. A new bill will be issued to you based on the reading you provide, normally within 10 days.

At least one bill in any 12 month period will be based on an actual read.



Waterline
03457 440088

Billing Line
03457 770030

The front page of the bill will look like this:

Customer reference: MC09062610/01

Customer name: SAMPLE CUSTOMER 1
Supply address: 1 SAMPLE STREET, SAMPLE TOWN, BT1 2AB
Property reference: 07878187

Bill Date: 18 July 2016 **Bill Type:** Original Bill **Page** 1 of 2

Metered water bill

Monthly water and sewerage charges:

Billing Period
 01 April 2016 - 30 April 2016

Previous Bill	
Charges	£0.00
Amount you paid	£0.00

This Bill - See page 2 for the detail		18 July 2016
Amount Carried forward		£0.00
Water charges	£870.12	
Sewerage charges	£1,333.32	
Total new charges		£2,203.44
VAT on water charges at 20.00%		£174.03
VAT on sewerage charges at 0.00%		£0.00
Amount now due		£2,377.47

Please pay £2,377.47 immediately.



Delivering what matters

niwater.com/paybill

Email: customer.billing@niwater.com
Address: PO Box 1026, Belfast BT1 9DJ
VAT number: 898 7465 37

0345 877 0030

8am-8pm Mon-Fri, 8am-6pm Sat, 12-6pm Sun

Moving Premises or Ceasing Trading?
 You are responsible for notifying us at least two working days before you leave. If you don't you may still be held liable for charges. We can update our records up to 30 days in advance of your move.

How to pay

- 1 **By Direct Debit.** The easiest way to pay, simply call 0345 877 0030.
- 2 **By Self Service.** You can now register your account on line. Go to niwater.com/paybill to view your account and pay your bill.
- 3 **By debit or credit card.** Call 0345 877 0030.
- 4 **By internet banking or BACS.** Please use the following details: sort code: 95-01-21 and account number: 31064355. Please quote your customer reference (top left of this page). At any bank or building society or via their bank or building society internet or telebanking facilities. Free in all branches of Danske Bank, charges may be applied by other banks or building societies.
- 5 **By cheque.** Make your cheque payable to **Northern Ireland Water Ltd** and post it to **PO Box 1025, Belfast, BT1 9DH**. Write your customer reference on the back and send it along with your payment slip (overleaf).



Sample Customer 1
 Sample Street
 Sample Town
 AB1 2CD

- 1 Your unique personal reference number used for all contact with NI Water.
- 5 Total of all charges due in this billing period.
- 2 Your name, address that water is supplied to and that property's reference number.
- 6 Information on different payment methods.
- 3 Contact information for NI Water
- 7 Your name and postal address for billing. Usually the same as the supply address.
- 4 Summary of charges, including previous bill information and VAT charges if applicable.

22

And the back of the bill will look like this:

If you have contacted us recently about your bill and we have made changes, the details will appear in the bill message window on the front of the bill.

Customer reference: MC09062610/01 **Bill date:** 18 July 2016 **Bill type:** Original Bill **Page 2** of 2

New charges for this bill

Bill from: 01/04/16 **Bill to:** 30/04/16

Meter Reference: 00797703 Bill number: 7023965827	Unit	Rate	Charge
Water Volume Rate	836 m ³	1.03000000 per m ³	£861.08
Water Standing Charge 25mm	30 days	110.00 per year	£9.04
Sewerage Volume Rate	794 m ³	1.66600000 per m ³	£1,322.80
Sewerage Standing Charge 25mm	30 days	128.00 per year	£10.52
Total charges for this meter			£2,203.44
VAT on water charges at 20.00%			£174.03
VAT on sewerage charges at 0.00%			£0.00
Grand total			£2,377.47

Meter Reference: 00797703
Size: 25mm Serial Number: 12-511382
Location: Displays the location of your meter
Company Estimate 0 (01/04/16)
Company Reading 1000 = 1000 m³ (30/04/16)
Domestic Water Allowance = -164 m³
Chargeable Water Volume = 836 m³
Non-return to Sewer Allowance = -50 m³
Domestic Sewerage Allowance = -156 m³
Chargeable Sewerage Volume = 794 m³

Codes of Practice
View our Billing and Metering Codes of Practice and all of our other Advice Leaflets on our website: www.niwater.com or call us on Waterline **03457 440088** to request your free copy.

Complaints
If you are unhappy with our service, please get in touch. Call **0345 877 0030**, email customer.billing@niwater.com, or write to: Customer Relations Centre, PO Box 1026, Belfast, BT1 9D1.

If you are not satisfied with our response, please contact the Consumer Council for Northern Ireland, an independent body:
0800 121 6022
www.consumerCouncil.org.uk
complaints@consumerCouncil.org.uk
The Consumer Council, Floor 3, Seatem House, 28-32 Alfred street, Belfast, BT2 8EN

Water leak or emergency
Emergency leakline: **0800 028 2011**
To help with early leak detection we recommend that you take regular readings as you are liable to pay for all water registered through the meter.

Water efficiency
Save water and money with our water efficiency tips. Visit our website: www.niwater.com or call us on Waterline **03457 440088** to request your free leaflet.

bank giro credit

Reference Number: **0906261001** Credit account Number: **31064355** Amount Due (Standard fee payable at PO counter): **£ 2,377.47**

CHEQUE ACCEPTABLE

Customer Name and Initial: **Sample Customer 1**
Signature: **1 Sample Street**
Date: **Sample Town**
Sample
AB1 2CD

Domestic Bank: Downfall Square West Belfast BT1 6JZ
NI Water 31064355

CASH:
CHEQUE:

95-01-21 £

Please do not write or mark before this line and do not fold this counterfoil

<0906261001< 950121+ 31064355< 78 X

- 1** Breakdown of individual charges and readings.
- 2** Information about your meter and any allowances you are claiming.
- 3** Contact information in case of complaint or emergency.
- 4** Payment slip, used for payments at banks or for cheque payments via post.
- 5** Your billing name and address.

5.3 Water charges

Your water bill will be made up of 2 parts:

- a standing charge which is fixed and based on the size of your water supply pipe
- a variable charge known as the volumetric charge, which is based on your actual or estimated water use.

The standing charge is a fixed charge which includes the costs of providing a metered water supply (e.g. pipes, meter maintenance and reading and billing costs). The charge depends on the internal diameter size of the supply pipe within your property.

The volumetric charge is calculated by multiplying your water use in cubic metres for the billing period by the price per cubic metre.

You will be liable for a standing charge on each meter you have, plus the registered usage, less any allowances which you are entitled to.

On combination meters the total recorded usage on both dials shows your consumption but a single standing charge applies as there is only one supply pipe.

All water supplied through a meter for non-domestic purposes, whether consumed or lost through leakage, will be billed. This includes where there is a short period of unusually high consumption which then reduces. Often this can be due to a previous estimated read which was too low.

5.4 Pipe size and your standing charge

The size of the supply pipe to your property was specified by whoever originally applied for the water connection to your property, normally the builder or architect. If you feel that your water usage needs have changed significantly since the property was built you can replace your supply pipe with a smaller one. Any change would be at your own cost and you may be required to apply, and pay, for a new water connection. It is your responsibility to confirm that this would be suitable for all your requirements (including fire safety compliance) and change the pipe from the meter to the first point of use within your property, please refer to the diagram on page 17.

Once we have confirmed that this has been done you would be billed a standing charge on the basis of your new supply pipe size as outlined in our Scheme of Charges.

If your supply pipe has been sized to serve a fire fighting hydrant point and, as a consequence, is larger than necessary to serve your normal consumption you may be granted a standing charge reduction. If you think you are eligible please contact us on Billing Line to discuss.

5.5 Sewerage charges

Your sewerage bill will also be made up of 2 parts:

- a standing charge – which is fixed and based on your water supply pipe size
- a variable charge – which is based on the water you use. To do this we assume that 95% of the water we supply is returned to the sewerage system.

5.6 Non-return to sewer allowance

If your business uses water in its processes and more than 5% is not returned to the sewer in any way you can apply to have us review your non-return to sewer allowance and you will be asked to provide appropriate evidence. There will be a charge for this review which will be refunded if we approve your application. Please phone us on Billing Line for an application form or more information.

5.7 Trade effluent

Some non-domestic customers may be billed for trade effluent, as well as normal sewerage charges. Trade effluent is any liquid, either with or without particles of matter in suspension in the liquid, which is wholly or partly produced in the course of any trade or industry carried on at trade premises.

Trade effluent customers are billed based on the strength of the effluent and the level of treatment required. The charges for trade effluent are available in our Scheme of Charges and more information can also be found in the trade effluent application pack on our website.

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03457 770030



5.8 Private water supplies and your bill

We do not charge for any water which you draw from a private supply or borewell. If you use a borewell supply, or grey or rainwater harvesting, these systems must be installed to comply with the Water Fittings Regulations (see also section 10.10) and you must tell us you have them. We may check that these are installed correctly and we will also make sure we are billing you correctly for the services you use.

If you are connected to the mains sewerage system you are liable for a sewerage charge and we may need to meter your private supply to understand how much you are putting into the sewerage system. If you maintain a water supply from our network as a back-up you will be liable for charges for that too. This will be either an unmeasured charge or metered charge if you have a meter on that supply.

5.9 Domestic allowance

If you pay rates for your metered property, a domestic allowance may be available. This is subtracted from the volume recorded by the meter, before calculating the volumetric water and sewerage charges. Details of the current allowance are set out in the Scheme of Charges. This allowance may be withdrawn if domestic charging is introduced.

This allowance will normally apply to each individually rated property served. Properties with a bulk or shared supply may have more than one allowance applied. If you pay reduced rates, e.g. for caravan parks with static units, the domestic allowances on both water and sewerage will be applied at a similarly reduced rate. The domestic allowance does not affect the standing charge, and you will still be liable for this on each meter you have. If you think you are eligible for the allowance, phone us on Billing Line. We may require proof of your rateable status to confirm eligibility.

The domestic allowance may be backdated to the date you can show that you started paying rates, up to a maximum of 6 years.

5.10 High consumption alert

A significant increase in your consumption may indicate leakage on your supply. If we find that a meter reading shows an unusual and significant increase we will alert you to this usually by writing to you.

It is your responsibility to check for and repair any leaks on your property. If you take regular readings from the meter you will be able to identify any significant or unusual increases in your consumption, this can be an indication that there is a leak. Please also see our section on leakage and your metered bill.

5.11 How to read your meter

You should only try to read your meter if it is safe and practical to do so.

To take a reading, first locate your meter. If you cannot remember where your meter has been fitted, please check the description on your bill (as shown on page 23 of this document) or phone us on Billing Line. We will be able to provide a description of the location and send you a map of its location if needed. External meters are usually located inside a metal or plastic box in the ground at the boundary of your property.

The cover of the meter box can usually be opened using a flat screwdriver. The meter box will have been installed with a pad or block of insulating foam inside, which should be removed to expose the meter. This foam helps to protect your meter from frost, so please remember to replace it before you close the lid again.

It is common to see water in the meter chamber, this is usually rainwater or groundwater. If you find water in the chamber after a long dry spell and your usage is high, it may indicate that you have a leak. Some meters may have a flip lid above the dial which you will have to lift to take a reading. If not you may need to clean dirt from the meter face.

If the glass on top of the meter is cloudy with condensation you can usually clear this by tapping gently on the glass with a blunt tool e.g. the plastic or wooden end of a screwdriver. You may need a torch to help you read the meter, as it will be some way below ground.

Each water meter has its own unique serial number and this number is shown on your bill. Please make sure you have located the correct meter by checking that the serial number matches the one shown on your most recent bill.

The dial will vary for different types of meter but should look broadly like the one shown here:

To take a meter reading you only need to read the black dials on the meter which show full cubic metres of water used. Please ignore the red dials which show decimal fractions of a cubic meter.

If you have opened a lid on the pavement or roadway, it is important that, once you finish reading the meter, the lid is properly closed, with the foam frost protection back in place, to help ensure that the meter is adequately protected from any damage.



Serial number

This should be as it appears on your bill and may contain numbers only or letters and numbers.

5.12 Meter Replacement

If you notice that your meter or the boundary box chamber is damaged please phone us on Waterline and we will assess the urgency of this and arrange a repair if this is necessary.

We will maintain the meter and replace it if we find it is damaged or has stopped working. We may also replace the meter if the meter chamber is damaged, if we relay the water main or as part of our proactive meter exchange programme. If we change the meter we will provide the new meter serial number to you in writing.

The meter and all associated fittings belong to Northern Ireland Water. After installation, we shall be responsible for maintaining or replacing the meter, unless it is damaged or misused by you or through your negligence. In this case, you will be liable for any repair charges.

5.13 Meter accuracy

The accuracy of a water meter is confirmed by the manufacturer and Trading Standards before it leaves the factory. However if you think the meter supplying your property is faulty please phone us on Billing Line. We will visually confirm that the meter is functioning at no charge.

If you are still unhappy you can ask us to have it tested. There is a fee for the meter test so we recommend that you carefully check for leaks or any other reasons for unusual consumption before asking for the test. The fee depends on the size of your meter and must be paid in advance. Details of the fees can be found in our Scheme of Charges available on our website.

If a meter is not accurately measuring your consumption it is more likely to under record (record less than you are using) than over record the amount of water used. If you decide to have the meter tested we will tell you about the payment procedure and ask you to apply in writing. The test will determine if the meter complies with the Measuring Equipment (Cold Water Meters) Regulations 2006, and we will send you a copy of the results. A meter which has been in service is considered to be recording with acceptable accuracy if the test shows consumption within +/-2.5% of actual consumption at the nominal (normal) flow rate, which relates to the size of the meter.

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03457 770030

- If the meter is found to be working correctly, we will keep the charge for the test.
- If the meter fails the test, the charge will be returned.
- If you have been over or under-charged as a result of the faulty meter, we will adjust your bill accordingly. We will assume that your two most recent bills have been affected by the fault.
- If the last two bills have been based on estimated readings the charges will be amended on the basis of retrospective application of consumption details determined from meter readings taken by us from the replacement meter.

We have to take the meter away to test it. We will replace the meter while the tests are carried out. Usually due to the costs involved in changing a meter, we will not reinstate your original meter, regardless of the test results.

5.14 Can I go back to unmeasured charging?

No. Once a meter is fitted on your property we will not remove that meter or bill you on the basis of an unmeasured charge unless the meter is not fully capturing all the water going into your property, or our survey information has been incorrect. You cannot change back to unmeasured charges.

You and any subsequent occupiers of the premises will be liable for measured charges.

If you wish to have a supply disconnected you can request this using the 'Customer Requested Disconnection' application form that can be downloaded from our website. We will perform this free of charge, but a reconnection fee will apply if the supply is later reinstated (please see section 7.8 on customer requested disconnections). For more information on the charges for reconnections please see our Scheme of Charges document.

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5.15 Our promises

- We will issue bills to measured (metered) customers every 6 months unless we have agreed something different with you.
- If your business uses water in its processes and more than 5% is not returned to the sewer in any way from your property you can ask us to review your non-return to sewer allowance.
- We may meter any private water supplies if you are connected to the mains sewer.
- We will apply a domestic allowance to your account if you are eligible and apply for one.
- We will aim to read your meter twice per year.
- At least one bill in any 12 month period will be based on an actual read.
- If you receive an estimated bill, you can provide us with an actual reading within 7 days and we will reissue the bill within 10 days.
- When we read your meter and your consumption shows an unusual and significant increase we will alert you to this, usually in writing.
- If you cannot find your meter, please phone us on Billing Line. We will provide a description and a map of your meter's location if you need it.
- If you tell us your meter, or meter chamber is damaged we will assess this and arrange a repair.
- We will maintain the meter and replace it if we find it is damaged or has stopped working. We may also replace the meter if the meter chamber is damaged, if we relay the watermain or as part of our proactive meter exchange programme. We will provide the new meter serial number to you in writing.
- If you think your meter is not working properly, we will test it for a fee. If you are correct we will refund the fee and amend your bill.
- If there has been an error on your bill we may choose to make retrospective adjustments and will always do so where it is in your favour. Such adjustments could result either in a refund or a bill for uncollected charges.
- We will not remove a meter unless it is not properly capturing all the water supplied to your property or you request to have the supply disconnected.

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6 Leakage and your metered bill

6.1 Checking for leaks before we install a meter

When we install a meter on an existing supply, we will check to see if there is any leakage from your private supply pipe. We will repair any leak free of charge provided we can do so without any further digging. If additional digging is required you will be responsible for finding and repairing the leak yourself.

Normally we will not start to record your water consumption through the meter until the leak has been repaired.

6.2 Finding a leak on your supply

We recommend you keep a check on the amount of water you are using by taking regular meter readings, particularly if you have a long supply pipe, or following periods of exceptional, or prolonged cold weather. If your recorded consumption suddenly increases this may indicate a leak on your pipework.

We recommend that you carry out the following checks:

1. For Underground Pipes

- Locate meter.
- Close internal stop tap.
- If meter is still recording a flow, investigate further.
- Look for patches of unusually damp ground.

2. For Internal Plumbing

- During a period of no water use, check meter.
- If meter is recording a flow, close internal stop tap.
- If meter stops recording a flow, check internal pipework and appliances.

For more information on dealing with leaks view our Code of Practice on Leakage, available on our website or by phoning us on Waterline or view the 'Need Our Help' Section on our Website.

6.3 Liability for leakage costs on water

Where a leak occurs between the meter and point of use, water will be recorded as consumption on the meter and may result in a high bill.

All water supplied through a meter for non-domestic purposes, whether consumed or lost through leakage, will be billed. This includes where there is a short period of unusually high consumption which then reduces. Often this can be due to a previous estimated read which was too low.

Unless a test shows that the meter is not recording properly (see section 5.13 on meter accuracy) this will be used as the basis for your bill.

6.4 Liability for leakage costs on sewage

The sewerage charges on a bill are directly linked to the volume of water recorded, assuming 95% of water supplied is returned as sewage, unless we have agreed a different Non-Return to Sewer allowance.

If there has been a leak you can apply to have the sewerage charges on your bill adjusted to take account of the water which leaked and did not reach the sewer. This can be requested each time a leak occurs, provided it can be demonstrated that any previous leaks were properly repaired.

The sewerage charges on the bill will be averaged for the period of the leak, based on your previous normal consumption records. This is subject to the following conditions:

- The leak occurred on underground, or hidden internal pipework within your property boundary
- The leak has been fixed within 4 weeks of the date it was found
- There is no evidence that the leak has been caused by your negligence or wilful damage
- A claim is made within 6 weeks of the date the leak was fixed, or the date the bill (based on an actual read) issues, whichever is later
- Any allowance granted will relate to the period from the date of the last bill (based on an actual read) until the date of its repair.

It is your responsibility to fix any leak on your pipework as soon as you find it. If you do not own your property, your landlord may be responsible for fixing the leak, but the bill payer will still be liable, even if the leak is on a shared supply pipe within the property. If necessary you should ask your landlord, or the property owner to carry out the repair.

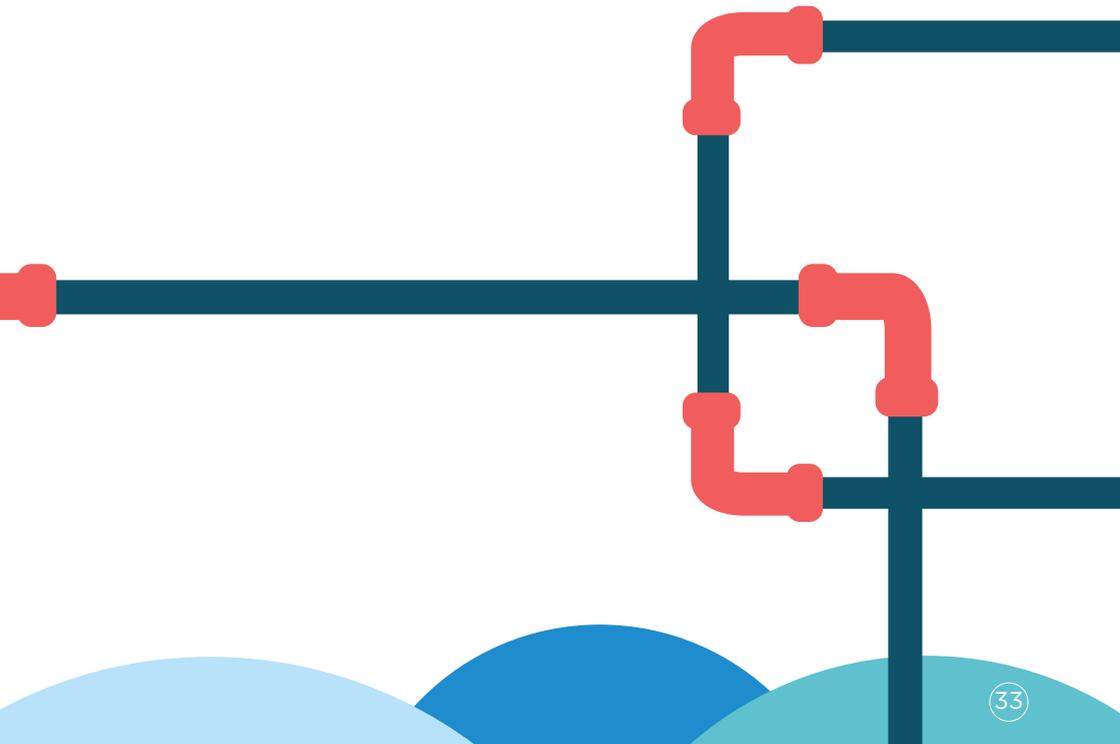
If the leak occurs on a portion of the pipe that Northern Ireland Water has responsibility for (e.g. between the meter and your property boundary), both the water and sewerage elements of the bill will be averaged. Additionally, if such a leak occurs as a result of damage caused by us or our contractors you will not be financially liable and we will repair any damage caused.

6.5 Leakage on the domestic part of a mixed use supply

If you have a single metered supply providing water to a non-domestic and domestic mixed use property, and a leak occurs on the domestic part of the supply you can apply to have both the water and sewerage elements of your bill adjusted. The same conditions apply as above, and you will have to show that the leak was repaired. We may visit your property for you to show us where the leak had been and confirm that this was on the domestic portion. If leaks happen again we may require you to separate the supplies.

6.6 Our promises

- We will check for leaks on your supply when we fit a meter and fix it for free if we can access it within our excavation.
- We will provide advice on how to find leakage on your supply.
- We will bill you for all water consumed through your meter, less any allowances you are entitled to.
- If you have had a leak on your supply you can apply to have the sewerage part of your bill adjusted.



7 Changes you should tell us about

If you make changes to your property you may need to tell us. Below are details of changes you should tell us about.

7.1 Building over infrastructure

Building over a public watermain is NOT permitted. Specific approval is required to build over or near sewers.

If you do not get consent such works constitute an offence.

If you think that any building work you are starting is near any of our water mains or sewers please contact our Developer Services Team immediately on Waterline.

7.2 Works affecting your meter

If you need to carry out work which affects your meter please let us know or you may be committing an offence. The cost of any work which we need to do to replace or repair the meter as a result of an offence is recoverable from the offender.

If you need to have the meter moved, we may be able to do this. There will be a charge depending on what work we need to carry out. We will assess if the work is possible and give you an estimate on request.

We will move the meter, if possible to do so, for free to meet your needs as a customer with a disability.

7.3 Change of use

You should tell us if you change from non-domestic to domestic status. Please phone us on Billing Line and we will discuss this with you. We may need a copy of your rates bill as proof of your domestic status with LPS or other documentary evidence which proves the cessation of non-domestic activity. We may choose to verify by monitoring your consumption, if the supply is metered, and by reviewing the available information. We may request the alteration of pipework and or the removal of fittings to ensure non-domestic use does not continue. If you do not contact us before the change of use, the date you contact us will be the date the account is amended.

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7.4 Sub-division of premises

If you are sub-dividing your property you need to provide a separate water supply to each part of the property which has a different occupier, and apply for a new connection for each of these. After connection each supply will be separately billed to the respective occupiers. For more information on new connections please phone our Developer Services Team on Waterline or check our website.

7.5 Co-joining buildings

If you join two buildings together you will be liable for charges based on both original supplies, including standing charges, unless you contact us to have one of them disconnected. This applies to both measured and unmeasured properties.

7.6 Moving or ceasing trading

You are responsible for notifying us if you are moving premises or ceasing trading. You need to tell us at least two working days before you leave or you will be liable for any charges up to the date of whichever happens first:

- 28 days after you tell us
- The day when the meter would normally next be read
- The day when someone else tells us that they are taking responsibility for the supply.

You should also phone us on the day you leave to provide a final reading. We will close your account on the basis of a meter reading you provide, or if you cannot do that, on the basis of an estimate if you agree.

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7.7 Demolition

Please inform us if you are demolishing a non-domestic property so we can disconnect the supply to prevent leakage on the site after you leave. We will close your account and ensure you are not billed for any use after the demolition date. If you do not contact us you may still be liable for costs as outlined in section 10.6.

7.8 Customer requested disconnections

We will not remove a meter unless it has been incorrectly installed or you request a disconnection. This means that we will stop supplying water to the property. There is no charge for disconnection but you must submit your request using the application form that can be downloaded from the Northern Ireland Water website in the section 'Your bill and our charges'. There will be a cost if you later want to have the water supply reconnected. You will be liable for charges until any disconnection is carried out. We are unable to accept a request to disconnect a shared supply unless all parties served by the supply have recorded their agreement.

7.9 What if I want to use automatic meter reading?

We do not currently use automatically read meters (using a radio signal) on customer accounts. Some customers ask to use their own monitoring systems on our meters. Each case is individual, and the work required depends on the age and type of the meter serving your property. If you want to use your own automatic systems on our meters please phone us on Waterline to discuss your, and our, requirements. There will be a charge for managing your request. Please see our Scheme of Charges for more information.

If you install equipment without seeking prior permission this may constitute an offence of tampering with a meter.

7.10 Water Fittings Regulations compliance

Any works now done on plumbing systems or water fittings must satisfy the Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2009. This is the responsibility of the owners, occupiers and plumbers carrying out the work. We have a guidance leaflet on the Water Fittings Regulations available on our website or by phoning Waterline.

7.11 Our Promises

- We will provide advice on building near a water main or sewer.
- We will move your meter, if possible, if you need to carry out works that affect it. There will be a cost depending on the work required.
- If you need your meter moved to meet your needs as a customer with a disability, we will do this for free, if it is possible.
- We will close your account if you are moving, providing you give us two days' notice.
- We will disconnect your supply at no charge if you ask us in writing, but there will be a charge for reconnection.
- We will provide advice on compliance with the Water Fittings Regulations.
- If you want to use automatic meter reading equipment on our meter we will discuss this with you.

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Billing Line
03457 770030



8 Water Efficiency

Having a water meter fitted means that your charges are directly related to the amount of water you use.

Metering encourages a greater awareness of the water that you use and can help you to use it more efficiently and budget for your bill.

It is worth noting that a dripping tap can waste up to 30 litres of water a day! That could cost you over £25 per year on your bill.

For most businesses toilet and urinal flushing typically make up 63% of water use, so improvements in the efficiency of plumbing devices will significantly reduce the amount of water wasted. Below are some ways of making your plumbing appliances more efficient.

Taps

- Fix dripping taps and encourage employees not to leave taps running.
- Fit tap aerators or spray heads.
- Fit self closing, push or infrared operated taps.

WCs

- Check that water is not running into the bowl between flushes.
- Check that overflows are not running.
- Replace older cisterns with smaller modern ones or fit a HIPPO bag to reduce water use. HIPPO bags are available free from NI Water.
- Retrofit toilets with dual flush system.

Urinals

- Adjust the time between flushes.
- Switch urinals off when your business is closed.
- Use a motion sensor so urinals only flush when used e.g. not at night time.
- Waterless urinals are another option, but remember that they do need maintenance.

Showers

- Fit push buttons to showers.
- Fit aerating shower heads.
- Use a shower timer to increase awareness of usage.

For more tips on water efficiency please see our Water Efficiency Advice For Business Customers leaflet available on www.niwater.com or by phoning us on Waterline.

9 What to do if you are not happy with our services

We are committed to giving you the service you expect, all day, every day.

If you are disappointed with our service, we want to hear from you. This gives us the chance to put things right for you and make improvements so that other customers may benefit.

Our contact details are:



Northern Ireland Water

PO Box 1026
Belfast,
BT1 9DJ



Email: waterline@niwater.com



Fax: 028 9016 8002



Phone Waterline: 03457 440088



Phone Billing Line: 03457 770030



Website: www.niwater.com

You can ask for a free copy of our complaints procedure or you can download it from www.niwater.com

9.1 Our promises

Answering your questions

- When you call we will answer the phone within 30 seconds
- If you phone us we will try to deal with your questions straight away
- If you write to us we will reply within 10 working days
- If we need to investigate your complaint we will explain what we need to do and we will write to you within 10 working days.

Keeping appointments

- When we make an appointment with you we will tell you whether we will visit before or after 1pm.
- We will try to keep all appointments. If we need to cancel or change an appointment, we will give you at least 24 hours' notice.
- If an emergency stops us from keeping an appointment, we will try to let you know.

9.2 Independent help and advice from the Consumer Council

If you remain unhappy with how we initially dealt with your complaint or would like free, independent advice, you can contact the Consumer Council. The Consumer Council has the power to act on your behalf and investigate your complaint about our services; they can provide assistance if you need help when making a complaint.



Consumer Council

Floor 3, Seatem House
28-32 Alfred Street,
Belfast, BT2 8EN



Phone: 0800 121 6022



Text Relay Service: 028 9025 1600



Fax: 028 9025 1663



Email: contact@consumercouncil.org.uk



Website: www.consumercouncil.org.uk



9.3 Further information

This leaflet is part of a set of leaflets about our codes of practice. These leaflets give you information about us and our services. All our codes are approved by the Utility Regulator. The other leaflets in the set include the following:

- ‘Sewerage services for domestic customers’ – provides information about the sewerage system, who is responsible for pipework, flooded sewers, new connections and our right to enter your property.
- ‘Dealing with leaks’ – provides information on leaks and who owns pipes.
- ‘Our complaints procedure’ – provides information on who to contact and how we will manage your complaint.
- ‘Customer Care Register’ – provides information on a range of free services we offer customers with particular needs.

We also offer a range of other leaflets, including ‘Using Water Wisely’ and ‘Lead in Drinking Water’.

To obtain any of the free leaflets shown above please visit www.niwater.com or phone Waterline.

9.4 Other useful contacts

Our Regulator

The Utility Regulator is the independent non-ministerial government department responsible for regulating NI Water.



The Utility Regulator

Queens House
14 Queen Street
Belfast, BT1 6ED



Phone: 028 9031 1575



Fax: 028 9031 1740



Email: info@uregni.gov.uk



Website: www.uregni.gov.uk



Northern Ireland Water

PO Box 1026
Belfast
BT1 9DJ



Leakline: 08000 282011



Waterline: 03457 440088



Text Relay Service: 03457 440088



Email: waterline@niwater.com



Website: www.niwater.com

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