

Allowances, rebates and concessions on your bill

1. Overview

1.1 At a glance

We may give you a credit on your bill or provide other help if:

- you receive a higher than normal bill and the extra water use is outside your control
- there's a fault with our water or wastewater service
- your home is declared uninhabitable by a relevant authority
- our business activities have caused damage or injury
- you hold an eligible pension concession card.

1.2 Scope

This policy may apply to you if, you:

- have a hidden leak on your property
- are affected by bushfires or other natural disasters
- are unable to live in your property because it is declared uninhabitable
- participate in our water quality testing program
- use a registered kidney dialysis machine at home
- have your services interrupted (at our fault)
- want to claim for damages
- hold an eligible pension concession card.

This policy does not apply if, your property:

- is wilfully damaged
- hasn't been occupied.

1.3 Objective

This policy allows us to fairly compensate customers who:

- have additional water use outside their control
- experience service faults
- can't occupy their property (based on certain conditions)
- want to claim for damages
- own their property but are on a limited fixed income.

2. Allowances

2.1 Hidden leak allowance

If you've had a hidden leak, we may review the water use on your bill and give you an allowance. We'll only review your bill if:

- a licensed plumber repaired the leak, or suitably qualified technician where appropriate
- you weren't aware of the leak – you couldn't see or hear it (as determined by your plumber)
- you maintained your water service – there weren't obvious defects that you didn't fix
- you tell us about the leak within a year of your licensed plumber repairing it
- you haven't had an allowance in the last five years on this property.

We won't review your bill if the leak:

- was visible – like damp soil or consistently wet grass
- was on a tap, or internal fitting like a toilet cistern, dishwasher or washing machine
- wasn't repaired by a licensed plumber or suitably qualified technician
- was on vacant land
- was on an unoccupied property (this includes construction sites).

2.1.1 What is the allowance?

Who	How it works
Home owners	<p>We'll cover 50% of the water use in the most affected quarter. This applies to either drinking water or recycled water (if available).</p> <p>We only give one allowance every five years at the same property.</p>
Business property owners	<p>We'll cover 50% of the water use in the most affected quarter. We only give one water use allowance every five years at the same property.</p> <p>We'll cover 100% of the increase in wastewater use (if wastewater use charges apply). We'll cover each event for wastewater, there are no five-year limits.</p>

2.1.2 How can you apply?

If you think you may have a hidden leak on your property:

- contact a licensed plumber to locate and repair the leak
- contact us on 13 20 92 with the following information:
 - Property address
 - Date the leak was fixed
 - Meter serial number
 - Meter reading from the date the leak was fixed
 - Details of who completed the repair – including a valid business name, contact phone number and ABN.

In some circumstances you may be required to provide additional evidence such an invoice from the repairer or a photograph of your current meter reading.

2.2 Bushfire allowances

We may give bushfire allowances when the NSW Rural Fire Service (RFS) tells us a Class 3 bushfire was within one kilometre of your property. In special circumstances, we may give an allowance for homes in a wider area.

2.2.1 What do you get if a bushfire has destroyed your property?

We'll:

- give you an allowance on your fixed service charges if a bushfire has made your property uninhabitable
- stop the fixed service charges for up to a year (four quarters). This starts from the quarter affected by the bushfire. If you've already paid these charges, we'll refund them
- charge you for water if you're still using it at the property
- replace your water meter free of charge if a bushfire has damaged it.

2.2.2 What do you get if your water was used to fight fires?

We'll give you a \$40 credit on your next bill if water was used to protect properties from fires within one kilometre of your home. It includes any water RFS uses from your private water service or swimming pool.

We base the credit on a maximum flow of four kilolitres over four hours. If this isn't suitable, we may use your past water use to work out the increase.

2.2.3 How can you apply?

You don't need to apply. We identify affected homes based on information from the NSW Rural Fire Service. We automatically credit the allowance on the bill after the fire.

If you think you should have received the allowance but haven't, call us on [13 20 92](tel:132092).

2.3 Disaster allowance

We may give you an allowance if you've lost the use of your home after a disaster event. This may include properties destroyed or no longer liveable following a:

- flood or storm
- tornado
- fire that's accidental
- vehicle accident
- land slide or erosion.

We won't give assistance to you if damage is deliberate. We'll check the investigation report, police report or insurance claim.

2.3.1 What is the allowance?

To give you time to get your insurance sorted out, rebuild your home or sell it, we'll stop the wastewater service charges for up to a year (four quarters). This starts within the quarter the disaster occurs and continues for the following three quarters. We won't withdraw water usage or water services charges.

2.3.2 What happens if you have a damaged meter?

If a disaster destroys or damages your meter, we'll replace it free of charge.

2.3.3 How can you apply?

If your property has been destroyed or is no longer liveable, please call us on [13 20 92](tel:132092). You'll need to have the relevant claim or reference numbers when you call.

2.4 Uninhabitable property allowance

We may give you an allowance if your home is declared uninhabitable, by a relevant authority, because of something that you weren't responsible for. Examples may include properties:

- with structural defects or damage
- that are not deemed safe to live in.

The allowance will not be paid when the property is covered by:

- builders or developer's warranty
- building insurance
- other insurance.

Should any insurance cover become available after our allowance has been given, the allowance may need to be returned to us.

Not all cases of structural building damage will be eligible for an allowance. It will depend on the merits of each individual situation.

2.4.1 What is the allowance?

We'll:

- stop the fixed service charges for water and wastewater for three months (one quarter). This starts within the quarter where you could no longer live in your home (i.e. declared uninhabitable by a relevant authority). If you've already paid these charges, we'll refund them
- review your eligibility for the allowance on a quarterly basis. The allowance on service charges is capped at one year (four quarters)
- charge you for water if you're still using it at the property. This includes water use as measured through an individual or shared water meter (for e.g. master strata)
- replace your water meter free of charge if it's been damaged due to the structural building damage.

2.4.2 How can you apply?

If your home is declared uninhabitable for a long period of time, please submit your enquiry and supporting documentation through our [contact us](#) page.

You'll need to provide evidence from a relevant authority stating that your home is uninhabitable. We may also request additional information. Examples of a relevant authority include:

- structural engineers report
- court orders (regarding building or fire codes)

2.4.3 What if you can't go back to your home for a longer period, e.g. more than one year?

Please call us on [13 20 92](tel:132092) or [contact us](#). We'll assess your situation on a case-by-case basis.

2.5 Water sampling allowance

As part of our water quality testing program, we continually monitor the water supply to ensure it complies with the [Australian Drinking Water Guidelines \(2011\)](#). We take samples from some customers' taps each month for testing.

2.5.1 What is the allowance?

To make up for the water we use for testing and to thank you for your co-operation, we give \$23 a year to customers who take part in our testing program. We automatically credit your bill in the April – June quarter each year.

2.5.2 How can you apply?

If we'd like you to be part this program, we'll ask you in writing.

2.6 Kidney dialysis use allowance

We give an allowance to customers who use a registered haemodialysis machine at home. If you're renting a property, talk to your landlord or managing agent about this allowance.

If you move to a new house, ensure your dialysis centre tells us so we can transfer the allowance to your new address.

2.6.1 What is the allowance?

We give an allowance of up to 400 kilolitres a year (100kL each quarter) to registered kidney dialysis customers. Renal physicians and dialysis centres consider this appropriate for dialysis needs.

2.6.2 How can you apply?

You don't need to apply. Your hospital or dialysis centre will arrange the allowance for you. If you don't currently get an allowance and believe you should, ask your dialysis centre to call us on [13 20 92](tel:132092).

3. Service faults

3.1 Rebates

If you have a service fault, we may give you a rebate on your next bill except if the fault in our system is caused by a disaster event.

3.1.1 What are the rebates?

What it is	What we'll give you	Who's eligible
Planned water service interruption	A \$23.55 rebate if you have a planned interruption for over five hours.	Identified properties affected by a water disruption.

What it is	What we'll give you	Who's eligible
Unplanned water service interruption	<p>A \$47.10 rebate if you have an unplanned interruption for over five hours for each of up to two events.</p> <p>A full credit of your water service charge for the next 12 months (four quarters), if you have three or more unplanned interruptions, of over one hour for each event, in a rolling year (less any concession you are entitled to)..</p>	Identified properties affected by a water disruption.
Low water pressure	<p>A \$47.10 rebate if your water pressure falls below 15 metres head of pressure at the point of connection to our system for one hour or more (not due to a service interruption).</p> <p>Only one rebate in any quarter.</p> <p>Note: These rebates don't apply to customers in low pressure zones as detailed in the <i>Customer Contract</i>.</p>	Identified properties through pressure monitoring.
Wastewater overflow	<p>A \$89.09 rebate if you have a wastewater overflow on your property due to a Sydney Water fault.</p> <p>A \$178.18 rebate if you have two wastewater overflows on your property within a rolling year.</p> <p>A full credit of your wastewater service charge for the next 12 months (four quarters), if you have three or more wastewater overflows in a rolling year (less any concession you are entitled to).</p>	Identified properties affected by a wastewater disruption.
Dirty water	<p>A \$47.10 rebate if your water supply is dirty (unsuitable as drinking water).</p> <p>If your property, including clothes, household furniture or fittings, has been damaged by dirty water, you can send a claim for us to clean, replace or repair the damaged items.</p> <p>Note: These rebates don't apply if the cause of the problem is in your private water service.</p>	Identified properties receiving dirty water caused by our activities.
Boil water alert	A \$59.39 rebate if NSW health issued a 'Boil water alert' due to contaminated drinking water supplies.	Identified properties in affected areas.

3.1.2 How can you apply?

In most cases, we automatically identify affected properties and credit your next bill. If you haven't received a rebate and think you're entitled to one, please call us on [13 20 92](tel:132092).

4. Claims for damages

If we damage your property or you're injured because of our activities or service failures, you may be able to claim for:

- out of pocket expenses
- damaged items
- property repairs
- an alternate water supply

- emergency accommodation.

You must make your initial claim through your insurance company. If you're not covered by insurance, you can make a claim by submitting a completed [customer claim form](#).

We'll respond within five working days to confirm:

- how we'll investigate your claim
- how long our investigation will take
- what we'll do if we need more information from you.

5. Concessions

5.1 Pension rebates

We apply a concession on eligible accounts on behalf of NSW Treasury under a Community Service Obligation (CSO). This is known as a pension rebate and ensures equity for pensioners without disadvantaging the remaining customer base.

5.1.1 Who is eligible?

Eligibility is determined by the NSW Government through the records of Centrelink and Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA). These agencies financially assess people under strict criteria for pensions.

Eligible cards are either a Pensioner Concession Card issued by [Services Australia](#) or [Department of Veterans' Affairs](#), or a [Veteran Gold Card](#) embossed with:

- WAR WIDOW or WIDOWER
- EDA (Extreme Disablement Adjustment)
- TTI (Temporarily Totally Incapacitated)
- TPI (Totally and Permanently Incapacitated).

The eligible pension is the **Disability Compensation Payment** at the TTI rate or [Intermediate rate](#) for veterans without a Veteran Gold Card.

It's essential we **only** apply the concession to eligible pensioners as the value of the rebate is supplied by the NSW Government.

To be eligible for the pension rebate, the applicant must **own** and **occupy** the property where they are claiming the rebate. There are a few exceptions to this:

- If the owner of the property is living in a nursing home, still responsible for paying the water bill and the property is vacant.
- If you are in a spousal relationship with the owner of the property and both of you are occupying the property.
- If you occupy the property and are responsible for payment of the account through a legal arrangement such as a life tenant, the beneficiary of a will, occupy the property through a company trust or have a family arrangement with the owner.

5.1.2 How can you apply?

Customers can visit the [Pension rebates](#) page on our website or call us on [13 20 92](#) (Monday to Friday 8:00am – 5:30pm, except public holidays) to apply. If the applicant is not the owner of the property, supporting documentation will need to be provided to support the application.

5.1.3 What is the rebate?

The pension rebate applies to fixed service charges on each bill.

Service	Accountabilities
Water service	100% of the quarterly service charge to a maximum of \$16.94
Wastewater (sewerage) service	86% of the quarterly service charge
Stormwater (if applicable)	50% of the quarterly service charge

Pension rebates are calculated based on ownership and occupancy of the premises.

- You'll receive 100% of the rebate if you own your home with a spouse, even if they don't receive a pension.
- You'll receive a smaller rebate if you own your home with other people who don't receive a pension.
- You'll receive a smaller rebate if you own your home with other people who receive a pension but who don't live with you.

When applying, the customer or their authorised contact must give us permission to check their eligibility with Centrelink or DVA. When we confirm they are eligible, a concession will be applied to their next quarterly bill.

If a pensioner was eligible before they applied for the concession, we'll consider applying the concession for up to 5 (five) previous quarters, including the current quarter. This processed was endorsed by the Treasurer and Minister for Water as part of the NSW State Budget for 2012-13.

6. Definitions

Term	Definition	Source
Allowance	A sum of money or a free allocation of water that is credited on your next bill.	
Class 3 bushfire	This is a major bushfire that the NSW Rural Fire Service declares under section 44 of the Rural Fires Act 1997 .	
Drinking water	Water intended primarily for human consumption but which has other personal, domestic or household uses such as bathing and showering.	
Hidden leak	Water escaping from pipes that are hidden and you could not see or hear the leak.	
Private water service	All water service pipes, including recycled water service pipes, fixtures and fittings on the customer's side of the water meter (or one metre inside the property boundary if there's no meter).	