

## Can I have my meter tested?

We're very confident in the accuracy of the meters we use, but you can request that we arrange to have the meter tested. We strongly advise that you check all other possibilities first, as our meters rarely fail the tests.

You must pay the test fee in advance. We'll then remove the meter and fit a new meter in its place. We'll take the original meter to an approved testing centre. It will be tested at 5 flow rates on a water meter test rig, which is Trading Standards approved. If the meter is found to be outside the accuracy limits set by regulations under the Weights and Measures Act, it fails the test. The meter must operate with an accuracy band of + or - 6% at low rates and + or - 2.5% at higher flow rates.

This test will confirm if the meter is working normally, is under-recording or is over-recording. We'll send a copy of the results to you. If the meter has failed the test, we'll refund your test fee. If it was over-recording, we'll also amend your bill. If it was under-recording, however, we'll not adjust your bill. We won't normally put the old meter back after it's been tested.

For a copy of our advice leaflet, please call 0845 1 24 24 24.

## What if I have a meter and I am having difficulty in paying my bill?

We understand that some customers with a water meter find it difficult to pay their bills, because they need to use large amounts of water.

Houses built since 1990 have water meters, and many other customers have had water meters fitted, because they pay less, if they don't use much water. If you move into a property with a water meter, we'll bill you according to how much water you use. You don't have the option of rateable value charges.

We may however be able to provide some assistance. If you receive certain benefits or tax credits and use large quantities of water, you may be eligible for a special tariff called WaterSure.

We determine who is eligible for this tariff using criteria set by the Government. If you meet these requirements, then the charge that you will pay is a fixed amount per year, equivalent to the average household bill.

You must be in receipt of one of these qualifying benefits or tax credits: council tax benefit, housing benefit, income support, income-based jobseeker's allowance, state pension credit, child tax credit (unless you only receive the family element) or working tax credit.

If you receive a qualifying benefit or tax credit and have a

large family, you may apply for this tariff. At least three children under the age of 19 must live at the property and be in full-time education. You'll need to complete an application and return it with proof of your benefit or tax credit and a copy of your latest Child Benefit award.

If you receive a qualifying benefit or tax credit and someone in your household suffers from a medical condition which results in increased water usage, you may also apply for this tariff. You'll need to complete an application and return it with proof of your benefit or tax credit. We'll also need medical proof or a medically qualified person to countersign your application.

For more information about WaterSure or to request an application form, visit [yorkshirewater.com/meter](http://yorkshirewater.com/meter) or call 0845 1 24 24 24.

Please note that you'll need to re-apply for WaterSure each year to prove that you're still eligible.

## Where can I find out more about your terms and conditions?

We set out our terms and conditions of supply of water by meter in a separate leaflet called Information and Advice on Metered Water Supplies. Please call us for your copy.

## What can I do if I'm not happy?

We aim to provide a high standard of service and to treat you with courtesy and fairness at all times. We welcome any comments you may have, and we try to answer queries and resolve complaints quickly and in full. Please contact us as soon as possible if you're not satisfied with our service. We'll then investigate your complaint and try to resolve it to your satisfaction. Where your complaint is justified, we'll apologise and do everything we can to put things right as soon as possible.

If we've failed to meet any of our standards, we'll pay compensation in accordance with our Customer Charter. If our actions or inaction cause you particular hardship or inconvenience, we'll consider making a goodwill payment. We'll consider each case individually.

We send a copy of our Customer Charter to every customer each year. If you'd like another free copy, please contact us.

If you're not satisfied with the way we've handled your complaint or with the outcome, you may request a review of your complaint. This review will be independent of the original investigations and may overturn the original decision if appropriate.

If you're still unhappy with the outcome of your complaint, you may request an independent review, by telephoning or writing to:

**Consumer Council for Water**  
**Northgate House**  
**St. Augustine's Way**  
**Darlington**  
**DL1 1XA**  
**Lo-call number:** 0845 7 08 93 68  
 (or call 01325 469 777)  
**E-mail:** [yorkshire@ccwater.org.uk](mailto:yorkshire@ccwater.org.uk)  
**Text telephone:** 0121 345 1044 (minicom)

The Consumer Council for Water (CCWater) is an independent national body set up to protect your interests and to champion customer issues. CCWater ensures that customers' collective voice is heard in the national water debate and has undertaken research to understand customers' views and use this to influence decision makers within the industry.

CCWater will investigate customer complaints relating to our business activities. The regional office and committee may then act on your behalf to try to resolve your complaint with us.

Under the Water Industry Act 1991, the industry regulator, Ofwat, or an independent arbitrator may settle certain disputes. Where this is appropriate, we'll explain the action you can take – or you may prefer to seek advice from CCWater or another independent advice agency.

## Services for customers with additional needs

We provide information in large-print, Braille and audio formats. We'll also take additional meter readings, investigate high levels of water usage recorded on your meter and provide advice and help if you wish to relocate your meter. If you'd like information about our free Helping Hands services, please contact us on 0800 138 7878.

## How can I contact you?

Our contact centre is open 8am-8pm Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm Saturday

We're open 24 hours a day for emergency calls

**Call us**  
 All enquiries 0845 1 24 24 24  
 Request other information or leaflets 0845 1 24 24 24  
 Bogus caller checks on Identity cards 0800 1 38 78 78  
 Leakage 0800 57 35 53

**Additional services:**  
 Asian language 0845 1 24 24 21  
 Text telephone/minicom 0845 1 24 24 23  
 24 hour automated services 0845 1 24 72 47

**Fax** 01274 372800

**Visit our website** [yorkshirewater.com](http://yorkshirewater.com)

**Or write to us** Yorkshire Water PO Box 52 Bradford BD3 7YD

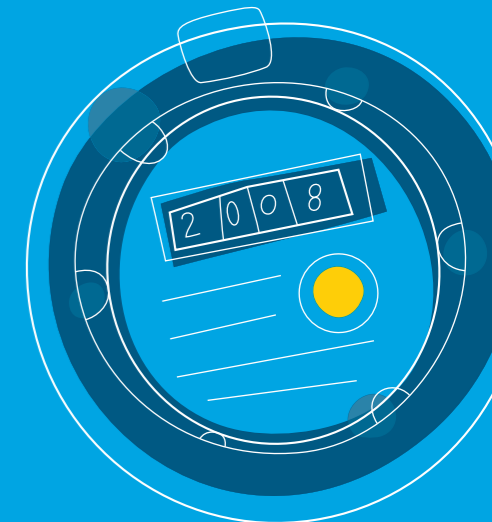
### Codes of practice:

Additional needs  
 Charges, bills and payments  
 Complaints & compliments procedure  
 Customer Charter  
 Debt recovery  
 Leakage from customers' supplies  
 Responsibility for pipework  
 Sewerage and waste water  
 Water meters  
 Water supply services

code of practice

# Could a meter help you?

Water meters



### [yorkshirewater.com](http://yorkshirewater.com)

Yorkshire Water Services Limited  
 Western House Halifax Road Bradford BD6 2SZ  
 Registered in England and Wales No.2366682

C3847d 01/08

YorkshireWater

## Understanding water meters

This code of practice is approved by the industry regulator, Ofwat. Please refer to the back cover for a list of other codes of practice for domestic customers. These are free and available on request.

If you've a water meter, or you're thinking about having one fitted, this leaflet answers many of the questions you're likely to ask.

We've included details of our free meter installation scheme for domestic customers, and we explain how you can apply.

### How does a water meter work?

It's very similar to a gas or electricity meter. It records how much water we've supplied to your home, measured in cubic metres (one cubic metre is 1000 litres or 220 gallons). The meter dials show whole cubic metres and fractions, but we only use whole cubic metres on your water bill.

### How accurate is the meter?

Water meters are very reliable and are tested before they leave the factory to ensure that they meet the required British standards.

### Where is the meter fitted?

There are 3 likely locations for a water meter:

- Inside the property.
- Outside, adjacent to the property wall.
- Outside, next to the stop tap, close to the property/highway boundary.

### Whose responsibility is it?

The meter and its connections belong to us, and we look after any repairs or replacements at our cost. You need to be aware it's an offence for anyone else to tamper with it, or to do anything which may prevent it from recording accurately.

### Who has a water meter?

Customers whose houses have been built since 1990 have water meters. These are normally fitted outside next to the external stop tap.

Many other customers have chosen to have a meter fitted rather than continue to pay charges based upon the rateable value of their home. In these circumstances the meters are often fitted inside, typically near the internal stop tap.

Additionally customers with a swimming pool or fixed garden sprinkler must have a meter.

If you move into a property which already has a water meter, you will pay charges based upon your water usage. We'll read the meter and bill you according to how much water you use. You won't have the option of charges based upon the rateable value of the property.

### How do I arrange to have a meter fitted?

Simply call us on 0845 1 24 24 24 or visit our website at [yorkshirewater.com](http://yorkshirewater.com) for more information.

We guarantee to carry out a survey and fit a meter

within three months of receiving your application. If we do not meet this timescale, we'll only charge you meter standing charges for the period beginning 3 months from the date we receive your application to the date on which we actually install your meter.

### How much does it cost?

Installation is free, as long as the work's reasonably straight forward.

### What if I want my meter fitted in a specific location?

We now prefer to install meters outside close to the property/highway boundary, typically near the external stop tap. We'll advise you of our preferred location. If you'd like the meter installed in a different location, you may request this. Provided that your preferred location is practical, we'll agree to this and you'll be responsible for any additional costs incurred.

If you're registered for our Helping Hands services for customers with additional needs and require a different location because you have sight difficulties, a disability or some other appropriate condition, we may make a contribution to the extra costs incurred. If you'd like information about our free Helping Hands services, please contact us on 0800 1 38 78 78.

If we install a meter outside, we'll reinstate the ground where we've carried out the excavation to a professional standard and we'll try to match to the surrounding area on a best endeavours basis. Colour and texture may, however, vary. All work carries a guarantee.

Any dispute about the location of the meter may be decided by an independent legal process (arbitration).

### What if I can't have a meter?

It may not be practical for us to fit a meter at or near your property. This may be because the pipework serving your property is complex or because there isn't a suitable location. In these circumstances we'll inform you that we're unable to fit the meter and we'll offer you the option of paying by assessed charge instead.

The assessed charge only applies where the customer has requested a meter but is unable to have one. The assessed charge relates to the type of property that you live in and whether you live alone. We'll provide details of the assessed charge, so that you can decide whether to change to this instead of continuing with charges based upon the rateable value of your home.

If you decide to change to the assessed charge, this

method of charge will also apply to any subsequent occupiers of your property. This is based upon the same principle that we would have applied if you'd been able to have a meter installed; namely that any subsequent occupiers would have been charged according to their metered water usage.

### If I've chosen to have a water meter, can I change my mind later?

If you decide to have a meter fitted, you can only go back to charges based on rateable value if you write to us within 12 months of the meter being fitted or within 28 days of receiving your bill for the first 12-month period of meter billing.

Should you decide to switch back to rateable value charges, you'll remain liable for meter charges up until the time we receive your request.

We won't remove the meter, so it's there should you decide to go back to meter charges and when you move house, it's there for the new occupants. They'll then be billed according to their metered usage.

You may only exercise your legal right to revert to rateable value charges on one occasion.

### How do you take meter readings?

We aim to read each meter every six months and guarantee to do it at least once in every year, provided that we can gain access to do so. If we haven't read your meter, we'll send you an estimated bill based on how much water you usually use at that time of year.

You may wish to provide your own reading. If so, please contact us at [yorkshirewater.com](http://yorkshirewater.com) or call our automated telephone service on 0845 1 24 72 47.

### What happens when I move house?

You can provide your own reading taken on the day that you move. Otherwise we'll estimate your final bill. Alternatively, if you want us to read your meter, you'll need to give us enough notice. You can help us greatly by giving a full week's notice.

### How much water do I use?

The following figures give you a rough idea of how much water you may be using. They're for guidance only; the amount of water you actually use will depend on your routines and habits, and on the age and model of your domestic appliances.

Annual usage	Number of people in household				
	1	2	3	4	5
Low	45	80	115	150	185
Medium	55	95	135	175	215
High	70	120	170	220	270
	Litres		Gallons		
Appliance/facility	From	To	From	To	
Hose (30 minutes)	270	810	59	178	
Sprinkler (30 minutes)	270	810	59	178	
Bath	80	150	18	33	
Shower	30	45	7	10	
WC flush	9	14	2	3	
Washer load	49	130	11	29	
Dishwasher load	14	50	3	11	

### How do you calculate my meter bill?

We take a meter reading or make an estimate based on how much water you usually use at that time of year. So, you pay for the water you use in arrears. We then add a standing charge for the quarter, for example from 1st April to 30th June, so you'll usually pay some of it in advance.

If we provide sewerage services to your home, we'll also make a sewerage charge based on how much water you use plus a sewerage standing charge.

### How often will I get a bill?

We send out meter bills quarterly, or you can pay by instalments throughout the year with our monthly Payment Plan. If you choose this, you'll receive only one statement of account each year.

### What if my meter reading is very high?

Water meters are very reliable and are tested before they leave the factory to ensure that they meet the required British standards. It's very unusual for them to over-record. If your meter bill is higher than expected, it's therefore more likely that there's another reason why your meter has registered more water usage than normal.

We produce a separate advice leaflet to help you. This tells you how to check the meter reading yourself and how to check for leaks, and it provides other useful information to help you work out why your meter reading might be higher than usual or expected.

For a copy of our advice leaflet, please call 0845 1 24 24 24.