

Water meter maintenance guide

How to look after the meter so we can charge you correctly



Contents

Introduction	What is this guide about?	Page 3
Getting a water meter	How do you get a meter? What if we can't install or exchange a meter?	Page 3 Page 3
Looking after the water meter	How can you protect the meter? What if the meter is damaged or stolen?	Page 3 Page 4
Changing the water meter	Can a plumber disconnect the meter? Can you downsize a meter?	Page 4 Page 4
Charging for water use	How can you avoid estimated water use? What if you have unusually high water use?	Page 4 Page 5

What is this guide about?

Our Customer Contract explains the services we provide and this guide provides more detail on what to do if you:

- need a meter
- have a problem with the meter
- would like to change the meter
- have a problem with a water use charge.

How do you get a meter?

If your property doesn't have a meter, ask a licensed plumber to check if you can have one at your property. The plumber may need to alter your private water pipes to allow for a meter. You're responsible for any plumbing costs.

If your plumber has checked your property and it's ready for a meter, please call us on 13 20 92. We'll then install one for you free of charge.

What if we can't install or exchange a meter?

We may not be able to install a meter if the:

- space for the meter is wrong
- risers are different sizes
- risers are made from polyethylene or galvanised iron instead of copper.

If this is the case, you must ask your builder, licensed plumber or property developer to fix the problem. We'll install a meter when the problem has been fixed. You must not use water on an unmetered service or a penalty for water theft may apply.

Please don't concrete around the meter or the risers. This will make it easier for us to exchange the meter in future.

How can you protect the meter?

Access to the meter and protection of the meter are your responsibility. We may charge a fee to replace the meter if it is stolen. If you'd like to protect the meter from damage or theft, you can install a steel bollard or a cage around it. You must make sure that:

- the steel bollard does not block the dials on the meter
- we can read the meter without opening the cage
- we can safely open the cage to exchange the meter
- there is enough room to exchange the meter.

If you're going to lock the cage, you must use an Abloy brand utility lock. This is a lock that authorised utilities can open.

To buy an Abloy lock, simply call Integrity Locksmiths on 1300 366 488. They can post one to you if you pay by credit card when you call. Alternatively, they can tell you where your local supplier is. Before you buy one, you need to tell Integrity Locksmith you want a Sydney Water accessible utility lock.

You're responsible for the cost of protecting the meter.

What if the meter is damaged or stolen?

If the meter is damaged or stolen, please call us on 13 20 90 and we'll replace it. We may charge you the replacement cost.

Can a plumber disconnect the meter?

A plumber can only disconnect the meter if they are disconnecting your private water service/pipe. This may be when:

- your property is going to be vacant for a long time or permanently
- a fire has damaged your property
- you are installing your own self-sufficient water supply
- you are downsizing your private water pipes and need a smaller meter.

You or your plumber must apply for the disconnection online at [Sydney Water Tap in®](#). We'll stop charging for the service when you have met our requirements.

The plumber must not disconnect the meter if you:

- are renovating
- demolishing a building
- are knocking down and rebuilding
- still need to use water at your property.

Can you change a meter size?

Residential properties are only allowed to have a 20 mm meter.

For non-residential properties, the fixed service charge on your bill depends on the size of the meter at your property. You may be able to reduce the charge by downsizing the meter. This is only if the meter is larger than 20 mm and your property doesn't need a large water connection.

A hydraulic consultant will be able to tell you if a licensed plumber can reduce the size of your connection. If you're able to downsize, you must apply online and pay a fee at [Sydney Water Tap in](#).

How can you avoid estimated water use?

We like to charge you correctly for the amount of water you use and not estimate it. Making the meter accessible is the best way to avoid estimated water use. To help us, you can make sure the meter:

- has a 30 cm gap around it
- is free of debris
- isn't buried in concrete or dirt
- isn't obstructed by trees or plants
- isn't obstructed by a locked gate.

If the meter is behind a locked gate, you must use an Abloy brand utility lock to secure it. This is a lock that authorised utilities can open.

To buy an Abloy lock, simply call Integrity Locksmiths on 1300 366 488. They can post one to you if you pay by credit card when you call. Alternatively, they can tell you where your local supplier is.

Before you buy the lock, you need to tell Integrity Locksmith you want a **Sydney Water accessible utility lock**.

If we can't access the meter, we'll leave a self-reading card at your property. To stop us estimating your water use, you must tell us the reading within 3 days of us leaving the card. You may do this:

- through our website under [Tell us your reading](#)
- by calling 1300 314 834 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
- by sending an SMS or MMS to 0478 308 922 – you must include your account number, the meter serial number and the meter reading in your message

If we don't receive a reading within 3 days, we may estimate your water use. We'll base this on your past water use. If this isn't possible, we may base it on the use of similar properties in your area.

What if you have unusually high water use?

Our meter readers always take great care in reading the meter so you get an accurate bill.

A change in your circumstances may explain a higher-than-usual water use charge. You may have had extra people stay over, watered your garden more often or installed a new pool. If your circumstances haven't changed, there are a few things you can do.

Check the reading

If you have unusual water use, you can check that we have read the meter correctly. To do this, you need to read the black numbers on the meter and compare them to the reading on your bill. You will find the reading on the back of the bill. If your reading is:

- higher than the one on the bill, the reading is correct.
- lower than the one on the bill, the reading is incorrect.

If the reading is incorrect, please call 13 20 92 and we'll adjust the charge for you.

You should also check your previous bills to compare your water use. The most effective bill to check is the same bill in the previous year.

Check for leaks

If the reading is correct, you may have a leak. To check for leaks you should:

- read the meter again and write down both black and red numbers
- don't use any water for an hour
- read the meter again. If the number has increased, you may have a leak.

We suggest you check your property's internal plumbing and fixtures for leaks. If you do have a leak, a licensed plumber must repair it.

There is more information about leaks on our website under [Leak prevention](#).

Test the meter

If you don't have a leak and feel your water use charge is not correct, you may ask us to test the meter. You must pay a fee for the test, which will depend on the size of the meter. We'll remove the meter and send it to an independent laboratory for testing. We'll replace the meter with a new one.

If you'd like us to test the meter, please call us on 13 20 92. We'll tell you what the fee is and send you an application form. To pay the fee, you must authorise us to charge it to your account.

We'll refund the fee if the test confirms the meter is inaccurate.

Definitions

Term	Definition
Risers	These are the 2 pipes that come out of the ground and connect the meter to the private water pipe.

References

Document type	Title
Legislation or standards	Section 10 of the <i>Customer Contract</i>
Policies	<i>Water meters policy</i> <i>Responsibility of connected customers policy</i> <i>Connecting to Sydney Water systems policy</i>
Forms and checklists	<i>Water meter test</i>
Guides	<i>Water meter installation guide</i>

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This is the first guide we have about maintaining meters.