

1 Change of occupancy metering scheme

By 2025, we'll be installing meters for the 40 per cent of our customers who don't already have one. Our main metering programme will be getting underway from April 2021. In the meantime, our policy is to install a water meter in household properties when there is a change of occupier, as long as this is practical. We do not charge for the installation.

This factsheet explains more, including answers to the questions our customers ask most frequently.

Which properties are included in the Change of occupancy metering scheme?

Any unmeasured household property within the area designated by SES Water for metering that has had a change in occupier. This includes tenanted as well as owner-occupied properties. We will carry out a survey to confirm whether the property you occupy is suitable for having a meter. If not, we'll move you to an Assessed Charge, reflecting the estimated amount of water used in a property during one year, based on the number of bedrooms and the number of people living there. Please visit www.seswater.co.uk/charges for more details

What legal powers do we have to install a meter?

The Government supports the need for water meters. Our powers are defined in the Water Industry Act 1991, as amended by the Water Industry Act 1999. We are allowed to enter on to your land provided we give you seven days' notice.

Where are meters fitted?

We normally fit them in the road just outside your property boundary. If this is not possible, we will consider alternatives such as a meter within the property. Any meter fitted under the scheme remains the property of the Company.

When will the meter be installed?

The installation should be completed within 12 weeks of the date we are made aware there is a change in occupier. In the meantime, you will not receive a bill. Once your meter has been installed, we will open an account and include in your first bill a charge to cover usage from the date of occupation to the date the meter is installed.

What if I am a tenant?

You should inform your landlord and give them this fact sheet or ask them to contact us.

Will I save money?

This depends on how much you currently pay, how many people live in your property and how water efficient you are. The table below is a guide to how much water is used by different household sizes during a year:

People	1	2	3	4	5	6
High use	75	136	180	225	270	300
Typical use	63	110	148	185	220	245
Efficient use	44	68	92	120	142	165

Figures in cubic metres (equal to 1000 litres)

With a meter you can control the size of your bill and help protect the environment as you are more aware of the water you use. The best way to find out how much water you use and how much this will cost is to complete our Water Usage Calculator at www.seswater.co.uk/calculator. You can also order free water saving devices to help keep your water and energy bills under control.

How will I be billed?

We will read your meter every six months and send you a bill twice a year. As well as your metered charges, you will be billed a 'standing charge', a fixed amount that

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each household pays to cover costs such as maintenance. The standing charge is payable in advance and consumption in arrears. We offer a number of payment options, including regular monthly payments.

Can I read the meter myself?

Most are fitted in an underground box that includes the principal stopcock. You can read it by opening the lid. The red figures are not used for billing as they represent less than one cubic metre. For example, a reading of 000432189 is 43.2189 cubic metres and we record 43 cubic metres.

What happens if I have a leak?

It's a good idea to check for any leaks in your property once you've moved in. This could include dripping taps, faulty tank overflows, leaking toilets or a leak on your underground pipework.

We check for leaks when the meter is installed. If the meter is moving when it is first fitted we will contact you. If it is due to a leak on your underground supply pipe you may be able to have it repaired free of charge under our Free Leak Detection and Repair Scheme.

The best way to check for leaks is to check your plumbing regularly and check your bills for any unexplained increase. Remember, you are responsible for all pipes and fittings within your property boundary – you should find the route of your water supply pipe on your property deeds. We are responsible for the pipes laid in the public highway.

How accurate is the meter?

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

Can I revert to an unmetered supply?

No, this is not possible under this scheme. Plus, by 2025, we'll be installing water meters for our customers that don't already have them.

What about sewerage charges?

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

Electrical earthing in older buildings

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

Contact Us

Our Customer Services Team is available on 01737 772000 or you can tweet @SESWater.

You can also email meterenquiries@seswater.co.uk and visit www.seswater.co.uk

Office Opening Hours:
Monday – Friday : 8am to 6pm