

### Opting to have a Meter

If you are interested in having a water meter, please ring us and we'll send you all the information you need to help you decide. This will include an estimate of how much your bill would be with a meter and details of who is responsible for any leaks when your supply is metered. Both home owners and tenants have a right to have a water meter but if you are a tenant your tenancy agreement should be more than 6 months and you should let your Landlord know.

- If you decide that having a meter is the right choice for you, you can ask us to fit one by completing a simple meter request form. This is available on our website at [www.hartlepoolwater.co.uk](http://www.hartlepoolwater.co.uk) or by ringing 01429 858050 Monday – Friday 8.30am – 5pm (excluding Bank Holidays).
- We will carry out a survey within 14 days to determine the best location for the meter
- We will tell you when the meter will be installed. We aim to install water meters within 70 days. This compares with the Ofwat target of 90 days. If we fail to meet the Ofwat target of 90 days, we will adjust your unmetered bill to compensate you for the lost savings in water consumption due to our delays.
- There will be no charge for fitting the meter if you are a domestic customer. If you are a commercial customer there is a flat rate charge for the charging year. Please contact us on **01429 858050** for more details.
- If you share a supply pipe with your neighbours, we will survey your pipework to see if we can install a meter inside your property.

- If you are a domestic customer and decide to have a meter, you will have the option to revert back to an unmetered account if the decision has not been right for you. You can revert back only once and you must tell us about your decision within 24 months of the installation date at the latest, or when you have a full 24 months of accounts which allows you to take into account any seasonal effects on water consumption. You are liable for metered charges before reverting back.
- if you do decide to revert back to an unmetered account, the meter will remain connected to your service pipe and the account will become a metered account once you sell the property or the tenant changes.
- If we cannot fit a water meter for technical reasons, for example your plumbing is joined to neighbouring properties, we will offer you the option of Assessed Charges. These charges are assessed based on whether you are likely to be a low user of water. You will be asked to complete a simple form. Your sewerage charges will also be assessed. This option is likely to benefit small numbers of people with low water usage living in a larger property.
- If you live in a flat where there is a single supply of water into the residential block, we may offer a joint billing agreement if all occupiers agree to this. In this case, a single meter would be installed and all residents will be jointly liable for the metered water and sewerage charges.

### Compulsory Metering

All new properties that require a water supply now have a meter installed and are charged on a metered basis. In addition, we will require existing properties to be metered and charged on a metered basis if:

- The premises are not used solely as a person's home and the other use is the principal use of the premises;
- Water is to be used at the premises for any of the following purposes;
  - for watering a garden, other than by hand, by means of any apparatus;
  - for automatically replenishing a pond, or a swimming pool, with a capacity greater than 10,000 litres;
  - in a bath with a capacity (measured to the centre line of overflow) greater than 230 litres;
  - in 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; or
  - in a unit which incorporates reverse osmosis.
- Any property comprising former premises which has been split, merged or converted so that it effectively comprises new premises and the Rateable Value of the former premises is or becomes inappropriate for the new premises (for example, a building converted into self-contained flats) provided always that metered charges shall not apply to the premises if they are occupied by a person as their home until there is a change in occupation of the premises;
- The use of the premises has changed, so that they have become non-domestic premises for the purpose of Part 111 of the Local Government Act 1986.
- There is a change of occupation of the premises and the Company considers that the present Rateable Value of the premises is inappropriate for charging purposes, having regard to other Rateable Values in the locality provided always that metered charges shall not apply to the premises if

they are occupied by a person as their home until there is a change in occupation of the premises;

## **Electrical Earthing**

You are responsible for making sure that all electrical appliances in your home are safely earthed. Before 1966 it was a common (but correct) practice to attach an earth lead to metal water pipes. Your water pipe should not be used for earthing your household electrical installation. This is not one of our responsibilities. If you are in any doubt, please ring a qualified electrician for advice.

## **Meter Location**

The usual place for a meter is at the boundary of your property. The exact position of the meter will be determined by us in accordance with regulations made by the Government. There are three possible positions: internally, externally, adjacent to the house wall, or externally next to the stop tap close to the property wall. We prefer to install meters in a boundary box next to the stop tap as it means we don't have to enter your property to read your meter.

If you want the meter located elsewhere, we will consider this provided that:

- The location you choose ensures that the meter is still reasonably accessible to us.
- You pay any costs over and above those we would incur in siting the meter in our preferred location.

## **Reading your meter**

All our boundary boxes have a square plastic lid labeled 'Water'. These can be opened using a flat-bladed screwdriver. On the face of the meter you will see a series of seven digits.



The first five digits indicate the number of cubic metres of water you have used. The last two red digits are units of 10 litres.

In the example shown the meter reading is 0 cubic metres. The 24 red means that 240 litres have been used.

You can use your meter to:

- Monitor consumption by regularly keeping an eye on your meter to see if you are using water wisely.
- Check for faults. If there's significant change in the amount of water being used which you can't explain, there may be a fault with your meter, or you may have a leak.

We will visit your property, with the intention of reading the meter, at least twice a year. We guarantee to read your meter at least once each financial year and to send you a bill within 7 working days of obtaining a reading.

### Meter Accuracy

The meter has a minimum life of eight years and can last many more years. Meter faults are very rare. All new meters are tested and approved for accuracy by the Trading Standards Office before leaving the factory. If you think your meter is inaccurate, you can ask

us to have it tested. We offer customers a simple, check test at no cost which compares your meter with another new meter on a local test rig. We issue a written report on this simple test. If you wish, we can arrange a formal test to determine if the meter complies with The Measuring Equipment (Cold Water Meters) Regulations 1988, as amended. You will receive a copy of the results.

If the meter is found to be accurate, you will be charged for the formal test as follows:

- In the case of a meter supplying premises used solely as a person's home, the test will be carried out free of charge if it can be done without removing the meter from the premises. If the meter has to be removed from the premises, a charge not exceeding £70 will be made in accordance with Part 3 of The Water (Meters) Regulations 1988..
- In the case of a meter supplying a premises not used solely as a person's home, we will charge you with the costs reasonably incurred in testing the meter.

If the meter fails the test, there will of course be no charge and we will replace your meter,

If you have been over or undercharged as a result of the faulty meter, we will adjust your bill. We will normally assume that your meter has been reading incorrectly since the last occasion but one when we took a meter reading.

### Meter Ownership

The meter remains the property of Hartlepool Water. Please note that it is a criminal offence to interfere with a meter in any way which:

- May affect the operation of the meter;
- May affect its accuracy;
- Will disconnect the meter.

You may be prosecuted if you tamper with one of our meters.

## Responsibility for Pipes

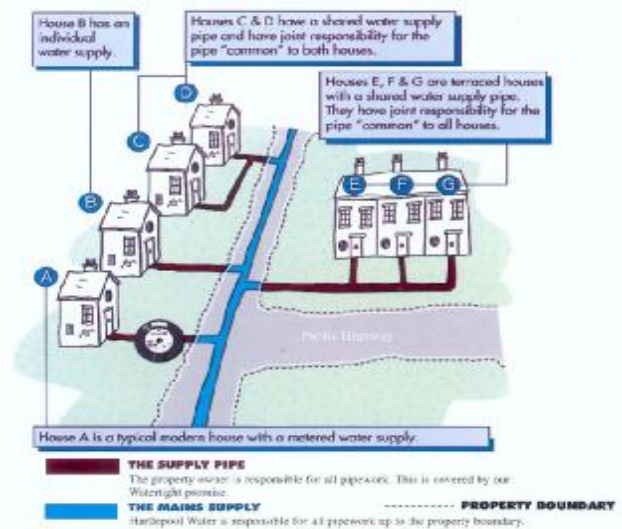
Water is delivered to your home from the water main by means of a service pipe. Responsibility for the service pipe is divided between Hartlepool Water and you or the property owner. The division normally occurs at the boundary of the public highway and the property. It is normal practice for our stop tap to be installed at this point. All pipework from the water main to our stop tap is maintained by us. Beyond this point it becomes the private supply pipe, maintained by you or the property owner.

If you pay Hartlepool Water domestic water charges, we offer our Watertight Promise. This is an additional service to help you to fix leaks and bursts on your supply pipe once the supply pipe is over 2 years old. This covers one leak or burst event on up to 25 metres of your supply pipe, providing this is no larger than 32mm in diameter. Repairs are guaranteed for 12 months. We will reinstate our excavations to a safe condition but will not carry out permanent reinstatements. We aim to complete repairs with 10 working days. If your supply pipe is in very poor condition, we will replace the first 25m in length. If your supply pipe is longer, we will expect you to replace the remainder of the pipe at the same time. If you move into a house where we have records that the supply pipe has been repaired previously, you will not qualify for the Watertight Promise.

If you pay Hartlepool Water Commercial water charges, the Watertight Promise does not apply. We do offer up to 2 hours of leak detection support on site to help you. Those terms also apply to mixed use premises – e.g. public houses but only where commercial water charges are levied.

Leaks inside or under buildings or leaks due to reckless or deliberate damage do not qualify.

Where you do not qualify under our Watertight Promise, you will need to seek advice from your own qualified plumber.



## Helping Customers to Reduce Leaks

Hartlepool Water has a legal obligation to promote the efficient use of water. It is vital in our changing world that we use water carefully – each litre of water has a cost to abstract, pump, treat and deliver to your home or business. As part of Anglian Water, we have a water efficiency plan and have leakage targets to meet so we play our part. We need everyone including customers to play their part to help us maximize our resources.

When a meter is installed for the first time, undetected leaks often come to light. When we install a meter we will check for leaks and repair any on your domestic supply pipe at our expense. This might need an extra excavation for which we will obtain your consent if it is on your land. It is your responsibility to repair any leaks on the pipes inside your house or under buildings and you should contact your own plumber for help and advice.

If you pay commercial charges, we shall repair any leak in the same excavation as the meter installation but will require you to repair any leak downstream of the meter at your expense. If you fail to repair the leak, any loss of water will be regarded as consumption.

If we take a routine reading of your meter and it appears a lot larger than normal, we will write to you to point this out. We will also offer advice and assistance to help you check whether the increase in consumption could be due to a leak and will offer a free leakage/water efficiency visit.

## Check for Leaks

If your meter shows that you have used an unusually high amount of water you may have a leak in your supply pipe. You can check by turning off all taps and other appliances which use water and watching the larger red dial for a short time. If the red needle rotates when you are not using any water, you may have a leak. We will repair any leak on your domestic supply pipe free of charge. Please see our leaflet "Your Water Supply" for more details.

If you are a commercial customer using more than 10,000m<sup>3</sup> per year, on a single metered supply, we can supply a monthly data analysis on your consumption pattern to help you to understand better your water use and to help minimise leakage. Also, if we see abnormal meter readings when processing your bill, we will tell you about this.

## HOW TO REPORT A LEAK

Leaks can be reported at any time. During office hours Mon-Fri 8.30am – 5pm (excluding Bank Holidays), you can ring our Leakage Hotline Freephone number 0800 028 4816. Outside office hours you can ring our emergency freephone number 0800 028 1054. You can report any leak including those after your meter or in the street, We will ask you about the leak and attend the site to assess the problem within an hour where we believe there are risks to safety of customers or road users.

## Leakage Allowances

If you are a domestic customer, have a water meter and have had a leak which has been repaired, we may be able to adjust your charges based on the amount of water you normally use. We only make an allowance on a single occasion and the allowance will cover the 12 months prior to the leak being reported. Where there is no record of past usage, we will

make an adjustment based upon typical usage for a property of similar type and will further adjust charges if your actual usage is significantly different. If you wish to make a leakage allowance claim, please ring us on **01429 858050** and ask for a leakage allowance claim form which contains more information.

Once we receive your completed form, we will write to you detailing the allowance granted and this allowance will appear on your next water services bill. Your application for an allowance must be received within 12 months of the leak being reported. Allowances are also granted on properties which do not qualify for our Watertight Promise.

We will not make an allowance if:

- You know, or should have known about the leak and failed to have it repaired PROMPTLY.
- There is another leak at the same address.
- The leak was caused by your carelessness or someone who lives with or has done work for you.
- You are a commercial customer (although you might qualify for an allowance for sewerage charges)
- You are a mixed use premises but pay charges on our commercial tariff (although you might qualify for an allowance for sewerage charges).

If we make an allowance, you may be entitled to an allowance for sewerage charges. Please ring us on 01429 858050 for more details.

## Who is Responsible for Repairing an Undetected Leak?

You are responsible for any leaks on your property and if the leak is within the house or building, you must call your own plumber. Water is a very precious resource and at Hartlepool Water we work hard to minimize the amount lost through leakage. A leaking underground supply pipe wastes a lot of water, which can cause damage to your garden and the foundations of your property. We offer a Watertight Promise for our domestic customers

but we must gain access to your property to determine if the leak will qualify for a free repair. Details are given above in the section "Responsibility for Pipes".

As a domestic customer, we do offer up to 4 hours of leak detection time to help locate leaks for you.

If you don't have the repairs carried out the Company will exercise its powers under Section 75(9) (a) and (b) of the Water Industry Act 1991 to take those steps itself. We will recover from you any expenses reasonably incurred.

But we would only do this in an emergency, or if the premises appear to be unoccupied. We can also cut off the supply of water to the premises in these circumstances.

### Paying for Metered Water

We will send you a bill every:

- Month if you are an industrial customer
- 3 months if you are a commercial customer
- 6 months if you are a domestic customer

The charge will generally be made up of:

- A standing charge for water supplies
- A charge for the amount of water used, as measured by the meter.

If you would like more details of our charges, please ring up on **01429 858030**.

### Sewerage Charges

We collect charges for sewerage services on behalf of Northumbrian Water. These are made under Northumbrian Water's Charging Scheme. If you'd like more details you can ring them on **08457 335566**.

### Moving House?

If you are moving house, please let us know. We will read your meter on the day you move, as long as you give us two days notice. If you do not give us at least two working days notice, you may have to pay charges for the period

after you have left the property, although we will accept your own reading when you move.

### A Guide to Household Water Usage

The amount of water used varies considerably from one household to another. If you regularly use an automatic washing machine, dishwasher, sprinkler or hosepipe and take frequent baths, your usage will probably be ABOVE AVERAGE.

If you occasionally use a washing machine and have a mixture of showers and baths, your usage is likely to be AVERAGE.

If you don't use a washing machine, use a shower, with little or no garden watering, your usage is probably LOW.

The table below is a guide to how much water you might use in a year, depending on the number of people in your household and your type of use. If you would like more information, please ring us on **01429 858050** and we will send you a meter information pack containing a meter comparison which is unique for your property.

No in Household	Above Average Usage (m <sup>3</sup> )	Average Usage (m <sup>3</sup> )	Low Usage (m <sup>3</sup> )	Very Low Usage (m <sup>3</sup> )
1	170	100	75	30
2	220	120	110	55
3	235	145	135	70
4	260	170	160	90
5	280	200	180	100
6	305	225	200	120

### How to Reduce Your Water Consumption

It's easy to reduce water use in the home – not by going without but simply by cutting down on waste.

- A running tap can use a lot of water – try using a bowl when washing dishes or vegetables, or stop the tap from running while you brush your teeth.
- Using a bowl can save up to 10 litres every time you use it.

- Have a shower instead of a bath – a shower uses half as much water. But remember, power showers can use as much water as a bath.
- For a cold drink, fill up a jug and put it into the fridge to use later instead of running the tap until cold.
- Instead of running the hot tap until the water is hot, use the cool water to help get the right temperature instead of adding cold water later.
- Find time to fix any leaking taps. A dripping tap can lose up to 90 litres of water every day.
- Wait until you have a full load of clothes before doing your washing, or you could use the half load button – you'll save water, electricity and detergent. The same applies to using your dishwasher.
- Think about collecting rain water from your roof and down pipe in water butts or buckets and then use it to water your garden or wash your car.
- A sprinkler can use as much water in an hour as a family of four does in 40 hours. So, instead of using one in your garden – check the weather forecast first or use a watering can.
- Use a bucket and sponge instead of a hose pipe to wash your car. A hose pipe can use as much water as a sprinkler.
- The demand for water is greatest between 5.30 am – 8.00 pm; if you can, try to avoid washing up or watering your garden between these hours

The leaflets in this series are:

- Code of Practice for Domestic and Commercial Customers – Introductory Leaflet
- Your water supply for Domestic and Commercial Customers
- Understanding charges for Domestic and Commercial Customers
- How to pay your bill (including a Code of Practice on Debt Recovery)
- Living with a Meter (including a Code of Practice on Leakage)
- How to contact us (what to do if you wish to complain)
- Pipelaying in Private Land
- Water watchdogs
- Customer charter

In addition, we have a leaflet which gives details of our current charges.

You can get a copy of any of our leaflets, free of charge, by ringing us on 01429 858050 Monday to Friday 8.30am - 5pm (excluding Bank Holidays). Or you can write to us or call in at our office:

3 Lancaster Road, Hartlepool, TS24 8LW

Or email: [enquiries@hartlepoolwater.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@hartlepoolwater.co.uk)

Or visit our website [www.hartlepoolwater.co.uk](http://www.hartlepoolwater.co.uk) where you can download these leaflets

Hartlepool Water:  
3 Lancaster Road  
Hartlepool TS24 8LW

Tel: 01429 858050

Fax: 01429 858000

Email: [enquiries@hartlepoolwater.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@hartlepoolwater.co.uk)

Website: [www.hartlepoolwater.co.uk](http://www.hartlepoolwater.co.uk)

For emergencies out of office hours: Freephone 0800 028 1054.