

Your Metered Supply

Incorporating our Code of practice
for meter reading

APRIL
2009



Dŵr Cymru
Welsh Water

PAB 0065

We want you to feel confident that your water supply and sewerage service is well looked after. This booklet is designed to answer some of the questions you might have about your meter, reading your meter, metered charges and your bill.

If you can't find the information you are looking for, please call us on **0800 052 0140**. You will find a list of other useful numbers on page 16 of this booklet.

We have a range of FREE publications available for you to download at www.dwrcymru.com. Alternatively, you can call 0800 052 0138 to request a copy of any of our publications.

Your water and sewerage charges

We provide over a million customers in Wales and some neighbouring parts of England with water and sewerage services. We are committed to providing you with value for money and safe, reliable water and sewerage services.

Over the five years 2005 – 2010 we are investing £1.4 billion – that's around £1,000 for every household customer – to maintain and improve the enormous network of assets we use.

The new 2009/2010 charges

Although our charges have increased you will receive a customer dividend of £22. You can see this on your first bill of 2009/2010 - £11.00 for your water service and £11.00 for your sewerage service. Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water is the only water company to pay a customer dividend in this way.

How we calculate your bill

As a customer with a water meter, you pay for your services based on the amount of water you use. It is measured in cubic metres, with one cubic metre being equivalent to 1,000 litres or about 220 gallons. Your meter is also used, in part, to work out your sewerage charges. As well as a volumetric charge you pay an annual standing charge for your water and your sewerage service based on the size of the meter you have. A standard household meter is normally up to 20mm.

These charges will take effect from 1st April 2009. We will charge you for any water you have used before this date at 2008/2009 rates. If a billing period includes 1st April 2009, we will assume that the amount of water you have used throughout this period is consistent. You should notify us of the meter reading on 1st April if you believe that this would give a more accurate picture of your water usage.

If your business uses over 50,000 cubic metres (50 million litres) of water a year then you may benefit from our Industrial tariff. Please call us on **0800 052 0140** for further details.

Your water charges at a glance

Measured water charge	
£1.3671 per cubic metre	2009 – 2010 price
£1.3078 per cubic metre	2008 – 2009 price

PLUS

Water standing charge per annum		
Size of meter (mm)	2009 – 2010 price (£)	2008 – 2009 price (£)
Up to 20	32.00	31.00
25	85.00	81.00
30	145.00	138.00
40	266.00	255.00
50	399.00	381.00
65	533.00	509.00
80	706.00	675.00
100	840.00	803.00
150	1082.00	1034.00
200 and above	1082.00	1034.00

Your sewerage charges at a glance

Your sewerage charge is for removal and disposal of used water from your property, including surface water, and highway drainage.

For household customers your measured sewerage charge is calculated on the assumption that 95% of the water recorded by your water meter is returned to our sewer. If you are a business and you think that the amount of wastewater you return to the sewer is less than 95%, then please contact us on **0800 052 0140**.

Measured sewerage charge

£1.5833 per cubic metre

2009 – 2010 price

£1.4811 per cubic metre

2008 – 2009 price

PLUS

Sewerage standing charge per annum

Size of meter (mm)	2009 – 2010 price (£)	2008 – 2009 price (£)
Up to 20	74.00	70.00
25	217.00	206.00
30	311.00	295.00
40	463.00	438.00
50	802.00	759.00
65	1286.00	1218.00
80	1861.00	1762.00
100	3267.00	3094.00
150	7391.00	6999.00
200 and above	13073.00	12380.00

For more information about our water and sewerage charges, please call us on 0800 052 0140 (Monday – Friday, 8am – 8pm, Saturday, 8:30 am – 1:30 pm) or visit us online at www.dwrcymru.com

Billing Frequency

Every six months you should receive a bill for your metered charges. Normally, if you are on an industrial tariff or your charges are on average more than £2,000 a month you will receive your bill monthly. If your charges are on average more than £2,000 a quarter, you will receive your bill every three months

Your bills have been designed to be easy to read and simple to understand. Here are the key areas of your bill and what they mean:

■ Customer Information

- Address where meter service is provided
- Meter Serial No. - a unique number to identify your meter
- Size - this is your meter connection size which determines your standing charges
- Location – this shows the location of the meter

■ Amount brought forward from previous bill

This shows the balance on the last bill

■ Payments received

Payments you've made since the last bill

■ Meter readings

Your previous meter reading, your new meter reading and whether they were an actual or an estimated reading

■ Volume used

The number of cubic metres you have used since your last bill (1 cubic metre = approx 220 gallons or 1000 litres). This is normally based on an actual meter reading, but if we have not been able to read your meter, and you have not provided a reading, it will be an estimate of the amount of water you have used based on past usage

■ Water charge

This is calculated by multiplying your usage in cubic metres by the measured water price

■ Sewerage charge

This is normally calculated by multiplying 95% of your water consumption recorded by the meter by the measured sewerage price

■ Water and sewerage standing charges

These are based on the connection size of your meter

■ Total balance

This is the current balance on your account

If you receive an estimated bill and would like a bill based on an actual reading, please take a reading yourself (where it is safe to do so) and then contact us on 0800 052 0140.

How to pay your bill

Your bill must be paid within 14 days and you can pay by:

Direct debit – please call us on **0800 052 5604** with your bank sort code, account number and account name and we will do the rest for you.

On line – log on at **www.dwrcymru.com** and follow the onscreen instructions.

At your bank – take your bill and completed payment slip to your local bank, or any branch of NatWest.

PayPoint – pay free of charge where you see the “PayPoint” sign.

At the Post Office – take your bill and cash payment to your local Post Office.

Post – complete and return the Giro Credit slip at the bottom of your bill to us with a cheque or postal order (make sure you write your customer reference number on the reverse of the cheque).

Phone – with your debit or credit card. Call us on **0800 052 0140** (Monday – Friday, 8am – 8pm, Saturday, 8:30am - 1:30pm).

With a payment plan you can spread the costs over a year with a regular direct debit. This is also available to non-household customers who do not pay VAT and who are not in arrears.

What to do if you cannot pay your bill

We understand that you may at some time experience difficulties paying your bill, and we want to help.

Call us on **0800 052 0140**. We might be able to arrange for you to pay your bill by monthly instalments, fortnightly instalments or more frequently.

If you are receiving certain benefits, then payment of your water charges can be made directly by The Department for Work and Pensions.

Whatever your situation, it's important that you talk to us right away. If we do not know your circumstances or cannot contact you about an unpaid bill, we will automatically appoint a debt collection agency to recover the money owed. This could mean more costs for you.

The meter

Whilst the meter is on your property or within your premises it remains the property of Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water and it is your responsibility to provide a safe environment and allow access to Welsh Water employees and/or their representatives for the purpose of reading and maintaining the meter.

Where to find your meter

You will normally find your meter in a boundary box to the front of the property, at the boundary or in the pavement. In some cases, particularly in rural areas, the meter may be some distance from your property. If it is safe to do so you can access the external meter by, carefully lifting the lid of the boundary box, removing the polystyrene frost cover (if necessary) and pulling up the inner meter lid, if fitted, to view the meter face. The meter will be sitting inside a chamber and is connected to your water supply pipe at the bottom of this chamber. Don't worry if you see some water in the chamber when you read the meter, as this is likely to be ground water.

However, if you do find water in the chamber after a prolonged dry spell, and your water usage is high, it may be the sign of a leak and should be checked.

In some cases the meter is inside the property at the main internal stop tap (e.g. in the kitchen or downstairs toilet). If this is the case and the property is likely to be empty for long periods of time, because you work away from home or because it's a holiday home, please provide a contact address or telephone number so we can gain access to the meter.

Each water meter has its own unique serial number, which is also shown on your bill. Please ensure you have located the correct meter.

Moving your meter

We will charge you for having your meter moved. However, if you are on our additional services register and are in receipt of certain benefits we may be able to relocate the meter free of charge. Please contact us on **0800 045 0140** to find out more.

Moving house?

Please tell us when you are moving and if it is safe to do so, provide us with a meter reading on the day you move. If you prefer, we will

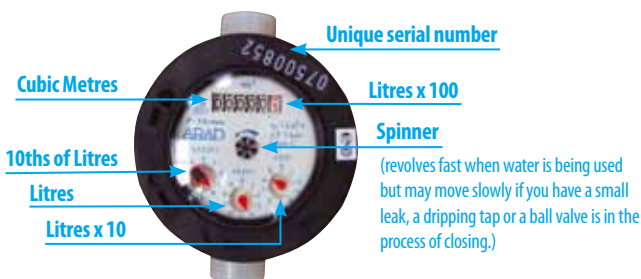
read your meter for you – simply let us know at least five working days before you move.

If known, please give us the name of the person who is moving in to the property. If the property is to remain unoccupied then we may disconnect the supply to help protect it against contamination or leakage.

Taking a meter reading

Look at the meter face (some may be under a hinged cover) and read the white on black or black on white numbers as they record the cubic metres of water used. Only these numbers are used to bill you.

When you have finished reading an external meter, replace the polystyrene frost sponge if there was one covering the meter, carefully close the lid of the boundary box and make sure it is level with the ground.



If you have an external meter and are unable to read it because of dirt that cannot be cleared or condensation, or if you are worried that your meter is broken, please contact us and we will repair or replace it free of charge. If you have an internal meter then it is your responsibility to protect it against damage and frost.

We aim to take a practical approach to safeguarding the interests of those in genuine need of support and assistance whilst accepting that it is not always possible to define and identify such customers. Our approach is based on eight basic principles:

1. **Dŵr Cymru will aim to read all meters at least twice a year**

It is better for bills to be based on actual meter readings than estimates so we will aim to read all meters at every reading cycle, which is every 6 months as a minimum. If we are unable to read the meter on the first visit we will visit again on two occasions within a two week period either during the day or evening, between 8am and 8pm. If we do not read the meter for two reading cycles we will also visit during a weekend.

2. **Dŵr Cymru will encourage customers to provide their own meter readings, if it is safe to do so**

There are times when it is more cost effective for customers to provide a meter reading than for us to send a meter reader for an ad-hoc visit, for example, for a change of occupancy. In such circumstances we will ask you to take the reading, if it is safe to do so, and will encourage you to agree your outgoing reading with the new occupier to avoid later disagreements.

If we are not able to obtain access for a scheduled meter reading (but we had read the meter for the previous reading cycle) we will encourage you to provide a meter reading, either by leaving a note in the window or by telephoning our contact centre on **0800 052 0140**. If we do send you an estimated bill you can ask for a revised bill if you give us a reading.

3. **Dŵr Cymru must access all meters to read them at least once every two years**

The water meter remains the property of Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water and as such we reserve the right to access the meter for reading and maintenance purposes. We need to know that the meter is operating correctly, has not been tampered with and to verify previous readings. The regulatory measure stipulates that we must read your meter at least once every two years and for this reason we may not be able to accept a customer reading if this would cause us to fail the regulatory measure for Company meter reads.

4. **Dŵr Cymru's policy for meter reading will reflect a cost efficient approach**

One of the highest costs associated with metered billing is obtaining the meter readings. In recognition of this we will set a cost efficient billing frequency, balancing the needs of our business with the needs of our customers.

We offer the following meter reading and billing frequencies:

- Monthly – for customers with more than £24,000 annual bill value
- Quarterly – for customers with more than £8,000 annual bill value
- 6-monthly – for all other metered customers

Currently, the cost of quarterly meter reading and billing for all customers is prohibitive. We will continue to review these costs every 5 years as advances in meter reading technologies are made.

5. Dŵr Cymru has a structured escalation process to ensure that meters at risk of failing the regulatory measure are read by our meter reader

We will be as flexible as possible as we appreciate you can't always be available to give us access to read the meter.

It is important that you keep us advised of any changes of ownership, your current contact address and telephone numbers and any relevant circumstances that may affect access to the meter, for example a holiday home only used in summer months or premises only accessible at night.

Where access is not readily given, the process we will invoke will have the following stages:

- 5.1 Attempt day time, evening and weekend readings
- 5.2 Leave a card or letter at your property asking you to contact us
- 5.3 Write to explain we must have access to read your meter and ask you to contact us
- 5.4 We will send a series of reminder letters
- 5.5 We will appoint a debt collection agency who will contact you
- 5.6 The debt collection agency will visit your property to attempt to read the meter
- 5.7 We will send a final letter warning of legal action
- 5.8 We will apply for a 'Warrant of Entry'
- 5.9 We will execute the 'Warrant of Entry'. A senior manager, accompanied by a locksmith (and the Police if necessary) will gain entry to your property to read the meter.

Throughout this process if we have your telephone number we will continue to try to make contact with you.

6. Customers should not have to subsidise the costs we incur dealing with deliberately obstructive customers

Unfortunately some customers intentionally and deliberately obstruct meter reading and meter maintenance activities. Whilst they are few in number they are costly to deal with.

We believe that other customers should not have to bear these additional costs and therefore we reserve the right for the costs incurred for steps 5.5 to 5.9 to be re-charged to those causing the difficulties.

We consider an obstructive customer to be someone who:

- Repeatedly refuses access to the meter on their property
- Agrees repeated appointments then fails to keep them
- Places obstructions around the meter, or on the boundary box or meter chamber, for example, decking or patio slabs
- Builds fixtures or fittings around an internal meter that prevents us reading or replacing the meter, for example, fitted kitchen units
- Intentionally damages the meter to prevent us from reading it
- Removes the meter.

We will charge you for every failed visit if, for example, you fail to remove obstacles and we will charge you if we have to replace a damaged meter or one that has been removed.

7. Dŵr Cymru will not apply any additional charges to customers genuinely unable to comply with meter reading requirements

We appreciate there will be times when you may be unable to support our meter reading requirements. Typically this could be because you have been in hospital long term or you are physically unable to read your meter. In such cases we would not apply the additional charges. If the charges are applied in error they will be withdrawn.

8. Dŵr Cymru will encourage our customers to minimise meter reading costs

The meter readings which cost the most are those that cannot be made as part of a scheduled 'walk' or route. If you ask us to take a reading outside of the scheduled route we will encourage you to read the meter yourself, if you can do so easily and safely. For example, if you receive an estimated bill because we have been unable to gain access and you ask us to read your meter we may make a nominal charge for that visit. We would not charge you if you provide a reading before the visit, if it would be unsafe for you to read the meter or you have registered 'additional needs' that make meter reading difficult for you.

Other help

Welsh Water Assist

If you receive certain benefits and have either three or more children under the age of 19 or suffer from certain medical conditions you may be eligible for a lower bill by applying for our Welsh Water Assist tariff. If you think you may be eligible please contact us on **0800 052 0138** for an application form (supporting documentation will be required).

Tips to save you money and help you use water efficiently

Would you like to save money on your water bill? Cutting down on the amount of water you use might help:

- Have a shower instead of a bath – a five minute shower instead of a bath every day could save up to 400 litres of water a week
- Only use your dishwasher or washing machine when it has a full load
- Turn the tap off when you are brushing your teeth or washing dishes
- Wash your car using a bucket of water instead of a hosepipe
- Fix any leaks, dripping taps or toilet overflows
- Collect rainwater in a water butt for your garden.

If you are using more water than expected please contact us and ask for our booklet 'Where does your water go?' This is a practical guide to help you track down excess water usage.

For more information on your bill, different payment methods or our tariffs please call us on 0800 052 0140 (Monday – Friday, 8am – 8pm, Saturday, 8:30 am – 1:30 pm) or visit us online at www.dwrcymru.com

Leaks

Did you know?

A leaking pipe can waste as much water in five days as an average family uses in a year!

Who is responsible for repairing the leak?

We are responsible for the water main in the street and the pipe that runs from the main to the boundary of your property. This is often marked by a stop tap. The pipe work from the stop tap in the street onto the property is normally your responsibility as either the owner or occupier. If you are the person who pays the water charges, you are responsible for the pipe work. Where the pipe supplies more than one property, referred to as a common supply or joint supply, the responsibility to maintain it is shared by all the customers who receive water from this pipe.

FREE leak repairs

You are responsible for maintaining the pipe work that runs from the boundary of the highway in which our main is laid into your home or premises, regardless of the location of the meter. If there is a leak on this part of the service pipe, you are responsible for making the repairs – unless you qualify for our FREE leak repair scheme or business grant. For household customers we will try to repair a leak on your part of the underground service pipe free of charge, once within any three-year period. **Terms and conditions apply** – We will not attempt any repair that interferes with any building or structure e.g. a conservatory, outbuildings, walls etc.

For non-household customers – you are eligible to apply for a £50 grant towards the cost of repairing or replacing the pipe. Only one grant payment will be made in any three-year period for the property. In order to qualify, the leak must be repaired on your underground pipe within 14 days of first contacting us.

If you would like further information on our leak repair scheme, please contact us on 0800 052 0138 and ask for our 'Customer Information – Leakage' sheet.

Leaks can be an expensive problem especially when you are on a metered supply. To spot a leak, take a meter reading (if safe to do so) once a month on the same day and keep a note of it. If your readings increase significantly, and your water consumption hasn't changed, you may have a leak.

If you think there is a leak on your supply pipe work please contact us on **0800 281 432**. If you don't have a leak and would like to understand why your water use has increased please ask us for our 'Where does your water go?' booklet.

Will I have to pay for water lost through a leak?

We may grant a one off allowance for water lost due to a leak to household customers. This generally applies where the leakage occurs on underground pipes. This allowance will be restricted to the beginning of the billing period prior to the one in which the leak was repaired.

For household and non-household customers we may grant an allowance for sewerage charges when the water lost through leakage has not returned to the public sewer via your drains. This allowance may be awarded for up to two charging years prior to the one in which the leak was repaired, if it can be shown that the leak was present during that period.

Customers must apply for an allowance within six months of a leak being repaired.

Please note we will provide a full water and sewerage allowance on the amount of water lost to leakage if, following investigation, the leak is deemed to be the responsibility of Welsh Water or its appointed agents/contractors.

However no allowance will be given if the leak has been caused through the carelessness of the customer or someone acting on their behalf (e.g. leaking overflow, dripping taps, etc).

Useful Contact Numbers

Water services and emergencies
0800 052 0130

Sewerage services and emergencies
0800 085 3968

Reporting a leak
0800 281 432

For your nearest area office call
0800 052 0130

Lines are open

**24 hours a day
seven days a week**

Billing and accounts
0800 052 0140

Water meters
0800 052 0140

Welsh language line for billing
and account enquiries
0800 052 6058

For customers with hearing difficulties,
call our text telephone facility
0800 052 4125

Lines are open

**Monday-Friday
8am - 8pm
excluding bank
holidays**

**Saturday
8.30am - 1.30pm**

This leaflet is available in alternative formats, including audio cassette, large print or Braille. For further information please call 0800 052 0145.

Visits us online at www.dwrcymru.com to pay your bill, download our FREE information booklets, and discover more about your water supply.

www.livingandlearningwithwater.com is packed with games, downloads and information for children, teachers and parents.

Standard terms and conditions for a metered supply of water

Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water (hereinafter called “the Company”) will supply water by meter subject to the following terms and conditions:

- 1 The customer shall take the supply subject to The Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations 1999 made under the Water Industry Act 1999 currently in force or any regulations from time to time made by the Secretary of State under the Water industry Act 1991 or any statutory modification or re-enactment thereof for preventing the waste, undue consumption, misuse or contamination of water, and shall abide by, observe and comply with such byelaws and regulations.
- 2 For the purpose of ascertaining the quantity of water supplied, the Company will provide a meter of such size and description as it may prescribe and shall maintain and replace the same as it may consider necessary. The said meter or any substituted meter shall belong to the Company and shall not be removed or in any way disturbed or interfered with except by an official of the Company, except under (11) below. Unauthorised tampering with a meter is an offence under S175 of the Water Industry Act 1991 and carries a fine on summary conviction.
- 3 If water escapes from an internal meter installation for whatever reason, the customer is responsible for any resulting damage. The customer is responsible for ensuring that any internal meter installation is protected from freezing whilst still allowing easy reading of the meter.
- 4 The record of the meter of the consumption of water shall be taken by an official of the Company (or, on occasions, with the agreement of the Company, by the customer) and form the basis of any charges to be levied in accordance with water consumed, together with any fixed charges prescribed by the Company in accordance with its published Scheme of Charges. Should any doubt arise on either side as to the correctness of the meter register of the water supplied, the Company may, and at the written request of the customer shall, remove and test the meter in accordance with the Water (Meters) Regulations and the Measuring Equipment (Cold Water Meter) Regulations or such other Regulations as may be made. Where a reduction of charges under S.147 of the Water Industry Act 1991 applies, the arrangements for measurement shall be determined by the Company. The Company seeks to read meters at least once every 12 months. If it cannot read a meter the Company may ask the customer to provide a reading. In the absence of a reading the Company will estimate usage based on previous consumption. The next bill based on an actual meter reading will adjust the figures to the correct amount. If a customer is dissatisfied with an estimated bill, the customer may notify the Company of the actual reading and the company will issue an amended bill.
- 5 The customer shall be responsible for all water after it has passed through the meter and shall pay therefore notwithstanding for any loss or leakage, waste or misuse. This responsibility shall not be relieved by any repairs to pipes and fittings which are the customer’s responsibility to maintain being carried out by the Company or any other person. Consequently it is in the customer’s own interest to read the meter at frequent and regular intervals in order that any unaccountable increase in consumption will not continue without investigation. (See the Company’s Leakage Code of Practice and ‘Your Metered Supply’).

- 6 The Company reserves the right to require the customer to install a stop valve on the customer's part of the service pipe within his own land as near as is reasonably practical to the meter. It should be noted that the customer is responsible for the maintenance of all pipes and fittings (which term, by virtue of Clause 2 above, does not include the meter) on the customer's part of the service pipe irrespective of the position of the meter. The customer's part of the service pipe extends from the Company stop valve generally at the highway boundary into the customer's premises. The responsibility for some parts of the service pipe is sometimes shared with other customers.
- 7 The Company reserves the right to require the customer to install cold water storage facilities having a volume considered adequate by the Company in relation to the use of water at the site to be connected.
- 8 The supply of water may be interrupted or suspended for the purposes of carrying out any necessary works subject to any safeguards relating to prior notification under the Company's Service Guarantee.
- 9 Subject to the Company's Service Guarantee the Company shall not be responsible for any damage or loss that the customer may sustain or any accident to any of the customer's employees by reasons of any interruption or suspension of the supply or any excess or deficiency of pressure or any failure of any employees, works, machinery, pipes or apparatus of the Company.
- 10 The supply of water may be discontinued and/or the service pipe disconnected in accordance with S.61 of the Water Industry Act 1991 wherever the customer has failed to pay the Company's charges. In case of household customers, the Company's Code of Practice for the Collection of Unpaid Charges from Household Customers will be observed.
- 11 The supply of water may also be discontinued at the request of the customer in accordance with S.62 of the Water Industry Act 1991. Provided the customer has given notice to the Company under S.62 of the Water Industry Act 1991 for the supply of water to be disconnected, the Company will make no charge for permanently disconnecting the service pipe. If the arrangements to supply water by meter are discontinued for any reason and the meter is within the curtilage of the customer's premises, the customer will be required at his/her expense to remove and to deliver the meter to the Company in good condition, unless the customer and the Company agree that the meter becomes the property and liability of the customer.
- 12 Any notice from the Company under these terms and conditions may be served by leaving it for the customer at the premises to be supplied or at the customer's last known address or place of business or (in the case of a company) at its registered office or by putting it into the general post addressed to the customer at such premises, and shall be sufficiently authenticated if it bears or purports to bear, in print or otherwise, the signature of the Director or any other authorised officer of the Company. Any notice from the customer to the Company shall be signed by or on behalf of the customer, and shall be sent to Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water P.O. Box 690, Cardiff, CF3 5WL, by post or otherwise.
- 13 The Company will specify details of the meter location, type, size and installation arrangements, in accordance with S.47(2) and S.162 of the Water Industry Act 1991 subject to any overriding statutory regulations. If the meter is not located in the highway, and not on the customer's own premises, the customer must have a legal right of access thereto for the benefit of himself and the Company.

