

# 1 Code of Practice for Domestic Customers



It is a regulatory requirement for us to publish a Code of Practice for Domestic Customers, providing a comprehensive guide to the services offered by the Company. Our Code of Practice is made up of a suite of leaflets which are listed at the end of this Fact Sheet (also available on our website). This Fact Sheet incorporates some more general information on how we operate as part of the UK Water Industry.

## Your water company and other relevant organisations

SES Water was founded in 1862. Today, the company supplies water to about 650,000 people living and working in an area of more than 830 square kilometres. We provide water supply services through a licence granted by the Secretary of State under the Water Industry Act 1991.

There are a number of organisations whose job it is to regulate the water industry.

**Water Services Regulation Authority (Ofwat)** is the independent body responsible for the economic regulation of the Water Industry in England and Wales. One of its duties is to protect the interests of customers. It must make sure that we comply with the conditions of our licence. These conditions include: restrictions on the overall increases we can make in our charges; controls on the levels of service we must provide; requirements about the information we must give our customers.

Ofwat can be contacted on 0121 644 7500.

**Consumer Council for Water (CCWater)** is an independent organisation that represents customers' interests and deals with their complaints. CCWater is set up on a regional basis with 10 separate offices around the country. Our region is known as Consumer Council for Water London & South East Region and its address is:

1st Floor,  
Victoria Square House,  
Victoria Square,  
Birmingham, B2 4AJ  
Tel: 0207 931 8502 Minicom: 0121 625 1442  
email: londonandsoutheast@ccwater.org.uk  
Web site: www.ccwater.org.uk

Each regional office has a committee whose job is to review any matters that may affect your interests as a customer.

One of its duties is to investigate complaints. If the committee is unhappy with our response to its conclusions, it will refer the complaint to Ofwat.

The **Environment Agency (EA)** determines how much water we can take from boreholes, rivers, and other sources. It also regulates the condition in which it is returned to the rivers after it has been used and treated.

The EA is divided into eight regions. Our area is in the Thames Region.

**The Secretary of State for the Environment** controls some important areas of our work. In particular, setting the quality standards for drinking water, which include the European Union's requirements, and is responsible for

# 2 Code of Practice for Domestic Customers



ensuring we comply with those standards. This work is done through the **Drinking Water Inspectorate (DWI)**, which carries out water quality audits on all undertakings and publishes an annual report of the results.

The **Environmental Health Officer (EHO)** of your local council also has a responsibility for the quality and health issues arising from the use of water.

## Solving Disputes

Under the Water Industry Act 1991 either we or you can refer certain disputes to Ofwat for determination. Their address is:

Centre City Tower,  
7 Hill Street,  
Birmingham, B5 4UA

Disputes which can be referred to Ofwat are as follows:

- a customer's right to a payment or credit under the Guaranteed Standards Scheme;
- the charges and conditions set by a company for making connections to water mains;
- the terms and conditions for a non-domestic supply;
- the need for a customer's property to have a separate service pipe;
- the charges and conditions for providing a water main (requisition);
- the terms and conditions for the adoption of a self-laid main; and

- a refusal to allow a customer to pay by measured charge because a meter is not practical or is unreasonably expensive to install.

The Water Industry Act, 1991 also gives you the right, in certain circumstances, to take legal proceedings against us, for any loss or damage caused to you by our failing to comply with certain of our duties under the Act.

## Water Industry Redress Scheme

If your complaint remains unresolved after it has gone through all the stages of our complaints procedure and has been reviewed by CCWater, you may be eligible to take your concerns to WATRS, the Water Industry Redress Scheme who can provide an independent binding decision. Details on how and when to apply can be found at [www.watrs.org](http://www.watrs.org) and their address is:

WATRS  
International Dispute Resolution Centre  
70 Fleet Street  
London  
EC4Y 1EU

As a subscriber to the Water Industry Redress Scheme, SES Water has committed to comply with the **WATRS Code of Conduct** as follows:

- Provide ADR free of charge to customers
- Support the principles set out in the ADR specification
- Respect the independence of the ADR Service Provider

# 3 Code of Practice for Domestic Customers



- To be bound by the decision of the ADR adjudicator if accepted by the customer and to implement the decision as required by the Scheme Rules.
- To co-operate with and have due regard to the recommendations of the ADR Panel
- To provide accurate and reliable information to and co-operate with the ADR adjudicators.

Advice on the applicability of particular disputes to the Water Redress Scheme can be obtained from the company or, alternatively, from CC Water.

## Water Quantity

Supplies will be sufficient to meet reasonable demand at all times, subject only to unavoidable emergencies and essential maintenance work.

We are obliged to provide you with enough water for normal domestic purposes: that is, drinking, washing, cooking, central heating, sanitation, watering the garden and washing the car (but not with a hosepipe). However, under normal conditions, we aim to ensure that you will have enough water for 'non-essential' usage too.

Non-essential usage (such as using a hosepipe or sprinkler in your garden) may have to be restricted occasionally depending on the amount of water the system can supply, and the amount that our resources can prudently meet. Our pipes, pumps and treated water reservoirs are all designed to satisfy

normal levels of peak demand when an average level of resources is available. Providing more than this would mean higher costs and this extra capacity would be lying idle most of the time. Therefore, at times of exceptionally high demand, or exceptionally low resources, we may have to restrict the use of hosepipes for garden watering, car washing, etc., so that everyone can receive adequate supplies for essential purposes.

We plan that such restrictions should not be necessary for more than one year in ten. Continuing work on resource development and demand management is designed to ensure that resources are entirely adequate until the year 2035, given average winter rainfall. (Remember that you can still water your garden when hosepipe restrictions apply by using watering cans.) Rebates will not be made in respect of restrictions as the hosepipe facility is provided at no extra charge to unmeasured customers. Customers supplied by meter pay on the basis of use and therefore no rebate would be payable.

In the kind of exceptional drought conditions that occur on average once every 100 years, standpipes may need to be used.

## Water Pressure

We aim to supply all our customers with a minimum water pressure of 10 metres (approximately 1 bar) at the boundary of their property. This pressure at the boundary stopcock ordinarily means that water will rise and fill a storage tank at second floor roof

# 4 Code of Practice for Domestic Customers



level. The minimum flow at the cold water tap in the ground floor kitchen will be 9 litres per minute - equivalent to filling a one-gallon bucket in 30 seconds with all other taps and appliances turned off.

Pressure and flow rates in your home can be affected by a number of factors including:

- the height of the property above the water main and its height relevant to the local service reservoir;
- the condition, size and length of the service pipe;
- whether the property shares a service pipe with other properties;
- peak demand conditions.

If you think that your water pressure is too low, we will come and investigate the situation. This service is free of charge during normal working hours. Contact our Customer Services team. If the cause is our responsibility, we will take appropriate action. If it is not our responsibility, we will tell you what you need to do.

## Other information included in our Code of Practice:

Please refer to the following Leaflets and Fact Sheets for further information on all other aspects of our service:

- [Charges scheme](#)
- [Water quality report](#)
- [Leakage code of practice](#)

- [Every drop counts](#)
- [Having a water meter fitted](#)
- [Change of occupancy metering](#)

Our fact sheets :

- [Making a complaint](#)
- [Debt](#)
- [Moving property](#)
- [Special services](#)
- [WaterSure](#)
- [Water Support](#)

Office Opening Hours:  
Monday – Friday : 8:00am to 6.00pm

water fact sheet

For further information contact the Customer Services team at  
SES Water, London Road, Redhill RH1 1LJ