



Your guide to  
**Household Water Metering**  
2012/13



South Staffs Water

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# 1. Introduction

If we all use water wisely, we can help reduce the amount taken from rivers and underground sources.

Unmetered charges for water are based on the rateable value (RV) of your property. As an alternative you can have a meter installed so that future bills are based upon the amount of water you actually use, rather than the size or location of your property.

If you choose to have a meter fitted you not only benefit the environment by being more aware of how much water you use, but it may also help to reduce your water bill.

This guide will help you to decide whether to apply for a meter to be fitted. Please read it thoroughly to ensure you understand the conditions of fitting and service you can expect.

**Newly built homes are all automatically metered.**

**It is compulsory to have a water meter fitted in cases where a substantial amount of water would be used, over and above that of a normal household. These cases are:**

- **If you use a garden sprinkler.**
- **If you leave a hosepipe running unattended.**
- **If you have a swimming pool or garden pond with a capacity greater than 10,000 litres.**

## 2. Will I save money?

The following tables might help you decide whether you could benefit from having a meter installed. They should only be used as a guide because water use can vary considerably between households and the figures are based on a semi-detached property. It is worth remembering that power showers use a lot more water than ordinary showers and can use as much water as a bath.

### Do not underestimate the amount you use.

Annual Water Use: <b>Low</b>	Prefer showers. Few/no baths. Little/low use of washing machine. Little/no garden watering.					
<b>No. in household</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Amount used (m<sup>3</sup>)</b>	33m <sup>3</sup>	61m <sup>3</sup>	89m <sup>3</sup>	117m <sup>3</sup>	144m <sup>3</sup>	172m <sup>3</sup>
<b>Estimated Metered Charge:</b>	£167.75	£221.32	£274.88	£328.45	£380.11	£433.68

Annual Water Use: <b>Average</b>	Daily baths/showers. Regular use of washing machine and dishwasher. Occasional use of hosepipe.					
<b>No. in household</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Amount used (m<sup>3</sup>)</b>	76m <sup>3</sup>	117m <sup>3</sup>	159m <sup>3</sup>	200m <sup>3</sup>	242m <sup>3</sup>	283m <sup>3</sup>
<b>Estimated Metered Charge:</b>	£250.01	£328.45	£408.81	£487.25	£567.60	£646.05

Annual Water Use: <b>High</b>	Daily baths. Heavy use of washing machine. Daily use of dishwasher. Extensive use of sprinkler or hosepipe.					
<b>No. in household</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Amount used (m<sup>3</sup>)</b>	97m <sup>3</sup>	142m <sup>3</sup>	190m <sup>3</sup>	239m <sup>3</sup>	288m <sup>3</sup>	338m <sup>3</sup>
<b>Estimated Metered Charge:</b>	£290.19	£376.28	£468.12	£561.86	£655.61	£751.28

1m<sup>3</sup> = one cubic metre = 1000 litres (220 gallons)

You can use the following table to compare your estimated metered charge to your current charges:

<b>Estimated Metered Charge:</b>	
<b>Unmetered Charge:</b>	
<b>Difference:</b>	

The following information may also help you calculate your water use more accurately:

Bath .....	80 litres per bath	Dishwasher .....	42 litres per load
Shower .....	45 litres per shower	Flushing the toilet.	7.5 litres per flush
Washing machine..	85 litres per load	Sprinkler/hose .....	540 litres per hour

This information can also be found on our website, [www.south-staffs-water.co.uk](http://www.south-staffs-water.co.uk)

### 3. How will my charges be calculated?

The charges for metered water consist of five elements:

- **Chargeable volume of water** relates to the usage of water registered through the meter.

Current charge = £0.9912 pence per cubic metre

- **Water standing charge** relates to the size of the meter and covers the cost of reading, billing, maintaining and, in due course, replacing the meter.

Current charge = £32.21 per annum

- **Sewerage** relates to volume of water registered through the meter. It is assumed that the volume of 'water in' equals the volume of 'water out'.

Current charge = £0.9220 pence per cubic metre

- **Sewerage standing charge** relates to the costs incurred by Severn Trent Water not attributable to the consumption registered through the meter.

Current charge = £12.88 per annum

- **Surface water drainage charge** relates to removal and treatment of the water that falls as rain onto roofs, yards and other parts of the property. This is an annual charge based on the property type:

Current charge =

Terrace/Flat .....£29.70

Semi-detached .....£59.52

Detached .....£89.21

**Sewerage and surface water drainage charges are collected by South Staffs Water on behalf of Severn Trent Water.**

## 4. Where will the meter be installed?

### External meter and chamber

Our policy is to locate the meter externally at the boundary of your home, where our existing main stop tap (MST) is located either on the footpath or just within the boundary of your property.

Sometimes it's not possible to install an external meter, usually due to shared supplies. In these circumstances we will carry out a survey to fit the meter inside, where the supply first enters the property. If your property has more than one point of entry, no more than two meters will be fitted. Should two meters need to be fitted there will be a charge of £100 + VAT for the second fit. This fee is payable before the meter is fitted.

## 5. How much will it cost?

Normally the meter will be fitted **free of charge**, as long as the meter is fitted in one of our preferred locations and the work can be carried out practically and at reasonable expense. We may refuse to fit a meter free of charge where:

- You have a shared service with one or more properties. If this is the case, you can apply to have a separate supply. To find out more visit Supply Responsibility section on our website - [www.south-staffs-water.co.uk](http://www.south-staffs-water.co.uk).
- The dwelling is a flat with separate hot and cold water supplies.
- Substantial alterations to the existing plumbing and/or joinery would be needed before it could be installed.
- You ask to have the meter in a location other than the one determined by our representative.
- If your home has two points of entry, two meters will need to be fitted. The cost of installing the additional meter(s) is not included and would have to be paid for by yourself, this is £100 + VAT per meter. This charge will need to be paid before the meters are fitted. You will be contacted should this apply to you.

### Rented accommodation

If you live in a rented property you can still have a meter fitted, free of charge, subject to conditions. You must let your landlord know that you have asked us for a meter.

**If your tenancy is for less than six months, you must obtain your landlord's written permission before applying, a copy of which must be submitted with the application form.**

## 6. Conditions of meter fit

Sometimes you may need to carry out work prior to a meter being fitted. These would have to be undertaken by you and at your cost. These may include:

- Structural or major pipework alterations
- Extensive joinery requirements – for example, the complete removal and replacement of kitchen units
- The disconnection and repositioning of gas appliances
- The repair or replacement of defective internal stop taps
- Tiling or redecoration
- The repair of any leaks found on faulty fittings or a private supply pipe
- The replanting or landscaping of garden areas
- If it is necessary to excavate your driveway, footpath or patio, our contractor will ensure the area is made safe after fitting the meter. The permanent reinstatement of any disturbed area is at your own expense.

## 7. What if you cannot install a meter?

If the initial survey shows that a meter cannot be fitted in our preferred location at reasonable cost, we will offer you the alternative of paying an assessed charge for your water and sewerage services. Assessed charges are based on your property type and not its rateable value. Current charges are listed in the table below. If your rateable value (RV) is lower than the assessed charge, then you would continue to be charged on the basis of RV.

	Assessed charge for water - £/pa	Assessed charge for sewerage - £/pa	Surface water drainage - £/pa
<b>Terrace/flat</b>	£126.08	£108.34	£29.70
<b>Semi-detached</b>	£175.58	£123.31	£59.52
<b>Detached</b>	£222.47	£144.47	£89.21
<b>Single Person*</b>	£111.24	£64.54	Applicable property type charge, as above

**Where a meter can be fitted at reasonable cost, or where you refuse to pay any additional costs for the installation in an alternative location, the assessed charge will not be offered. The charges will continue to be based on the rateable value of your home.**

\* Proof of single occupancy will be required i.e. council tax bill.

## 8. How do I apply for a meter?

If you wish to have a meter fitted please complete the application form, in full, at the back of this guide and send it to:

**South Staffs Water, PO Box 63, Walsall, WS2 7PJ**

If you need help completing your application form, please ring us on:

**0845 45 67 063** and select **Option 1**.

Or, if you have already applied to have a water meter fitted and would like to know how your application is progressing, please ring us on:

**0845 45 67 063** and select **Option 2**.

Opening hours are 8am to 5pm, Monday to Friday.

### **How long will it take?**

Confirmation of your application will be made within five working days.

Our contractor will telephone you to arrange an appointment to carry out the initial survey. If we cannot contact you by telephone, our contractor will write or email asking you to contact them to arrange an appointment. If our contractor is unable to contact you within 21 days of your application being received, your application will be cancelled.

We aim to carry out the survey and fit your meter within three months of the application being received. Where possible we will install the meter during the initial survey. If it is not possible we will arrange another visit. The survey can take around one hour and the installation two to three hours dependent on the work required.

**Important: If you have to cancel your appointment, please let us know as soon as possible on 0845 45 67 063. If you fail to keep to the allocated appointment slot, we will charge you £50 + VAT.**

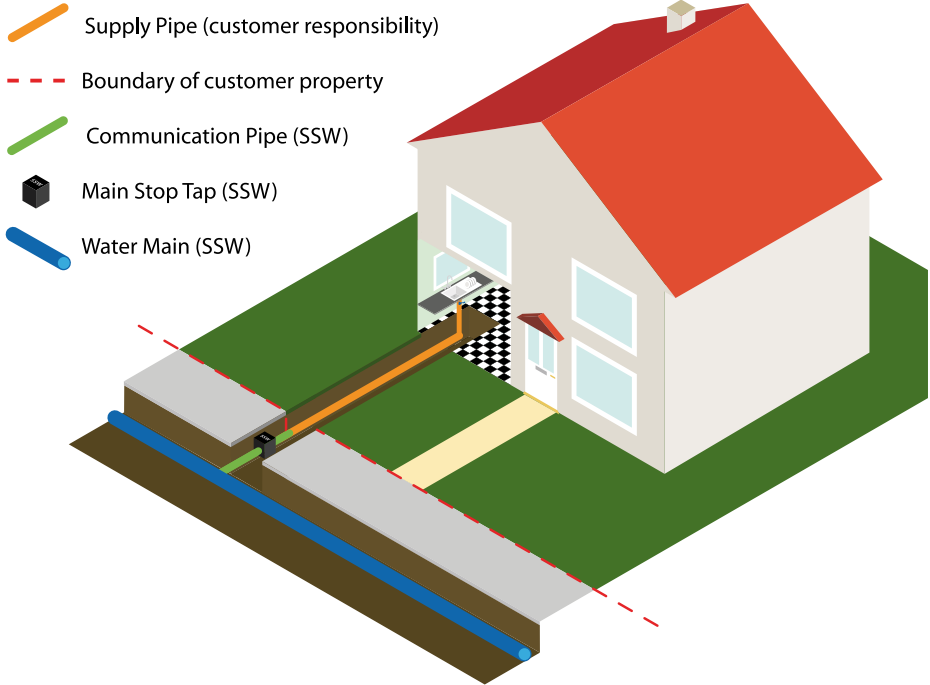
If it is necessary to install a meter chamber, then this will be completed on a separate visit. We may need access to the outside of your property, however, it may not be necessary for you to be present.

**We aim to update your account within one month of the meter being fitted. It is important that you continue to pay your unmetered bills during this time. Once completed any over or underpayment will be refunded or billed accordingly.**

## 9. Any things I should consider?

### Leaks

Water is delivered to your home from the water main by a supply pipe. You are responsible for this section of pipework (orange) from the boundary of your property and including all internal plumbing as shown in the diagram:



If a leak should occur on the supply pipe, dependent on the location of the meter, you may be charged for the excess consumption. The home owner is responsible for the repair and maintenance of this pipework.

Although the supply pipe of a property is the owner's responsibility, you may qualify for a free leak repair. This scheme is subject to terms and conditions. Visit our website [www.south-staffs-water.co.uk](http://www.south-staffs-water.co.uk) or contact us on **0800 389 1011** for more information.

**If you have a leak on any above ground pipe or fitting, you must contact a plumber for assistance. A meter will not be installed until repairs have been carried out.**

### **Do I need to do anything at my property?**

If it is possible to fit the meter outside at the boundary of your home you will need to take no further action. Where this is not possible we will carry out a survey to see if we can fit one inside. To do this we will need access to the internal stop tap where the supply first enters the property. Please note: Either you or a representative will need to be present for the initial survey.

### **Is your internal stop tap in good working order?**

If it is necessary to replace the internal stop tap, you will be informed of this before work begins. You will be responsible for the replacement.

**During the installation we will need to turn off your water supply. Please do not start a washing machine or dishwasher before the appointment is due.**

## **10. Can I change my mind?**

You can change your mind at any stage. You should notify us as soon as possible so your application can be cancelled. **Please telephone 0845 45 67 063, option 2.**

If, once the meter has been installed, you find that your bill is higher than your previous charges, then you can change back to charges based on the rateable value of the property. This must be received in writing within 12 months of the meter being installed, along with a meter reading. You will have to pay for the water registered through the meter up to the date of your request.

**Any additional charges you may have paid to carry out the meter installation will not be refunded.**

**Once the meter has been fitted it will NOT be removed even if you change back to paying by rateable value charges.**

**If you move into a property that has a meter fitted, you must pay the charges based on metered usage, even if the previous occupiers had changed back to rateable value.**

If you use a garden sprinkler, leave a hose pipe running unattended or have a pond or swimming pool with a capacity greater than 10,000 litres you will not be able to revert to the rateable value charges for your property.

## 11. What service can I expect?

If an appointment is necessary, we will offer one before or after 1pm. If we fail to keep to the appointed time, you will be entitled to a payment of £20.

**Please note, appointments will be between 8am and 5pm, Mondays to Fridays.**

- We will confirm receipt of your application within five working days.
- We aim to survey and fit within a maximum of three months.
- Your account will be amended within one month of the meter fit.

We provide a range of additional services if you require them, these include Braille and large print. To register or enquire about these, call **0845 60 70 456** or write to **South Staffs Water, Green Lane, Walsall, WS2 7PD.**

Please also visit our website, [www.south-staffs-water.co.uk](http://www.south-staffs-water.co.uk) for full details.

## 12. How do I know who is calling?

All our staff and contractors carry identification cards. They will always produce identification cards when calling at your home.

**Do not let anyone into your property without first checking their identification card. Any official caller will not mind taking the time to show you proof of their identity.**

In addition, we operate a password scheme which helps to safeguard against bogus callers. Only the relevant members of staff will know your password and they will use it when they telephone you or visit your home. To register for a password to be used only in conjunction with this application, please complete the password section on the application form. **This can be anything up to 8 letters.** As the application form will be sent back to us, you may wish to also write it here:

P	A	S	S	W	O	R	D
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**Remember to use it!**

**If you are still suspicious, you should call the police or contact Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.**



## 13. How do I read the meter?

Each billing year (1st April to 31st March) we will send you four bills, at least one of these will be based on our own reading, and the others will be estimated. We calculate daily water usage and multiply this by the number of days that the bill covers. If you receive an estimated bill you can provide us with an actual meter reading, either through our website [www.south-staffs-water.co.uk](http://www.south-staffs-water.co.uk) or by telephoning us on **0845 60 70 456**.

We recommend, where possible, that you read the meter regularly. It will help you monitor the amount of water you use and alert you to any leaks that may have developed on your pipework.

We only require the **black numbers** from your meter, these represent the cubic metres you've used. Please ignore the red digits.

We only advise you to read internal meters and even then, only when it's safe to do so. Meters that are fit externally under manhole covers should not be lifted without the correct equipment so if you need some help please call us on **0845 60 70 456**.

Below is a guide to reading the most commonly fitted water meter. On occasion it may be necessary to fit a different type of meter, if this is the case you will be shown how to read it when it is installed. Should you not be home at the time of the installation, please contact us and we will be happy to arrange a demonstration.



### Key

- 1 The unique meter serial number.
- 2 The current meter reading in cubic metres. The reading is the numbers in the black dials. The numbers in the red dials are for our reference only.

### Moving house

It is important to remember to let us know when you move house. When you vacate your property, please provide us with a reading and forwarding address on the day you move. We will then be able to send you a final bill. Please telephone our customer helpline on **0845 60 70 456**.

## 14. How do I pay my metered water bills?

- **Direct Debit – Easy and efficient!** Just call **0845 60 70 456** with your bank account details and we'll do the rest. We will send you a statement four times a year for your information. Following the meter installation we will ask you to pay £25.00 per month for the first 12 months until we are aware of your consumption. We can arrange to collect payments on either 1st, 14th or 21st of the month.
- **Pay Online** – E-Payment is a secure and convenient method of paying your water bill and is available 24 hours a day. Simply visit our website at: **[www.south-staffs-water.co.uk](http://www.south-staffs-water.co.uk)**
- **Pay by debit card/credit card – 0845 60 70 456.** Please note: Payments made by credit card will incur an administration charge.
- **At a bank** – this service is free at any branch of your own bank. Other banks may charge for this.
- **By post** – send to South Staffs Water, PO BOX 63, Walsall, WS2 7PJ. **Please do NOT send cash or post dated cheques. Receipts will NOT be issued.**
- **Post Office** – the Post Office will charge you for this service.
- **Paying by cash** – cash payments are processed **free of charge**. Simply take your bill and cash to any PayPoint outlet. You will be given a printed receipt as proof of payment.
- **Moneyway** – you can spread your bill by 12 months or 52 weeks. For more information call **08000 92 99 81**.

**Payments made at Post Offices can take 10 working days to reach us.**

**Please note: You must carry on paying your current unmetered water bill in the normal way until your account has been amended. Any over payment will be refunded. Any underpayment will be billed accordingly.**

Please tell us at once if you are finding it difficult to pay your bill. We have a number of payment options available. Simply call us on 0845 60 70 456. Remember that if you do not pay your water bill it may mean extra costs for you if we have to collect through court proceedings.

## 15. Application for a household water meter

So that we can process your application it is important that you complete the details in full. Failure to give us all the relevant information may delay your application.

Mr  Mrs  Miss  Ms  Other

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_

### Property details

Address of property to be metered if different from above:

\_\_\_\_\_

Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_

Customer Ref. UC

<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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This can be found on the top right hand side of your bill.

### Contact telephone numbers

In order to arrange your survey, please provide your contact details. Please tick preferred contact:

Home: \_\_\_\_\_

Work: \_\_\_\_\_

Mobile: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Please note that appointments will be between 8am and 5pm, Monday to Friday. Someone will need to be present for the initial survey.

For extra security, we also operate a 'password' scheme, so that you can be sure a caller is official. If you want to use a password please fill in the boxes - no more than 8 letters can be used.

P	A	S	S	W	O	R	D
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**We will use your chosen password when we telephone or visit you. Please remember to make a note of your password.**

Property No:

**Type of property** (where meter is required)

Flat  Terraced  Semi-Detached  Detached

Do you use a sprinkler or leave a hosepipe running unattended? Yes  No

Do you have a swimming pool/pond with a capacity greater than 10,000 litres? Yes  No

**Once the meter is installed how do you want to pay your future metered bills?**

**Direct Debit Monthly** - spreading the payments, making budgeting easier

Choose your payment date: 1st  14th  21st

**Direct Debit Quarterly** - when your bill is sent

Choose your payment date: 1st  14th  21st

**Monthly Payment Slips** - using cheque or cash and paying on due dates

**Cheque or Cash Quarterly** - when your bill is sent

How many people live in your property? \_\_\_\_\_

Are you the property owner? Yes  No

Is your tenancy agreement for 6 months or longer? Yes  No

If rented property please provide details of landlord/council/housing association:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**If no, please attach authority from your landlord agreeing to the meter installation.**

**Declaration**

I wish to have a meter installed at the property stated and agree to be bound by the Company's Household Water Metering conditions.

I understand that upon receipt of this application form you will contact me and arrange for a representative to carry out a survey which will determine whether or not a meter can be fitted, together with any additional charges which may apply.

**This application must be signed by the bill payer.**

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



South Staffs Water