



Your guide to
Household Water Meters
2010/11

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1. Introduction

If we all use water wisely, we can help reduce the amount taken from rivers and underground sources. By opting for a meter you not only benefit the environment by being more aware of your own use, but it may also help reduce your water charges. This guide will help you to make that choice and apply for a meter to be fitted. Please read it thoroughly to ensure you understand the policies and procedures.

Unmetered charges for water are based on the rateable value (RV) of your property, as shown on your water bill. As an alternative you can have a meter installed so that future bills are based upon the amount of water you actually use.

In some cases it is compulsory to install a water meter at a household property. This is when we consider that a substantial amount of water would be used over and above that of a normal household. These cases are:

- **If you use a garden sprinkler.**
- **If you leave a hosepipe running unattended.**
- **If you have a swimming pool or garden pond with a capacity greater than 10,000 litres.**

2. Will I be better off on a meter?

The following tables will help you decide whether you could benefit from having a meter installed. Please be aware that this should only be used as a guide because water usage can vary considerably depending on the individual household. It is worth remembering that power showers use a lot more water than ordinary showers and can use as much water as a bath. **Do not underestimate your usage.** This information can also be found on our website, www.south-staffs-water.co.uk

Annual Water Use: Low	Prefer showers. Few/no baths. Little/low use of washing machine. Little/no garden watering.					
No. in household	1	2	3	4	5	6
Amount used (m³)	33m ³	61m ³	89m ³	117m ³	144m ³	172m ³
Annual Water Use: Average	Daily baths/showers. Regular use of washing machine and dishwasher. Occasional use of hosepipe.					
No. in household	1	2	3	4	5	6
Amount used (m³)	76m ³	117m ³	159m ³	200m ³	242m ³	283m ³
Annual Water Use: High	Daily baths. Heavy use of washing machine. Daily use of dishwasher. Extensive use of sprinkler or hosepipe.					
No. in household	1	2	3	4	5	6
Amount used (m³)	97m ³	142m ³	190m ³	239m ³	288m ³	338m ³

1m³ = one cubic metre = 1000 litres (220 gallons)

Now you have your estimated usage, see how much you will expect to pay for your total annual metered bill. These figures are based on a semi-detached property. Enter the amount of your current annual unmetered charges and calculate the difference between the two columns.

Estimated Usage	Metered charge	Unmetered charge	Difference
33m ³	£149.87		
61m ³	£197.87		
76m ³	£223.59		
89m ³	£245.88		
97m ³	£259.60		
117m ³	£293.89		
142m ³	£336.75		
144m ³	£340.18		
159m ³	£365.90		
172m ³	£388.18		
190m ³	£419.05		
200m ³	£436.19		
239m ³	£503.06		
242m ³	£508.20		
283m ³	£578.49		
288m ³	£587.07		
338m ³	£672.79		

The following information may aid you in calculating more accurately your water usage:

- Bath 80 litres per bath
- Shower 35 litres per shower
- Washing machine..... 65 litres per load
- Dishwasher 25 litres per load
- Flushing the toilet 7-9 litres per flush
- Sprinkler/hose 540 litres per hour

Figures taken from Ofwat's "Water & You" leaflet. Available at www.ofwat.gov.uk

3. How will my charges be calculated?

The charges for metered water consist of five factors.

- **Chargeable volume of water** relates to the usage of water registered through the meter.

Current charge = 87.77 pence per cubic metre

- **Water standing charge** relates to the size of the meter and covers the cost of reading, billing, maintaining and in due course replacing the meter.

Current charge = £28.56 per annum

- **Used water** relates to volume of water registered through the meter. It is assumed that the volume of 'water in' equals the volume of 'water out'.

Current charge = 83.68 pence per cubic metre

- **Sewerage standing charge** relates to the costs incurred by Severn Trent Water not attributable to the consumption registered through the meter.

Current charge = £11.69 per annum

- **Surface water drainage charge** relates to removal and treatment of the water that falls as rain onto roofs, yards and other parts of the property. This is an annual charge based on the property type:

Current charge =

Terrace/Flat£26.46

Semi-detached£53.04

Detached£79.49

Sewerage and surface water drainage charges are collected by South Staffs Water on behalf of Severn Trent Water.

4. Where will the meter be installed?

External meter and chamber

Our preferred location is outside at the boundary of your home, where our existing main stop tap (MST) is located either on the footpath or just within the boundary of your home.

Internal meter and touch pad

Sometimes it's not possible to install an external meter, usually due to shared supplies. In these circumstances we will carry out a survey to fit the meter inside, where the supply first enters the property. If your home has more than one point of entry, no more than two meters will be fitted.

5. How much will it cost?

Normally the meter will be fitted **free of charge**, as long as the meter is fitted in one of our preferred locations and the work can be carried out practically and at reasonable expense. We may refuse to fit a meter free of charge where:

- You have a shared service with one or more properties. If this is the case, you can apply to have a separate supply. To find out more visit the Developer Services section on our website - www.south-staffs-water.co.uk or call **01922 618062**.
- The dwelling is a flat with separate hot and cold water supplies.
- Substantial alterations to the existing plumbing and/or joinery would be needed before it could be installed.
- You ask to have the meter and/or touch pad in a location other than the one determined by our surveyor.
- If your home has two points of entry, two meters will need to be fitted. The cost of installing the additional meter(s) is not included and would have to be paid for by yourself, this is £100 + VAT per meter.
Should you not wish to pay for the second meter fit, you will be offered the Assessed Water Charge (see section 7).

Rented accommodation

If you live in rented accommodation you can still have a meter fitted, free of charge subject to conditions. You must let your landlord know that you have asked us for a meter.

If your tenancy is for less than six months, you must obtain your landlord's written permission before applying, a copy of which must be submitted with the application form.

6. What is not included?

Sometimes you may need to carry out work prior to a meter being fitted. These would have to be undertaken by you and at your cost. These may include:

- Structural or major pipework alterations
- Extensive joinery requirements – for example, the complete removal and replacement of kitchen units
- The disconnection and repositioning of gas appliances
- The repair or replacement of defective internal stop taps
- Tiling or redecoration
- The repair of any leaks found on your property
- The replanting or landscaping of garden areas
- The permanent reinstatement of drives, paths and patios that may have to be lifted to install an external meter chamber. This includes surfaces like printed concrete, black or coloured bitumastics and block paving. Any permanent reinstatement will have to be undertaken by you at your cost.

7. What if you cannot install a meter?

If the plumbing is complex and the cost of installing the meter is unreasonable we will offer you the choice of either an 'assessed charge' or keeping your current way of billing. The assessed charge is based on the property type, not the number of occupants, and will be effective from the date of the initial survey.

	Assessed charge for water - £/pa	Assessed charge for sewerage - £/pa	Surface water drainage - £/pa
Terrace/flat	£111.69	£103.56	£26.46
Semi-detached	£155.55	£118.23	£53.04
Detached	£197.09	£132.41	£79.49
Single Person	£98.55	£66.94	Applicable property type charge (as above)

Where a meter can be fitted at reasonable cost, or where you refuse to pay any additional costs for the installation in an alternative location, the assessed charge will not be offered. The charges will continue to be based on the rateable value of your home.

8. How do I apply for a meter?

If you wish to have a meter installed please complete the application form, in full, at the back of this guide and send it to:

Integra Utility Services, PO Box 5580, Derby, DE1 9ES.

Please contact Integra, who are working on our behalf, on **0845 45 67 063** if you have any further questions or wish to know how your application is progressing.

How long will it take?

Integra will confirm within five working days that they have received your application form. They will telephone you to arrange an appointment to carry out the initial survey. If they cannot contact you by telephone, they will write asking you to contact them, and if no contact is received within 21 days they will presume that you do not wish to continue with your application.

Integra aims to carry out the survey and fit your meter within three months of the application being received. Sometimes, with your agreement, they can install the meter during the initial survey. If this is not possible they will need to arrange an appointment at a more suitable time. Normally the survey takes around one hour and the installation two to three hours.

Remember, if you have to cancel your appointment, please contact Integra as soon as possible on 0845 45 67 063.

If it is necessary to install a meter chamber, then this will be completed on a separate visit. As we need access to your property, we will need you, or a representative to be present, to confirm that the work has been undertaken satisfactorily.

We will update your account within one month of the meter being fitted. It is important that you continue to pay your unmetered bills during this time. Once completed any over or underpayment will be refunded or billed accordingly.

9. Do I need to do anything at my property?

As stated in section (4), if it is possible to fit the meter outside at the boundary of your home you will need to take no further action. Where this is not possible we will carry out a survey to see if we can fit one inside. To do this we will need access to the internal stop tap where the supply first enters the property. This will be confirmed during the survey.

Is your internal stop tap in good working order?

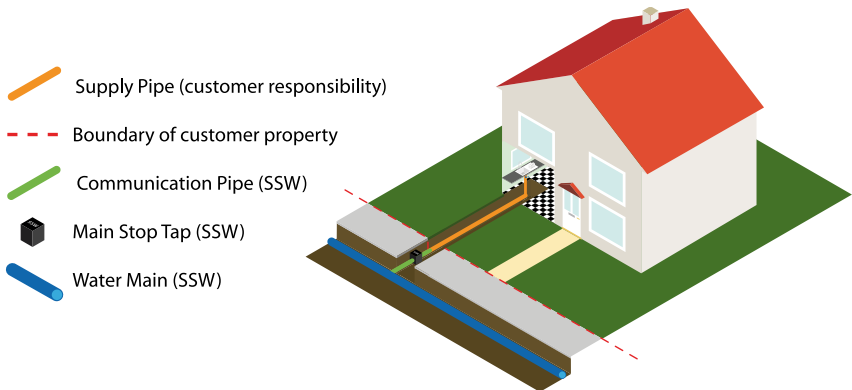
If it is necessary to replace the internal stop tap, you will be informed of this before work begins.

During the installation, Integra will need to turn off your water supply. Please do not start a washing machine or dishwasher before the appointment is due.

10. What else do I need to consider?

Leakage

Water is delivered to your home from the water main by means of a supply pipe. You are responsible for this section of pipework (orange) from the boundary of your property and including all internal plumbing as shown in the diagram:



When a leak occurs on your supply pipe, dependent on the location of the meter you may be charged for the excess consumption. As the home owner you are responsible for the repair and maintenance of this pipework.

Although the supply pipe of a property is the owner's responsibility, we offer a once only free leak repair service. This scheme is subject to terms and conditions. Visit our website www.south-staffs-water.co.uk or contact us on **0800 389 1011** for more information.

If you have a leak on an above ground pipe or fitting, you must contact a plumber for assistance. A meter will not be installed until repairs have been undertaken.

11. What if I change my mind?

If you change your mind at any stage, you should notify Integra as soon as possible so that any appointments can be cancelled. **Please telephone 0845 45 67 063.**

If, once the meter has been installed, you find that your bill is higher than your previous charges, then you can revert back to charges based on the rateable value of your home. This must be requested in writing within 12 months of the meter being installed. You will have to pay for the water registered through the meter up to the date of your request.

Any additional charges you may have paid to carry out the meter installation will not be refunded.

Once the meter has been fitted it will NOT be removed even if you revert back to paying by rateable value charges.

If you move into a property that has a meter fitted, you must pay the charges based on metered usage, even if the previous occupiers had reverted back to rateable value.

If you use a garden sprinkler, leave a hose pipe running unattended or have a pond or swimming pool with a capacity greater than 10,000 litres you will not be able to revert to the rateable value charges for your property.

12. What standards of service can I expect?

Appointments will be offered before or after 1pm. If we fail to keep to the appointed time, you will be entitled to a payment of £20.

We provide a range of additional services if you require them, these include Braille and large print. To register or enquire about these, call **0845 60 70 456** or write to **South Staffs Water, Green Lane, Walsall, WS2 7PD.**

Please also visit our website, **www.south-staffs-water.co.uk** for full details.

13. How do I know who is calling?

All our staff and contractors working on our behalf carry identification cards. They will always produce this when calling at your home.

Do not let anyone into your property without first checking their identification card. Any official caller will not mind taking the time to show you proof of their identity.

In addition, we operate a password scheme, which helps to safeguard against bogus callers. Only the relevant members of staff will know your password and they will use it when they telephone you or visit your home. To register for a password to be used only in conjunction with this application please complete the password section on the application form. This can be anything up to 8 letters. As the application form will be sent back to Integra Utility Services, you may wish to also write it here:

P	A	S	S	W	O	R	D
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Remember to use it!

If you are still suspicious, you should call the Police or contact Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.



14. How do I read the meter?

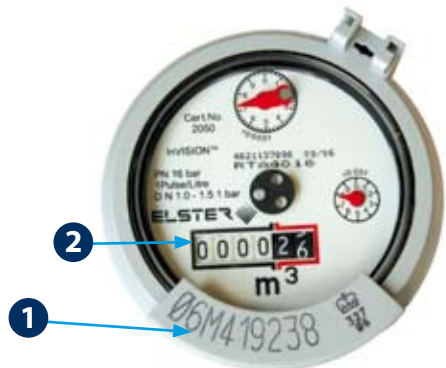
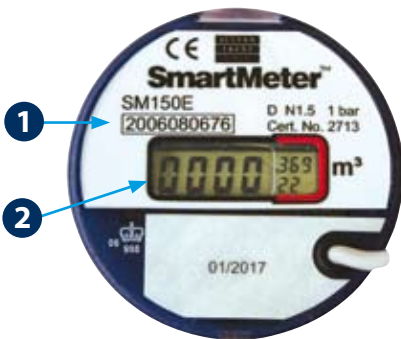
Each year we will send you four bills, at least one of these will be based on our own reading, and the others will be estimated. We calculate daily water usage and multiply this by the number of days that the bill covers. If you receive an estimated bill you can provide us with an actual meter reading, either by telephoning us on **0845 60 70 456** or through our website **www.south-staffs-water.co.uk**

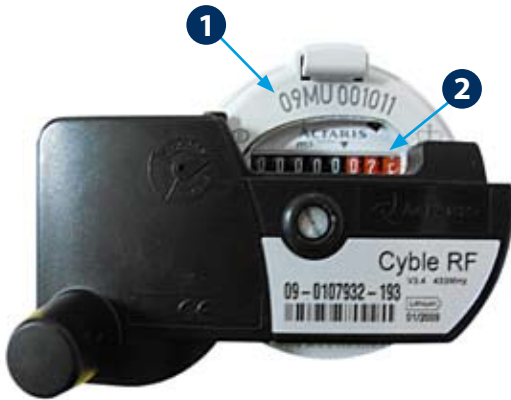
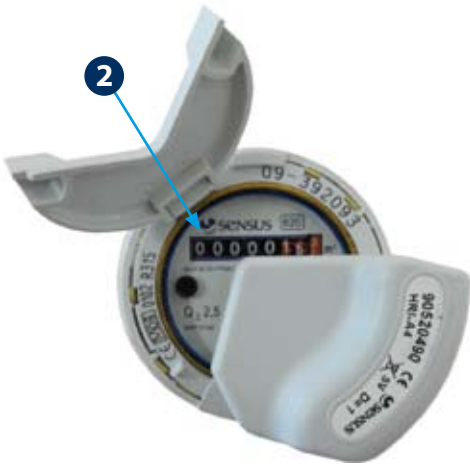
We recommend that you read the meter regularly. It will help you monitor the amount of water you use and alert you to any leaks that may have developed on your pipework.

Shown below and on the page opposite is a guide to reading the most commonly fitted water meters. On occasion it may be necessary to fit a different type of meter, if this is the case you will be shown how to read it when it is installed.

Key

- 1 The unique meter serial number
- 2 The current meter reading in cubic meters. The reading is the four digits within the black banded area. The numbers in the red band and the red dials are for our reference only.





Moving house

It is important to remember to let us know when you move house. When you become a metered customer, please provide us with a reading and forwarding address on the day you move. We will then be able to send you a final bill. Please telephone our customer helpline on **0845 60 70 456**.

15. How do I pay my metered water bills?

- **Direct Debit – the easiest of them all and FREE!** Just call our dedicated Direct Debit team on **0845 60 70 456** with your bank account details and we'll do the rest. We will send you a statement four times a year for your information. Following the meter installation we will ask you to pay £28 per month until we have actual readings to recalculate your monthly payments. We can arrange to collect your payment on either 1st, 14th or 21st of the month.
- **Pay Online** – E-Payment is a secure and convenient method of paying your water bill and is available 24 hours a day. Simply visit our website at **www.south-staffs-water.co.uk**
- **Pay by Card – 0845 45 67 064** (Automated line) Payments made by credit card will incur an administration charge.
- **Neighbourhood Office** – Payments are accepted at some offices **free of charge**
- **At a bank** – this service is free at any branch of your own bank. Other banks may charge for this.
- **By post** – send to South Staffs Water, PO BOX 63, Walsall, WS2 7PJ. **Please do NOT send cash or post dated cheques. Receipts will NOT be issued.**
- **Post Office** – the Post Office will charge you for this service.
- **Paying by cash** – cash payments are processed **free of charge**. Simply take your bill and cash to any PayPoint outlet. You will be given a printed receipt as proof of payment.
- **Moneyway** – you can spread 12 months or 52 weeks. For more information call **08000 92 99 81**.

Payments made at Neighbourhood Offices or Post Offices can take seven days to reach us.

Please note you must carry on paying your current unmetered water bill in the normal way until your account has been amended. Any over payment will be refunded. Any underpayment will be billed accordingly.

Please tell us at once if you are finding it difficult to pay your bill. We have a number of plans available designed to help. Simply call us on 0845 60 70 456. Remember that if you do not pay your water bill it may mean extra costs for you if we have to collect through court proceedings.

16. Application for a household water meter

So that we can process your application it is important that you complete the details in full. If you fail to give us all the information we need this may delay your application.

Mr Mrs Miss Ms Other

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

How many people live in your property? _____

Contact telephone numbers

To make the appointment, we need at least one daytime contact telephone number.

Home: _____

Work: _____

Mobile: _____

Property details

Address of property to be metered if different from above:

Postcode: _____

To help Integra in planning their schedule, please indicate below your preferred appointment time.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Before 1pm					
After 1pm					

For extra security, we operate a 'password' scheme. If you want to use a password please fill in the boxes - no more than 8 letters can be used.

P	A	S	S	W	O	R	D
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Integra will use your chosen password when they telephone or visit you. Please remember to make a note of your password.

Type of property (where meter is required)

Flat Terraced Semi-Detached Detached

Do you use a sprinkler or leave a hosepipe running unattended? Yes No

Do you have a swimming pool/pond with a capacity greater than 10,000 litres? Yes No

Once the meter is installed how do you want to pay your future metered bills?

Direct Debit Monthly - spreading the payments, making budgeting easier

Direct Debit Quarterly - when your bill is sent

Payment Booklet Monthly - using cheque or cash and paying on due dates

Cheque or Cash Quarterly - when your bill is sent

Are you the property owner? Yes No

Is your tenancy agreement for 6 months or longer? Yes No

If no, please attach authority from your landlord agreeing to the meter installation.

Declaration

I wish to have a meter installed at the property stated and agree to be bound by the Company's terms and conditions of the meter option scheme.

I understand that upon receipt of this measured charge notice you will contact me and arrange for a representative to carry out a survey which will determine whether or not a meter can be fitted, together with any additional charges which may apply.

This application must be signed by the Account Holder.

Signature _____ **Date** _____

**Completed forms should be returned to:
Integra Utility Services, PO Box 5580, Derby, DE1 9ES.**

