

## **PRINCIPLES FOR WATER CHARGES**

### 1. NEW WATER SUPPLIES

Following the provision by the Company of any new water supply to a non-domestic premises, the charges will be measured charges. A meter must be installed on all new water supplies to these premises.

The Company may decide that a new supply is provided when there is a change of use of water or a change in the extent of premises supplied through an existing service pipe. Following service of notice by the Company on the person chargeable, measured charges will be payable.

When there is a change of use of premises supplied by a common service pipe to two or more premises in separate occupation, the charges for the supply to the premises where the change of use has taken place will be measured charges, if the change is to non-domestic use. The person chargeable must pay for the separation of the common supply and the installation of a meter on the separate supply to the premises.

### 2. EXISTING WATER SUPPLIES

The Company may determine that the charges for unmeasured water supplies used wholly or mainly for any business, trade or manufacturing or for any other non-domestic purposes, should be changed to measured charges.

Where two or more premises form part of the same building and that building has only a single connection to the water main, the Company may determine that the water supply to the building should become a measured supply and that the building should become the premises for the purpose of measured charges.

The charges payable will be and will remain measured charges, subject to the right of reversion as detailed later:

- where a meter is installed on a water supply to any premises, or
- where the Company has so determined in respect of any premises or purpose for which water supplied is used.

The Company may only move a domestic customer (or mainly domestic) from an unmeasured charge to a measured charge if one of the conditions described below are fulfilled.

- Uses a garden sprinkler (or unattended watering device)
- Has a swimming pool or garden pond with a capacity of 10,000 litres or more which is filled from the mains
- Has a bath of over 230 litres
- Uses a reverse osmosis unit
- Has installed a shower unit (of a type specified under paragraph 4 of the Table to Regulation 5 of the Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations 1999(c)).
- Lives in a designated area of water scarcity

No charge will be made for a hand held hose, but should the hose be left unattended, it will be classified as a sprinkler. This Company does not allow garden sprinklers, unless the property is metered.

Customers moving into the Company's area of supply should contact the office for information on the basis on which charges will be payable.

### 3. UNMEASURED CHARGES

Most customers pay an amount that is linked to the rateable value of their property. The standing charge covers billing and collection costs and also acts as a modifier for the rateable value element as this does not fully reflect usage patterns. Combined, the two elements of the bill are designed to produce average bills that broadly follow average water consumption at different levels of rateable value. The use of averages however means some customers may gain while others do not and so we provide an option to convert to a metered charge. Customers with higher rateable values or a below average number of occupants, (e.g.: two or less persons in a property), are the most likely to gain from opting to change to a metered supply.

Premises not having a rateable value as at 31 March 1990 and receiving an unmeasured water supply are charged on the basis of the Assessed Charge.

### 4. METER OPTION

Customers receiving an unmeasured water supply may wish to be charged for water supplied to their premises by meter. If the premises are served by a separate service pipe and the plumbing installations comply with the company's water supply bye-laws, they may elect to have a meter installed. Customers can ask for a meter to be installed by sending us a Measured Charges Notice requesting the installation of a meter; this can be in the form of a letter, telephone call, fax or e-mail. From requesting a meter to having one installed, should take no longer than three months. If we fail to install your meter within three months we will estimate what your measured charges would have been for the period of delay and will apply those charges to your account instead of your unmeasured charge.

For a non-domestic meter supply, the person chargeable must pay the cost of installation of the meter and, once the water charges have become measured charges, they will remain so irrespective of any change of use of the premises or of the purpose for which the water is used.

When a meter is installed at a commercial property, installation will take place within 15 days of receipt of payment.

There will be no charge for the installation of a meter where the supply is for domestic purposes, provided that the meter can be installed practicably and at reasonable expense. The customer may in some cases be able to undertake work at his own expense in order to enable the free installation of the meter.

The company can refuse requests for meter installation on the ground that it would be unreasonable expensive. Any disputes will be determined by the Director General of Water Services, who will adopt the following approach:

Reasonable expense will include:

- the provision of a meter
- the cost of installation in the company's preferred location
- the cost of reinstatement, subject to reasonable limits

Unreasonable expense might be:

- the cost of separating the customers supply pipe where it was shared with other customers
- the cost of installing an additional meter if the customer is served by more than one supply
- the cost of substantial alterations to existing plumbing to enable meter installation.

Where a meter cannot be installed practicably or at reasonable expense, or agreement cannot be gained to install a single meter for a shared supply, a fixed charge equivalent to the average metered household bill will be offered, this is the Assessed Charge shown in the Schedule of Charges.

The meter will be positioned in the company's preferred location at the property boundary, although consideration will be given to an alternative position external to the property, or within certain types of housing. Any additional cost in positioning the meter in an alternative location will be borne by the customer, if the location chosen by the customer would cost more to install than the company's preferred location.

The company would consider the installation of a second meter in blocks of flats. Provided this did not entail disproportionate costs.

The company would also consider single meters for multi-occupied premises (such as blocks of flats) where one person is willing to accept responsibility for the bill.

A meter where installed remains the property of the company.

Where a meter is installed at the insistence of the company, it will be installed FREE OF CHARGE to the customer.

Domestic customers have the right for a limited time to decide to change back to unmeasured charges. The customer must advise the company within 30 days of receiving the bill which details the twelfth month of consumption that they wish to return to unmeasured charges. The meter will remain in place even when a customer has reverted to an unmeasured charge. On notification of a new customer moving into the property, they will be given the option of being charged on a meter or unmeasured charges scheme.

### Empty Properties

Where single premises are to be unoccupied for more than six months but remain furnished, and the customer requests the supply to be turned off at the company's controlling stop valve, no fee will be payable and no further water supply charge made until the supply is reconnected. If a company controlling stop valve is not available or the customer either requests that the supply remains connected or fails to request turn off as detailed above, the company's minimum charge will be payable. A written statement from the customer will be required each year will confirming that the property is still unoccupied. No allowances be made in retrospect

## 5. MEASURED WATER SUPPLIES

The charge for a measured water supply comprises:

- A standing charge determined by the size of the meter.
- A volume charge calculated on the volume of water recorded by the meter as having been supplied.

The register of the meter will be evidence of the volume of water supplied. However, in respect of any period during which the meter was not in proper order, was not read or was removed, the consumption of water will be estimated on the basis of the average actual consumption during the corresponding period of the previous year or as otherwise agreed. The minimum payment of measured water is £41.00 per year.

## 6. MISCELLANEOUS CHARGES

Cattle Troughs:

A fixed annual sum is charged for each cattle trough not connected to a measured supply.

Water supplies for building

The charge for supplies for building houses and bungalows is, provided the meter size 25mm or less, a fixed rate per annum per constructed unit.

Water connection charges

The Company recovers in accordance with the provision of the Act all expenses incurred in the laying (if required), and connection of a service pipes, and associated accessories, to a water main. The Company has a Basic Connection Charge (not exceeding 9 metres in length).

Disconnection and reconnection charges

The Company reserves the right to make a charge if a disconnection or reconnection of a supply is made. The Company will not make a charge for disconnecting a supply at the request of a customer.

Infrastructure charges

The company will levy and recover from the person requesting a connection of premises to the Company's water supply infrastructure the infrastructure charges as provided in section 146(2) of the Act and Conditions C and D of the Licence. Such charges will not exceed the prescribed maxima for water supply provided in the Licence as modified or amended by the Secretary of State or by the Water Services Regulation Authority. The maximum charge payable for 2010-11 will be £298.15.

Infrastructure charges are payable when a connection to the Company's water supply is made. For the purposes of this paragraph a connection is made when a water supply is made available for domestic purposes.

Where a Common Billing Agreement as referred to in Condition C is not honoured or is terminated by the person who undertook to pay infrastructure charges in respect of the premises subject to the Agreement, the Company has the power to recover outstanding infrastructure charges from the individual occupiers of the premises.

### Special meter reading call out

If a customer requests a meter reading in addition to the normal cycle of meter reading, the Company reserves the right to charge for this service.

### Fixed standpipes

If a standpipe is required on a temporary or permanent basis, the Company will charge.

## 7. WATERSURE

### ELIGIBLE GROUPS

Some customers receiving a measured supply of water may be entitled to assistance with their water charges, although certain customers with swimming pools or using sprinkler systems do not qualify. This assistance became available from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2000. If any individual, whether the customer or not, meets the required criteria, and is part of the same water bill paying household as the customer, then that customer can claim assistance. Assistance will be available where customers are in receipt of one of the following benefits or tax credits:

- Income support
- Income based job-seekers allowance
- Working family tax credit
- Housing benefit
- Council tax benefit
- Pension credit.
- Child tax credit (except families in receipt of the Family element only)

AND have EITHER three or more children under the age of 19 who receive Child Benefit and reside in the premises.

Any persons residing in the property who are suffering from one of the following conditions, which causes them to use a significant additional volume of water:

- Desquamation (flaky skin disease)
- Weeping skin disease (eczema, psoriasis, varicose ulceration)
- Incontinence
- Abdominal stomas
- Kidney failure requiring home dialysis (apart from cases where the Health Authority contributes to the cost of water consumed)
- Crohn's Disease
- Ulcerative Colitis

### PROOF OF ELIGIBILITY

Customers who believe that they qualify for assistance should contact the company to obtain an application form. Applicants will also be required to provide reasonable documentary evidence of their eligibility which will include:

- A copy of the latest notice of entitlement to the benefit or tax credit and
- A copy of the latest notice of entitlement to child benefit at the property for three or more children under the age of 19.
- Details of the medical condition, together with the name of the medical practitioner to whom enquiries can be made.

The Company will also consider requests for assistance from customers in receipt of the specified benefits who have other medical conditions, which involve significant use of water. In these circumstances the Company will require verification of the condition by medical certificate, from the customer's GP.

Where customers are required to provide a doctor's certificate, the following information needs to be included:

- The name of the doctor;
- The diagnosis of the patient's condition;
- The date the certificate was given;
- The name and address of the medical practitioner.

The customer may be required to pay a fee to the doctor for the issuing of the certificate.

The customer or other qualifying person must occupy the whole or part of the property as their only or principal home. Where the customer occupies only part of the property, this must still be the principal purpose of the property.

Completed application forms must be returned to the Company including evidence to support the claim in the specified format. Customers may register at any time of the year. If accepted, the entitlement will last for one year unless that is part way through a billing period, in which case the entitlement will cease at the end of the next billing period. Customers who want to keep their entitlement have to resubmit the registration form and evidence. The company will remind customers 28 days before their entitlement is due to end. At that time, it will send them another application form and details of evidence required. If circumstances change, customers must tell the company although they may stay on the tariff until the end of a billing period. Claims may be subject to checking by the Company.

The charges for water services will be the lower of the actual consumption or capped at the average charge paid by domestic customers, which for 2010-11 is £189.46.

The protection afforded to customers by this scheme will not apply if they have high discretionary use of water for example, watering a garden other than by hand-held apparatus or where the customer has a swimming pool.

9 March 2010