

Testing household water meters 2011-2012

This factsheet explains how to apply to have your water meter tested if you think it is not working properly.



If you have received a water bill which is higher than expected, your first reaction may be to ask us to test the meter. However, before completing the attached application form, please spend a few minutes to read this factsheet to ensure you have considered all the reasons why your water usage may have increased.

If you have access to the internet we have an online calculator which will give you an idea of what your bill should be based upon your water usage.

Visit unitedutilities.com/meters to try it out.

Does the water meter need testing?

Our water meters are approved by Trading Standards and have to meet strict performance criteria. It is very rare that our water meters will over record the amount of water used. Even in the unlikely event of the water meter not operating correctly, it is more likely to be under recording than over recording.

Then why is my water bill so high?

It may be that the amount of water you have used is perfectly normal. There are two tables inside this factsheet, one will give you an idea of the size of bill you could expect, and the other shows how much water you may use depending on the number of people living in your home.

If you use a sprinkler or a hosepipe in summer, you can use lots of water very quickly. In just one hour a sprinkler can use as much water as a family of four in a day.

If your bill has suddenly increased, it may be because your previous bill was estimated too low.

We recommend you compare at least four half yearly bills to avoid any seasonal or other effects not related to a water meter problem.

If you have access to the internet we have an online calculator that will indicate how much your bill should be based upon your water usage.

Visit unitedutilities.com/meters to try it out.

How do you test the water meter?

You have the right to have the water meter tested. To test the water meter, we have to remove it and take it to an independent test centre.

How to test for leaks

1

Make sure you know where the water meter is and that you can get to it.

2

Choose a time when you are not using any appliances that use water and make sure all taps are turned off. Allow all tanks and cisterns to completely fill. This can take up to 30 minutes.

3

Take a meter reading (make a note of all the digits).

4

Leave all appliances turned off and take another meter reading at least an hour later.

If there is a difference between the readings, there may be a leak. Any leaks you discover inside your home are your responsibility to repair. However, if you discover that the leak is on your outside water supply pipe (which is the pipe which transports drinking water from the street boundary into your home), we may be able to repair it under the terms of our 'private leak repair scheme'.

For full details contact us on **0845 746 2200** or visit our website: unitedutilities.com/bursthome.

If there is no leak, and you feel certain you have not used so much water, we can test your water meter if you wish. However, if the test shows the water meter to be working correctly, we will have to charge you £70 plus VAT for the test. You will not be charged if the meter fails the test.

We will put a new water meter in its place and we will not put the old water meter back, even if it passes the test. We will contact you about testing the water meter when we have received your application form (see inside).

The water meter is tested on a test rig which is Trading Standards approved. The water meter will be tested at two flow rates, or points. If the water meter is outside the limits set by the Measuring Equipment (Cold Water Meters) Regulations 1988, it will fail the test.

What happens following the test?

Once the water meter has been tested, we will send the results to you. If the meter passes the test, we will send you a bill for the cost of the meter test. This is currently £70 plus VAT.

If the water meter fails the test, we will pay for the test and also amend your bill.

We will do this by using readings obtained from the new water meter. We will send you details of how we have calculated the adjustment. When calculating the adjustment we will assume that the water meter has been faulty since the last occasion but one that we read the water meter (unless proven to have been a later date).

What should I do now?

If you are sure that:

- there is no leak;
- your meter reading is correct; and
- you do not think you could have used the amount of water we have billed you for;

then we can arrange for your water meter to be tested.

Please complete the form on the facing page and return it to us at the address shown.

Because you may have to pay for the test, please be aware that water meters very rarely over record.

If you have any questions about your water bill, please contact our billing team on 0845 746 2222.

Please note: you also have the option of having your water meter tested by a Trading Standards Officer. If you wish to do this you should contact your local Trading Standards Department directly.

Table 1

Average annual bill if you have a water meter					
Number of people in household					
	1	2	3	4	5
Bill	£256	£372	£488	£604	£721

Based on 2011-2012 prices

Table 2

Average amount of water used per year					
Number of people in household					
	1	2	3	4	5
Water use m ³	55	100	145	190	235

This table is only a guide. The amounts of water given above are based on the average annual household water use. The amount of water you use may be more or less than amounts given.

Check your water usage - instantly

If you have internet access visit unitedutilities.com/meters to try our interactive water usage calculator. Answer a few simple questions on how you use water in your home and see instantly what your bill should be.

Household water meter test application form

Please complete and return the application form if you would like us to test your water meter.



Please test my water meter. I agree to pay £70 plus VAT if you find my water meter is operating within the limits prescribed in the Measuring Equipment (Cold Water Meters) Regulations 1988.

PLEASE USE BLOCK CAPITALS

Name:

Date:

Signed:

Customer account number (shown on top of your bill):

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Address:

Post code:

Telephone no:

Meter reading (use black/white digits only):

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Date of reading:

D	D	M	M	Y	Y
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Meter serial number

(if visible, this can be found on top of the water meter):

Please return this form to:

**United Utilities
Meter Management
PO Box 50
Warrington
WA55 1AQ**

For office use only

Work order no:

unitedutilities.com

United Utilities Water PLC
Haweswater House
Lingley Mere Business Park
Lingley Green Avenue
Great Sankey
Warrington
WA5 3LP

Registered in England and Wales
Registered Number 2366678

