

1 Water meters – go smart!



A water meter is a simple device fitted to the water service pipe that records how much water is used at a property. However, with new technology we are now fitting meters which are much more advanced. This factsheet gives you information to decide if having a ‘smart’ meter would benefit your household.

With a standard water meter we usually take a reading every six months. This means we can only provide you with information on your water usage months after it has occurred.

In contrast, smart water meters can accurately measure, record and transmit water consumption virtually in real-time. This allows you to understand and monitor your water usage, as well as helping us manage our network (e.g. pinpoint leaks more easily) and provide better customer service.

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

Benefits of smart metering

Smart water meters benefit both water users and the environment: increased accuracy allows us to manage consumption, improve billing information, and helps us manage our water resources more sustainably.

- 1) Manage usage** – smart meters can track consumption on an hourly or daily basis. This means you can see how much you are using and compare this to how much you have used in the past. This helps to

understand which actions lead to the greatest amount of water being used. This feedback encourages lower water usage and less wastage. Trials of smart meters in other areas have shown a reduction in consumption of 7%.

- 2) Accurate bills** – charges will be based on the readings we receive on a daily basis, although you will still be billed as normal – usually every six months. We can alert you if your bill is higher than normal – which may indicate a leak.
- 3) Remote real-time data collection** – less need to visit properties to read meters manually.
- 4) Better understanding of water demand** – smart meter data, alongside data from our network meters, allows us to manage and predict demand more accurately. This helps us to prioritise new investments in the future.

Will I save money on a meter?

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)

For further information contact the Customer Services team at SES Water. London Road, Redhill RH1 1LJ
Tel 01737 772000 or Fax 01737 766807 www.seswater.co.uk

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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.

To work out what your bill would be if you were metered, multiply your expected water use in the below table by the cost per cubic metre of water. As well as your metered charges, you will be billed a 'standing charge', a fixed amount that each household pays to cover costs such as maintenance. You can find our charges (including your cost per cubic metre) on our website seswater.co.uk/charges.

The best way to find out how much water you use and how much this will cost is to complete our calculator at seswater.co.uk/calculator. You can also order **free** water saving devices to help lower your water and energy bills.

How is water typically used in the home?

| Type of Use | Cubic Metres | Litres |
|-----------------|--------------|--------|
| Bath | 0.1 | 100 |
| Shower | 0.06 | 60 |
| Toilet | 0.007 | 7 |
| Washing machine | 0.055 | 55 |
| Dishwasher | 0.018 | 18 |
| Hose (per hour) | 1 | 1000 |

Each cubic metre is equivalent to:

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

To find out how you can save water and money go to seswater.co.uk/saving or speak to one of our Customer Services team.

Where are meters fitted?

We normally fit them in the footpath just outside your property boundary, if this is not possible, we try to fit the meter inside your home.

Minor alterations may need to be carried out to the external pipework or internal plumbing (we do not charge for this). If you are a tenant, you should discuss this with your landlord. All meters remain the property of the Company.

When will the meter be installed?

We aim to install every meter within 10 weeks of your application. If it takes longer, and this is our fault, metered charges will be calculated and applied retrospectively. If you would like to be kept informed of the progress of your application, we offer a free text and email notification service.

What happens if a meter cannot be installed?

If it's not possible, we can offer a fixed charge known as the Assessed Household Charge which can be applied if it's cheaper than your current tariff. We cannot offer this if you use water for garden watering or a swimming pool.

If you are not happy with any decision we make, you can contact our regulator Ofwat.

When will my meter be replaced?

The smart meters we are currently fitting will need to be replaced after 12 months. The meters they would be replaced by would then last for 10 to 15 years, depending on consumption.

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Can I change my mind?

From April 2020 newly metered customers will no longer be able to switch back to an unmeasured tariff. We are starting a universal metering programme in late 2020, and will be switching most unmetered customers to a metered bill by 2025.

Can I read the meter myself?

Most meters are fitted in an underground box near the property boundary that includes the principal stopcock. You can read it by opening the lid – it is a digital display showing the number of cubic metres of water used.

How accurate are smart meters?

Smart meters are very accurate and are designed not to over-record consumption. Readings are taken every hour but only uploaded as total consumption every 24 hours. If you ask for an accuracy test, we can arrange this, but if it is found to be operating within the normal tolerance range you will be charged the cost of the test.

What happens if I have a leak?

We recommend you check for any leaks in your property before having a meter fitted. This could include dripping taps, faulty tank overflows, leaking toilets or a leak on your underground pipework.

If the meter registers consumption 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. If it is due to a leak internally, we have a free home visit service where a technician will review all fixtures and fittings and fix small leaks for free, along with receiving a tailored water and energy efficiency report.

The best way to avoid leaks is to check your plumbing regularly and check your usage for any unexplained increase. Smart water meters have a leak alarm and will notify you if there is a constant flow of more than six litres per hour over 24 hours.

Remember, you (or your landlord) are responsible for all pipes and fittings within your property boundary. We are responsible for the pipes laid in the public highway. In some cases, the water supply pipe can be shared between neighbours, in which case parts of the pipework are jointly owned. Also, some customers are responsible for pipes under land that they do not own. The route of your water supply pipe can be found on your property deeds.

How will I be billed?

We send you a bill twice a year based on your consumption plus the standing charge. The standing charge is payable in advance and consumption in arrears. We offer a number of payment options, including regular monthly payments.

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

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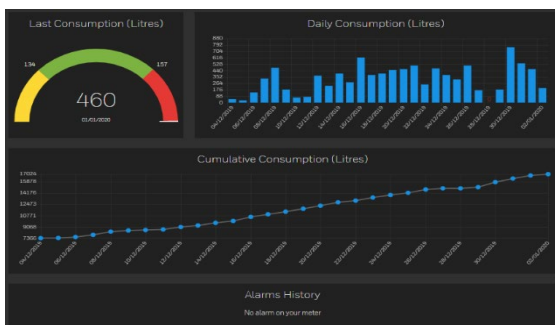
sewerage charge, the company concerned (either Southern Water or Thames Water, depending on your location) takes into account that not all the water supplied will be returned to the public sewer. If you believe that in your case considerably more than the average amount of water is not returned to the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

Electrical earthing in older buildings

If your property was built before 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 an electrician who may recommend checking your earthing. We will not reimburse this cost as it is an essential safety requirement of the owner. We do not accept any liability as a result of using a water pipe as an electrical earth.

How do I view my data?

The meter data can be viewed through a secure portal available on any smart device. An example of this dashboard is shown below:



(exact portal design is subject to change)

Consumption data can be viewed by year, month, day or the last 30 hours. Average consumption can also be calculated based on

the number of occupants at the property. This figure can then be compared to the average in our supply area, so you can compare yourself with other similar households.

How secure is my data?

Data is transmitted securely through the mobile phone network – no Wi-Fi access is required. Access to devices and the data we collect is strictly limited. Specific protocols and high security standards, such as encrypted transmission or anti-tampering countermeasures, will ensure the security of smart water meter data and prevent unauthorised access.

Will personal data be protected?

High security standards will also ensure protection of users' data, including both personal and consumption data.

How to apply

If you have not yet applied, the quickest way is to go online at seswater.co.uk/meter. You can tick the relevant box if you are interested in having a smart meter. Alternatively, call our Customer Services team and we can take your application by phone or we can send you a form to return by post.

Contact Us

Our Metering Team is available on 01737 772000. Alternatively, you can email <mailto:oneteammetering@seswater.co.uk>.

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

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