

# 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?<br>What if we can't install or exchange a meter?             | Page 3<br>Page 3 |
| Looking after the water meter | How can you protect the meter?<br>What if the meter is damaged or stolen?            | Page 3<br>Page 4 |
| Changing the water meter      | Can a plumber disconnect the meter?<br>Can you downsize a meter?                     | Page 4<br>Page 4 |
| Charging for water use        | How can you avoid estimated water use?<br>What if you have unusually high water use? | Page 4<br>Page 5 |

## What is this guide about?

This guide explains 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.

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?

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, please call us on 13 20 92 and we'll replace it. If we find that you have damaged it, we may charge you the replacement cost.

If the meter is stolen, you must report it to the police. When you have reported it, please call us on 13 20 92 and we'll replace the meter. You must give us the police event number when you call.

## Can a plumber disconnect the meter?

A plumber can only disconnect the meter if they are disconnecting your private water 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
- are knocking down and rebuilding
- still need to use water at your property.

## Can you downsize a meter?

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 three days of us leaving the card. You may do this:

- through our [website](#)
- by calling 9774 7446 Monday to Friday between 9 am and 5 pm
- 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
- by posting the card back to us.

If we don't receive a reading within three 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 in [Working together to prevent leaks](#).

### 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 or send us a cheque.

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

## Definitions

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