



**Metering Policy**

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Water Meters

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This document sets out our company policy on when, where and how we install water meters at household and non-household premises, and how we make sure they work correctly.

Our website has a number of useful frequently asked questions relating to meters, metering activity and metered charges. These can be found on our website at [www.affinitywater.co.uk](http://www.affinitywater.co.uk)

This metering policy should be read in conjunction with the following documents:

- Household Charges Scheme (for our customers of household premises),
- Wholesale Tariff Document (for the Contracting Retailer for non-household premises),
- Charging Arrangements for New Connections Services (for developers, self-lay providers and customers of new developments).

These documents are available on our website at [www.affinitywater.co.uk](http://www.affinitywater.co.uk)

References in this document to “you” means the person liable to pay charges for water supplied to premises which are to be metered. References to “we” “us” “our” means Affinity Water Limited.

## 2 When we *will* install meters

We own and are responsible for the maintenance of the meter and any equipment associated with it.

We will install a meter in the following circumstances:

1. If you require a supply of water for domestic purposes to your new premises. You will need to submit a new connection notice via our online Developer Services portal at [www.affinitywater.co.uk/developing](http://www.affinitywater.co.uk/developing) and we will notify you if a meter needs to be installed at your premises and when the meter will be installed.
  - a. New premises are premises which have never been connected to a water supply for domestic purposes before. This includes newly constructed premises on land where premises have previously been substantially or entirely demolished, regardless of whether the service pipe by which the supply was previously made has been reused.
2. For household premises in an area covered by our Water Saving Programme as described below.
3. Where you ask us to install a meter at your premises under our Meter Option Scheme. If you have a tenancy of your premises for six months or more, your landlord may not prevent you from exercising these rights and you do not need the landlord’s permission, however we recommend you let your landlord know as a courtesy.
  - a. We aim to install the meter within 90 days of you asking us for one. If we do not do so due to circumstances within our control, we will switch you to metered charges and apply estimated volumetric charges until we install the meter in accordance with our

Household Charges Scheme. We will then adjust these estimated charges if subsequent meter readings indicate a lower volumetric charge should apply.

- b. metered charges will otherwise apply in accordance with our Household Charges Scheme.
4. Where we have required you to have a separate supply pipe. We will notify you if a meter needs to be installed at your premises. Charges for the installation of the meter may apply.
5. If you use a garden sprinkler or other automatic garden watering system at your premises. Or if you have a pond or a swimming pool with a capacity greater than 10,000 litres which is designed to replenish itself automatically.

Unless stated otherwise, we will bear the cost of installing and connecting a meter to existing household premises. Following installation of the meter, metered charges will apply in the above circumstances in accordance with our Household Charges Scheme.

For non-household premises, we will charge you for the cost of installing and connecting a meter:

- Charges for external meters installed as part of a new connection to new premises shall be included in the new connection charge. Charges for internal meters to new premises shall apply in accordance with our Charging Arrangements for New Connections Services.
- Requests for the installation of meters to existing non-household premises will be received by the Retailer and processed under Part B of the Wholesale-Retail Code: Operational Terms and the charges for meter installations as set out in our Wholesale Tariff Document shall apply.

### **3 When we *may* install meters**

For household premises, we may require that a meter is installed in the following circumstances:

1. Where there has been a change in the persons occupying the premises where no person who was in occupation of the premises before the change remains in occupation after the change.
2. Premises which are deemed empty where charges have not been levied for any period of at least 12 months by reason of the premises being empty.
3. Sub-divided premises that have been newly formed by the division or merger of premises.
4. If your premises has a bath with a capacity (measured to the centre line of overflow) greater than 230 litres.
5. If your premises has a shower unit of a type specified under paragraph 4(c) of the table to Regulation 5 of the Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations 1999.
6. If your premises has a water softener unit which incorporates reverse osmosis.

Metered charges will apply in the above circumstances in accordance with our Household Charges Scheme.

For non-household premises, we will follow the relevant processes under Part B of the Wholesale-Retail Code: operational Terms and apply the charges set out in our Wholesale Tariff Document.

## 4 Our Water Saving Programme

The Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs has determined that premises situated in our Central region are in an area of serious water stress. The Secretary of State has approved our Water Resources Management Plan which includes a programme for the fixing of charges by reference to volume for household premises in Affinity Water's Central Region.

Our metering programme offers a two-year transitional period following installation of a meter during which you will continue to be billed on a non-metered basis unless you elect to be charged on a metered basis earlier.

### 4.1 How does it work?

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1. We will contact you before we install a meter at your premises to explain the process and our two-year opt-in period for switching to metered charges.
2. We aim to install the water meter within 90 days following our initial survey. If our initial survey indicates that;
  - a. installing the meter would not be reasonably practicable;
  - b. installing the meter would be unreasonably expensive, or;
  - c. you have not provided access to your premises,our assessed charges will apply to your premises in accordance with our Household Charges Scheme.
3. Once we have installed the meter, metered charges will apply in accordance with our Household Charges Scheme to water supplied to the premises from the first to occur of:
  - a. you asking to switch to metered charges;
  - b. a change in occupation of the premises;
  - c. the date of the next meter reading taken by us following the second anniversary of installation of the meter.

The Water Saving Programme also applies to empty premises and we will install a water meter at premises which we consider are empty. Metered charges will apply immediately upon occupation in accordance with our Household Charges Scheme.

The Water Saving Programme will not apply to premises where we have an existing arrangement in place with certain local authority and housing association landlords.

Information about metered and non-metered charges relating to our Water Saving Programme including eligibility for our concessionary tariff LIFT, is set out in our Household Charges Scheme.

## 5 Where we will install meters

We are required by law to install water meters so they are reasonably accessible for reading, inspection, testing and maintenance. Meters are usually (but not always) fitted where your external stoptap is located. The stoptap and the meter are apparatus belonging to us.

When we install a meter for the first time at your premises, will let you know where we intend to install it. You may ask us to fit the meter in a different location. If we agree, you will need to pay us for the cost associated with installing the meter in a different location:

1. for household premises, we will give you an estimate of any costs you will need to pay us to meet your request.
2. for non-household premises, we will follow the relevant processes under Part B of the Wholesale-Retail Code: Operational Terms and apply the charges set out in our Wholesale Tariff Document, which includes any requests by you to change the size, model or location of the meter.

### 5.1 External meters

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Where possible we will fit meters outside the property at the location of the external stop tap. This could be on the footpath or verge outside your property, or just inside your property boundary. A meter installed outside a building must be installed as near as is reasonably practicable either to the boundary of the premises supplied or to the point where the supply pipe enters the building.

### 5.2 Internal meters

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We always try to install meters externally and only fit an internal meter when this is not possible. For example, if a customer has a shared water supply pipe they may need an internal meter. To make this more convenient for you we will fit an internal AMR (automated meter reading) meter so that we can take a meter reading from the road outside the property. More information on AMR meters is set out below.

A meter installed inside a building must be installed as near as is reasonably practicable to the point where the supply pipe enters the building or to the stop-tap. This will usually be under the kitchen sink or wherever your internal stop tap is located. The location of the meter does not alter your liability to maintain and repair your supply pipe.

If we are unable to reach agreement with you about the amount of any costs and/or the location for the meter installation, you (or we) may require an arbitrator to be appointed to determine the dispute.

### 5.3 Changing the location of an existing meter/stop-tap

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You may request that we move an existing stoptap and/or meter from your premises, for example from your driveway or front garden to the footpath. If we agree, we will charge you for the costs associated with re-siting the apparatus:

- a. for household premises, the costs are set out in our Household Charges Scheme, Schedule of Charges.

- b. for non-household premises, we will follow the relevant processes under Part B of the Wholesale-Retail Code: Operational Terms and apply the charges set out in our Wholesale Tariff Document, which includes any requests by you to change the size, model or location of the meter.

Where we relocate the meter, we will remain responsible for the pipework up to the original stoptap and our statutory powers to maintain and repair the pipe will continue to apply. This means we may need to access your driveway or front garden to carry out repair works to our pipe, even if the meter has been moved. We will let you know in advance when access is required.

Our Leakage Booklet has more information about who is responsibility for the different types of pipe and is available from our website at [www.affinitywater.co.uk](http://www.affinitywater.co.uk) or on request.

## 6 Carrying out metering work

We are responsible for carrying out any metering works, such as installing, connecting, maintaining, repairing, disconnecting, removing or replacing the meter or any pipes or apparatus in relation to the meter. Unless you have damaged the meter, we will bear the cost of replacing and repairing the meter.

### 6.1 External metering work

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If we are fitting an external meter, (either in the footpath or in your front garden/driveway) we will let you know in advance when we will be carrying out the works. There will be a brief disruption to your water supply while the work is carried out and it takes approximately one hour to fit a meter. The meter is installed inside a chamber, which will be flush to the ground, so all you see will be our meter cover.

We will usually fit an external meter in the same location as the external stoptap, this may be in your front garden/driveway. If we need to dig a hole to install the external meter, we will reinstate the hole once the meter is in place. The works may take longer as we will need to arrange for a team to excavate and fully reinstate the area. The level of reinstatement following completion of the works will depend on the material excavated, for example:

1. Where we have carried out works in your garden or in soft ground, we will reinstate the soil only and you will need to carry out any replanting yourself;
2. If we have removed paving slabs, bricks, shingle or chippings, we will put back what we removed;
3. Where we have excavated an area of black tarmac/concrete, we will reinstate only the excavated area with new black tarmac/concrete. The reinstated area may appear a different shade to the surrounding area due to natural fading of the surrounding tarmac/concrete;
4. You will need to arrange for any special finishes such as bespoke or non-standard construction materials to be reinstated at your expense. These include but are not limited to the following:
  - a. Resin bound/bounded surface
  - b. Printed/patterned concrete
  - c. Coloured material

Reinstatement may occur anytime within a two-week period following completion of the works. This is because weather conditions can affect the excavated material, which will impact on the standard of the reinstatement. We will always leave the site safe and tidy and will clear everything away once the reinstatement has been completed.

We pride ourselves on doing a good job, but if you discover that our repair works have become defective, we will carry out further works to rectify the defect, free of charge. This is applicable up to one year from the date we carried out the initial repair works.

## 6.2 Internal metering work

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If any metering work involves accessing your internal meter which is encased by any boxing, cladding or other materials then we will need to remove this in order to access the meter and carry out the works. If we cannot easily remove any encasing material, we will use a cutting tool if necessary to access the meter. Once the remedial works are complete, we will replace any encasing provided that the meter remains accessible should we need access to it in the future.

For household premises, if we need to access your internal meter, we will contact you to make an appointment.

For non-household premises, if we need to access your internal meter, we will follow the process set out in Part B of the Wholesale-Retail Code: Operational Terms.

If you have special needs that require an uninterrupted supply, you can register your needs with us by calling T: 0345 357 2406 or visit [www.affinitywater.co.uk/priority-services](http://www.affinitywater.co.uk/priority-services)

## 6.3 Checking for leaks

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If you are a household customer and we install a meter at your property for the first time and we find a visible leak on the supply pipe between the meter and your property (excluding any pipework underneath your property) the leak will be repaired by us free of charge provided it can be repaired without additional excavation. If the leak cannot be repaired without additional excavation, we will notify you of the leak and request that you arrange for the repair works to be carried out at your expense.

If we have installed a meter as part of our Water Saving Programme (applicable to our Central Region household customers only), we will repair any leaks on the supply pipe between the meter and your property (excluding any pipework underneath your property) which occur within three months of installing the meter free of charge.

Our Leakage Booklet sets out our procedure on leakage and is available on our website at [www.affinitywater.co.uk](http://www.affinitywater.co.uk) or on request.

## 7 Protection of meters

You must take all reasonable care of the meter, for example you must not cover or obstruct the meter in any way and you must allow us reasonable access to your premises in order for us to access the meter. This applies to meters installed externally and internally.

For household premises, if we incur a cost in accessing or re-siting the meter because you have covered or obstructed it, or if you damage the meter, then we will recover from you the reasonable expenses in re-siting, repairing or replacing the meter.

For non-household properties, if we incur a cost in accessing or re-siting the meter because you have covered or obstructed it, or if you damage the meter, we will recover the total cost of the actual work involved in repairing or replacing a damaged meter in accordance with Part 2: Business Terms, para 13 of the Wholesale Retail Code and our Wholesale Tariff Document.

It is a criminal offence under Section 175 of the Water Industry Act 1991 to interfere with, willfully damage or remove the meter. This means that you must not remove it or instruct anyone to remove it for you (e.g. a plumber). This applies to meters installed externally and internally and applies whether your premises is household or non-household.

## 8 Meter testing and meter logging

For household premises, we offer two services that may be of assistance in determining the cause of an unexpected change in consumption: meter testing and meter logging:

### 8.1 Meter testing

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If you think the meter might not be working correctly, you may ask us to test it. On request, we will remove the meter and send it to an independent testing facility for testing in accordance with the Water (Meters) Regulations 1988. A replacement meter will be installed and will remain in place regardless of the test result:

1. if the results of the testing show that the meter is working correctly i.e. that it is registering within the prescribed limits of error, we will charge you the fee set out in our Household Charges Scheme;
2. if the results of the testing show that the meter is working incorrectly i.e. that it is registering outside of the prescribed limits of error, then we will adjust your metered charges in accordance with our Household Charges Scheme.

If we decide that your meter should be sent for testing, we will not charge you a fee, regardless of whether the test is found to be necessary or not.

### 8.2 Meter logging

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We offer a logging service that may assist you in determining the reason for unusual or high consumption. The service includes the deployment of an electronic logging device connected to the pulsed output of the meter, enabling actual consumption to be recorded at 15-minute intervals.

The logger will normally be deployed for a minimum period of 7 days and a full report will be produced for you shortly afterwards. The charge for this service is set out in our Household Charges Scheme.

For non-household premises, meter accuracy tests will be performed in accordance with Part B of the Wholesale-Retail Code: Operational Terms and charged in accordance with our Wholesale Tariff Document. We have published a list of meters including meters compatible with the fitting of data logging devices.

The following documents are available on our website at: [www.affinitywater.co.uk/Retailers](http://www.affinitywater.co.uk/Retailers)

1. Non-household Property Data Logging Policy and Guidance to Retailers

2. Retailer Equipment: Terms and Conditions
3. Retailer Equipment: Compatible meters menu

## 9 How to read your meter

We recommend that you read your meter regularly (monthly) and it is useful to keep a record of these readings. This will alert you if your consumption increases unexpectedly. Although water meters can vary in size and shape, reading a meter is easy. You simply need to record the number of cubic metres registered on the meter:

1. If you have a meter, turn off all the taps in your property – and wait approximately 10 minutes for toilet cisterns and other tanks to finish filling (larger properties may require longer time).
2. Next, find your water meter and check that its unique serial number matches the one on your bill. Your water meter is usually located either close to the boundary of your property, in your front garden, or in the footpath immediately in front of your property. Sometimes it's located inside your property, in which case it's usually under the kitchen sink or near the stop tap.
3. For externally fitted meters, lift the lid using a wide screwdriver if necessary, remove the polystyrene frost cover (if one has been fitted) and pull up the inner meter lid to view the meter face. There may be a little rain water which has gathered in the chamber, however, if water is present in the chamber after a prolonged dry spell, this may indicate a leak.
4. To take a reading, look at the meter face, which is about the size of a tin of baked beans. Firstly, read the numbers that indicate how many cubic metres of water you have used. The numbers you're looking for will be white on a black background or black on a white background. Now read the dials that are red and white. These indicate how many litres of water you have used. The red and white dials will move quickly when water is being used. There are normally three or four of these dials, although sometimes the fourth one is located separately on the meter face (it indicates how many tenths of a litre you use).
5. Read your meter again one hour later. If it has moved forward by more than five litres, you may have a leak. Our Leakage Booklet sets out our procedure on leakage and is available on our website at [www.affinitywater.co.uk](http://www.affinitywater.co.uk) or on request.

## 10 Metering technology: AMR meters

Where we install new meters, these will be meters with Automated Meter Reading (AMR) technology. This will allow us to read meters remotely using drive-by radio frequency technology, without requiring occupants to be at home.

AMR technology is safe: each day most of us already use devices which operate using radio frequency energy such as mobile phones, microwave ovens and baby monitors. Radio frequency emissions for AMR meters are far lower than these items. In units of  $\mu\text{W}/\text{cm}^2$  at a distance of 30cm a baby monitor emits 15.6275; a mobile phone 9.6425; a microwave 7.0775 and the AMR meter 4.035.

## 11 Adoption of meters

We may agree to adopt a meter which you have installed if:

1. the meter meets all relevant regulations governing accuracy and technical suitability;
2. the meter is installed in accordance with the Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations 1999 and the Water (Meters) Regulations 1988;
3. the meter is installed in a location that is suitable for us to gain access to read; and
4. the meter registers all water used at a single premises.

Where this applies to non-household premises, we may charge a fee in relation to any site visit which may be necessary.

## 12 Where meters can't be installed

For household premises, if we find that it is not reasonably practicable to install a meter or that it would involve unreasonable expense we will let you know. Typically, we consider this would arise where:

1. we would need to install more than one meter to measure the amount of water used;
2. access to install, read, inspect and maintain the meter would be impracticable or unsafe;
3. substantial plumbing alterations would be needed,
4. the installation of the meter would adversely affect the historic fabric of a listed building.

If we are unable to reach agreement with you whether it is impracticable to install a meter or whether it would involve unreasonable expense, you (or we) may ask the industry regulator, Ofwat to determine the dispute.

Our Household Charges Scheme sets out different water charges available where installing a meter would be impractical or would involve unreasonable expense.

For non-household premises, we will follow the relevant processes under Part B of the Wholesale-Retail Code: Operational Terms and will notify the Retailer if we determine the installation of the meter to be infeasible or impractical.

### 12.1 Unauthorised connections

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If your premises are subject to investigations concerning unauthorised water connections and/or contraventions of The Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations 1999, we will not install a meter at the premises until the contraventions have been rectified.

Household premises which are subject to such investigations will be charged on a non-metered basis in accordance with our Household Charges Scheme until metered charges can apply.

## **12.2 Reverting to non-metered charges (household premises)**

If your premises are in our East Region, you may revert to non-metered charges provided the conditions set out in our Charges Scheme are satisfied. If your premises are in our Central or Southeast Regions you will not be able to revert to non-metered charges as both are compulsory metering areas.

## **12.3 Metering multi-occupied household premises**

Unless there is an arrangement in place with certain local authority and housing association landlords, premises comprising areas of separate occupation (such as flats) may only be individually metered if the following criteria are satisfied:

1. a survey of the site establishing that all individual flats can be metered;
2. written consent from each occupier for individual meters to be installed, and
3. agreement for the retention of a communal meter for outside taps etc.

metered charges will apply in accordance with our Household Charges Scheme.

## **12.4 Sub-metering**

Sub-metering of premises comprising a private water supply network is no longer offered by Affinity Water. This applies to both household and non-household premises.

For household premises, where a sub-metering arrangement exist, it will continue in accordance with our Household Charges Scheme.

Where sub-metering is not permitted or no longer permitted, the private network must be altered or replaced so that each premises is separately supplied and individually metered.

## **13 Compensation for damage caused by metering works**

We have a duty to do as little damage as possible and to pay compensation for any loss caused or damage done in carrying out any metering works. You have a right to make a compensation claim if you believe you have sustained loss or damage as a result of our works. You should email details of your claim to our Claims Team at [claimsteam@affinitywater.co.uk](mailto:claimsteam@affinitywater.co.uk)

## **14 Complaints**

For household premises, we operate a complaints procedure which has been agreed with the industry regulator, Ofwat. We aim to answer all written complaints within 10 working days. Further information and a copy of the procedure are available from our website on [www.affinitywater.co.uk](http://www.affinitywater.co.uk) and on request.

For non-household premises, you should contact your Retailer if you wish to raise a complaint relating to our metering works. You will find their contact details on your bill/invoice.