



South Staffs Water

South Staffs Water  
Our Code of Practice for  
Household Customers 2023/24  
**Metering**



January 2023

# Our Code of Practice for Household

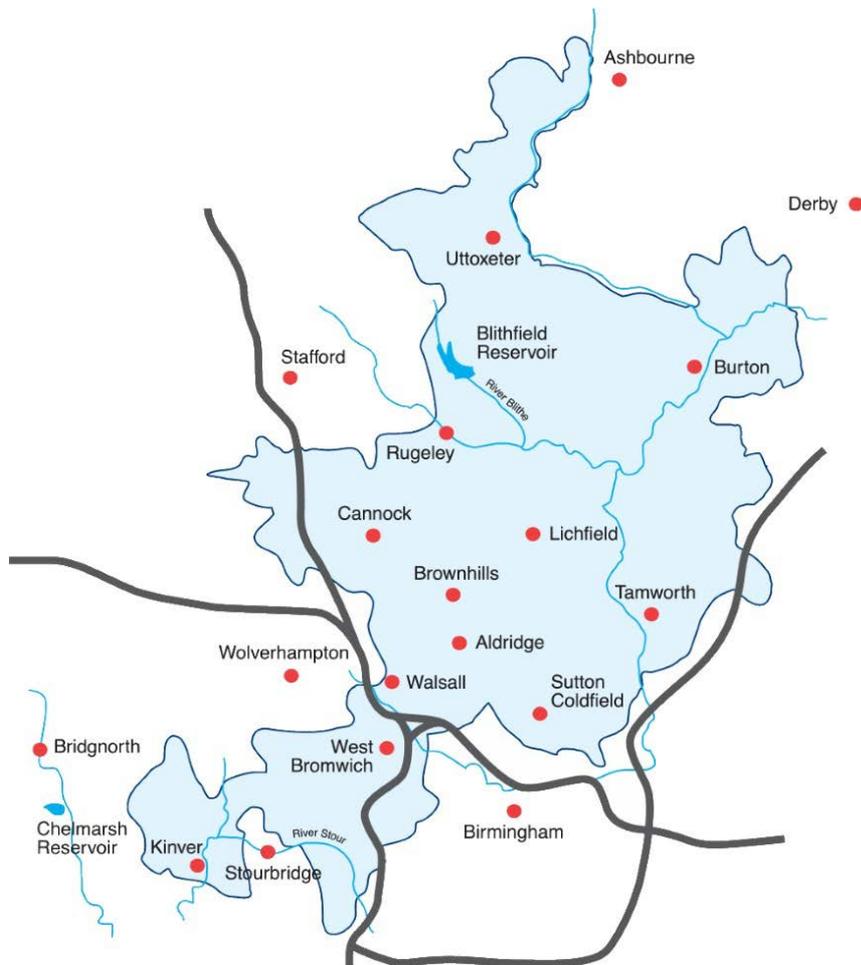
## Customers Introduction

### The Code

This Code of Practice is for household customers and gives information on the services we provide, the terms and conditions on which they are offered and how our customers can find the help and advice they need. It does not establish a contractual relationship between South Staffs Water Plc and any of its customers.

### South Staffs Water

South Staffs Water provides clean drinking water to a population of 1.3 million customers through a network of 6000km of water mains. Almost half of our water is sourced from boreholes in the ground and the remainder from two major treatment works one of which takes water from the River Severn. We have excellent service standards, have very efficient operations and our bills to customers are amongst the lowest in the country. Our area of supply incorporates the Black Country conurbation and stretches up to Burton and Uttoxeter. We do not supply sewerage services; our customers receive these from Severn Trent Water Ltd.



We provide an essential public service to our customers, enabling them to go about their daily lives while also protecting the environment that they rely on and enjoy.

How we perform as a business is important to our customers and other stakeholders, including our regulators and our owners. Because we want to demonstrate that we are accountable for our performance, we have developed a number of outcomes for the business. These are the promises we have made to our customers on the services they want us to deliver.

To ensure we maintain our customers' trust in us, it is vital that we deliver these promises. So we have developed 30 performance commitments, which are the areas our customers have said they want to hold us to account. We have worked with customers to set targets for each of these commitments so they can measure our performance and see how we are doing.



Further details of the measures that sit underneath these outcomes can be found on our website [www.south-staffs-water.co.uk](http://www.south-staffs-water.co.uk).

Throughout this Code there are references to useful information that can be found on our website.

**If you do not have access to the internet, please call us for any information you require and we will be happy to help.**

## Metering

It's generally considered fairer that we pay for the amount of water we actually use, rather than by a fixed amount, in the same way as we all pay for electricity and gas.

Water is a valuable resource and if we all use it wisely, we can do our bit to minimise waste and help reduce the amount taken from rivers and underground sources.

All houses built since 1st April 1990 are fitted with a water meter. If you have a meter, your charge is based on the water that's registered through it. Sewerage charges are also based on the water that's registered through the meter. For most customers, it's assumed that water going in to the property is equal to the water going out.

Properties built prior to this haven't been fitted with a meter and are billed for water based on rateable value. More information about our charges can be found on our website.

If you don't already have a meter, by opting to have one you not only benefit the environment by being more aware of your own use, but it may also help reduce your water bills.

You can find out whether or not you would be better off with a water meter by completing the water meter calculator which is available on our website [www.south-staffs-water.co.uk/water-meter](http://www.south-staffs-water.co.uk/water-meter).

Using less water can also help reduce your energy bills, as you can make savings on the cost of heating water up. Household customers can have a water meter installed free of charge where possible. You can apply on line by downloading the metering form from our website: [www.south-staffs-water.co.uk](http://www.south-staffs-water.co.uk) or contact us on 0345 45 67 063 for general advice about meters and to request a free survey to see if your property is suitable for a meter.

Meters are usually located in a box fitted into the public footpath outside your property boundary or inside the building on the incoming water pipe. There are a few occasions where, because of practical reasons, the meter is fitted elsewhere.

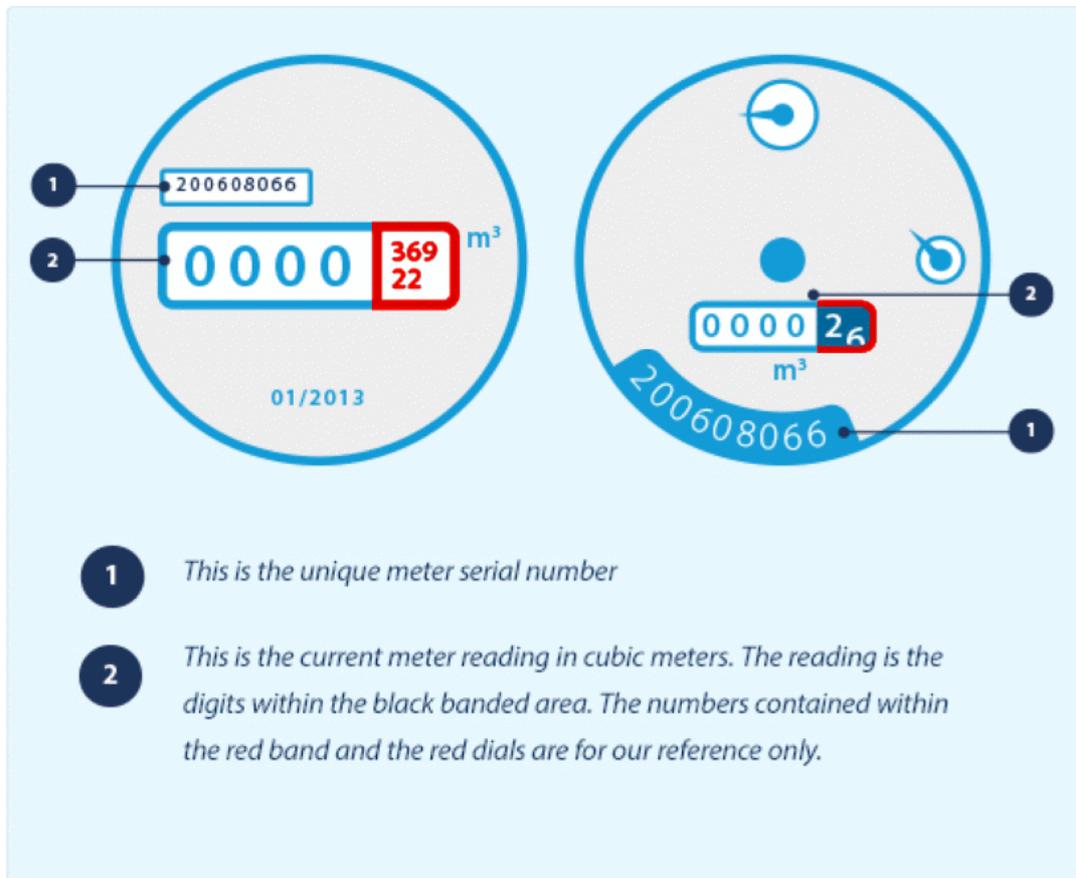
The box may have a metal or plastic lid and can usually be opened with household tools like a medium sized flat headed screwdriver. If you have any problems locating your external stop tap or opening the lid call us on 0800 389 10 11.

You can also contact us to:

- Give us a meter reading
- Tell us the meter has stopped working
- Have our meter moved – you need to let us know if for example you're having a new kitchen fitted and the meter would be in the way (you may be charged for this service)



How to read your meter –



The black numbers register the cubic metres of water you've used. Red numbers record fractions of a cubic metre you've used. It's a good idea to keep an eye on your meter readings in case you spot anything unusual which may mean there's a leak somewhere. If you think you have a leak you can use the meter to check this.

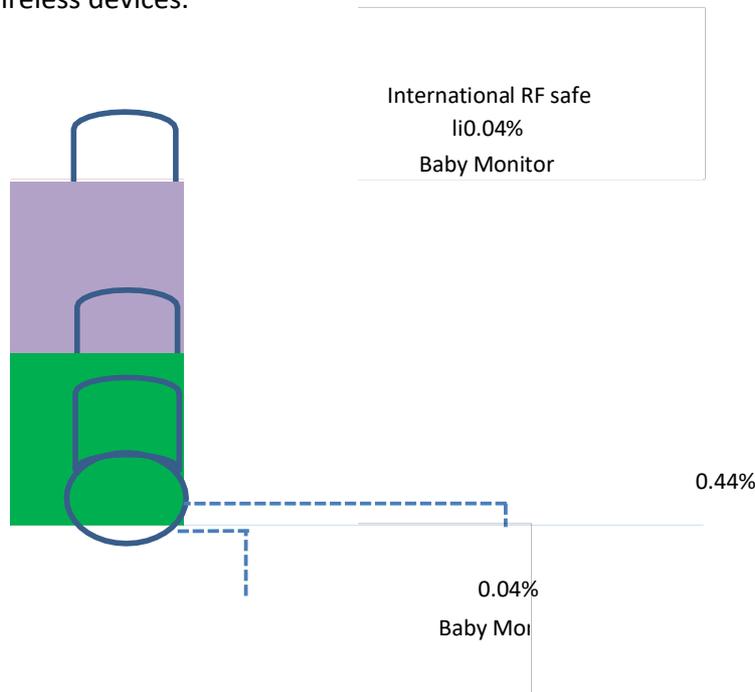
If you've received an estimated bill, or you're moving home --- you can sign up to My Account on our website, where you'll be able to enter your meter reading.

### Automatic Meter Reading (AMR)

When we install a new meter it will usually feature Automatic Meter Reading technology. In most situations this enables us to read the meter remotely without having to access your property or lift the meter box lid. The type of meters we use are different to the Energy Smart Meters now installed in many homes.

Our water meters are very safe when measured against international safety limits for radio wave energy. The International Commission for Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) is the independent body responsible for advising on non-ionizing radiation. ICNIRP has established scientific based safe limits on human exposure to radio frequency (RF) waves which have been recommended by the European Commission to its Member States.

RF waves are a form of electromagnetic energy and are present all around us, both from natural sources such as the sun and other stars, movement of the earth's crust and from man-made devices that utilise RF waves, such as microwave ovens, Wi-Fi Routers, cordless phones, 3G mobile phones and other wireless devices.



According to scientific research the effect from RF waves from our meters is 88,000 times lower than the ICNIRP safety limit at a distance of 15cm and 2.2 million times lower at a distance of 1m.

If you have a water meter you may be eligible for special tariffs that are available to some customers. See section 7.2 for more information if you have a low income or section 6.4 if you have high water usage due to a medical condition.

If you do opt for a water meter, you have the option to revert back to rateable value charges within 24 months, although the meter will remain in place. Any subsequent occupiers of this property will be metered.

There are many easy ways to save water in the home. Our handy tips will have you saving water, and money, in no time. Visit our website for more information and to claim your free water saving devices.

### Compulsory metering

It's compulsory to have a water meter fitted in cases where a substantial amount of water would be used that's over and above that of a normal household. These 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

## Key telephone numbers and addresses

### South Staffs Water

Green Lane  
Walsall WS2  
7PD

[www.south-staffs-water.co.uk](http://www.south-staffs-water.co.uk)

#### CUSTOMER ENQUIRY NUMBERS

Billing enquiries: 0345 60 70 456

Difficulty paying: 0800 09 30 610

Request a Water Meter: 0345 60 70 456

Supply problems & emergencies: 0800 389 10 11

Report a leak: 0800 389 10 11

#### SEWERAGE AND DRAINAGE SERVICES

Severn Trent Water

2 St John's Street, Coventry, CV1 2LZ

0800 783 4444

Website: [www.stwater.co.uk](http://www.stwater.co.uk)

### CCW the voice for water consumers

Customers are represented in the water industry by an independent body called the CCW.

23 Stephenson Street

Birmingham

B2 4BH

Telephone: 0300 034 2222

Email: [enquiries@ccwater.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@ccwater.org.uk)

### Water Services Regulation Authority (Ofwat)

Centre City Tower

7 Hill Street

Birmingham

B5 4UA

Telephone: 0121 644 7500

Email: [enquiries@ofwat.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofwat.gsi.gov.uk)

Website: [www.ofwat.gov.uk](http://www.ofwat.gov.uk)