

Service and usage charges

1. Overview

1.1 At a glance

This policy explains:

- the services we provide
- how connecting or disconnecting affects the charges on the bill
- the groups and organisations that are exempt from service charges
- how to ask us a question about a bill.

1.2 Scope

This applies to customers that are:

- connected to our water or wastewater system
- in a stormwater area that Sydney Water manage
- in a Rouse Hill area.

1.3 Objective

To explain how Sydney Water applies charges for water, wastewater and stormwater services.

2. Policy in detail

2.1 Sydney Water services

We provide the following services:

- Drinking water for normal domestic purposes.
- Recycled water for gardening, toilets and washing machines.
- Disposal of wastewater (sewage).
- Transport and treatment of stormwater (drainage).
- Trade waste and other water services for business and industry.

These services may differ depending on where your property is located and whether it is for residential or business purposes.

2.2 Connections

Customers are responsible for arranging connections to Sydney Water services. You need to apply to connect online at [Sydney Water Tap in](#).

Ensure you use the services of a licensed plumber, installer or drainer to complete new connections. Fines apply for unauthorised or illegal connections.

2.3 Disconnections

You can choose not to connect, or to disconnect, from our water or wastewater services.

If you demolish a building and are not intending to re-build, Sydney Water will consider it disconnected following a statement from a licensed plumber or drainer confirming that the disconnection has been made in line with our standards.

If you are demolishing a building and re-building, you may need to temporarily disconnect the service. A meter must be installed to measure water use during the re-building period.

If you can supply an alternative water/wastewater system, you can disconnect from Sydney Water's water/wastewater services provided the alternative complies with health, environmental and local council regulations.

All disconnections must be carried out by a licensed plumber. You need to advise us in advance by completing the application form at [Sydney Water Tap in](#).

2.4 Customer charges

Charges fall into three main categories:

1. Service charges:
 - Water
 - Wastewater (sewerage)
 - Stormwater or Rouse Hill stormwater
 - Rouse Hill land charge
 - Unmetered
2. Usage charges:
 - Water
 - Wastewater (sewerage) applies to business customers only
3. Other charges:
 - Trade waste for business customers

Service charges

Service charges are a fixed component of your bill and apply when your property is connected to a Sydney Water service. These charges cover the cost of building and maintaining pipes, pumps and treatment plants. Most customers receive water and wastewater service charges. Residential customers pay a base charge for each service they are connected to. For business customers, the service charges depend on the size of their meter. These charges are raised per quarter and may apply in advance or arrears, depending on when your property's meter read falls within the billing cycle.

A comprehensive review was carried out to define the areas served by Sydney Water's stormwater system. The new boundaries became effective from 1 July 2012 under the *Sydney Water (Stormwater Drainage Areas) Order 2011*.

You will be charged for a stormwater service if you are the owner of a property that is within a stormwater drainage area (local councils manage stormwater in most areas of Sydney). A different stormwater charge applies if your property is in the Rouse Hill Catchment area.

In addition to the Rouse Hill Stormwater charge, from 1 July 2012 you may receive a Rouse Hill land charge if your property is in the Rouse Hill Catchment area. This charge covers the purchase of land creating grass channels and artificial wetlands. It applies quarterly over a five year period.

The Rouse Hill land charge applies to properties that connect to our water system after 1 July 2012. Properties that connected before 30 June 2012 will not receive this charge, however if you redevelop your property you may receive the charge.

If your property is not fitted with a water meter, an unmetered service charge applies. This incorporates a charge for water use based on average consumption.

Usage charges

Usage charges apply to the volume of water and wastewater you use each billing period.

The water usage charge is calculated by the amount of water you use, as measured by a water meter. This includes drinking and recycled water. Your water bill shows you how much water you are using.

Service and usage charges

If your property is serviced by a common water meter (eg. a unit in a strata building), a bill for the building's total water usage is issued to your owners' corporation. They are responsible for dividing the bill between individual property owners.

Wastewater usage charges apply to non-residential customers only and are based on a percentage of the water used, known as a 'discharge factor'. This varies according to the type of business and the activities occurring at the property.

Other charges

If you are connected to Sydney Water's wastewater system and want to discharge wastewater from a commercial or industrial business process to the sewer, you need Sydney Water's written permission.

Sydney Water accepts trade wastewater that meets our published acceptance standards. Acceptance standards are generally limits applied to the concentration of trade wastewater discharges. A complete list of Sydney Water's acceptance standards is published in the [Acceptance standards and charging rates](#) fact sheet.

Sydney Water has three types of trade waste customers:

1. Some customers have deemed processes. Deemed processes discharge small quantities of wastewater to the sewer and are permitted to discharge without negotiating a Commercial Trade Wastewater Permit subject to meeting certain standard pre-treatment equipment and other requirements. These can be found on our [website](#).
2. Commercial customers are those with standard commercial processes. These are listed in the [Commercial customers Trade wastewater fees and charges](#) fact sheet.
3. Industrial customers are all those engaged in processes that are neither deemed nor commercial processes. Details of these charges are listed in the [Industrial customers trade wastewater fees and charges](#) fact sheet. Industrial processes include:
 - food processing and manufacturing
 - metals and surface coating
 - waste processing, disposal and treatment
 - oil refineries and oil recycling processes
 - larger scale commercial processes, such as smallgoods manufacturers, caterers and meal preparation areas that discharge more than 12,000 litres of trade wastewater a day.

Businesses are responsible for advising us when their processes change, this may affect your bill. Visit [Sydney Water Tap in](#) to apply for permission to discharge, vary or cancel your agreement.

Responsibility for charges

Property owners are responsible for paying Sydney Water charges, even if the property is rented and the tenant has agreed to pay water bills. The only exception is trade waste agreements where the occupier has accepted responsibility.

Prices

The NSW Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) determine the prices of all Sydney Water charges.

2.5 How charges apply

Property type	Metered status	Charges applied
Single dwelling or residential strata unit	Individually metered	- Service charges - Usage charges
Residential strata unit	Shared	- Service charges - Water usage is typically paid by the owners corporation
Single dwelling	Unmetered	Unmetered service charge instead of a usage charge
Single dwelling on a private water service line (joint service)	Unmetered	Unmetered service charge instead of a usage charge
Dual occupancy (one property owner for two self-contained dwellings with separate toilet and cooking facilities)	Property with two meters	- Service charges for each meter on the property - Usage charges for the property
Flats – one property owner	Metered	- Service charges for each dwelling - Usage charges for the property
Boarding houses with 10 or less units	Metered	- Service charges - Usage charges
Non-residential (Includes boarding houses with 11 or more units)	Metered	- Meter size(s) service charges - Usage charges for the property
Vacant land	Unmetered	Stormwater service charge only if in an area managed by Sydney Water

Contact Sydney Water on 13 20 92 to find out how charges apply to other property types.

For more information about our charges, including current prices, visit sydneywater.com.au/ourprices.

Businesses can find out about trade waste and wastewater usage from sydneywater.com.au/business.

2.6 When charges start and stop

Charges will:

- start when you apply for a connection or a building plan approval
- stop when you apply for a disconnection. Before we stop the charges, you must meet our requirements.

2.7 Groups and organisations exempt from service charges

Sydney Water exempts properties from service charges when they are being used by:

- churches and religious groups
- registered charities
- not-for-profit day care, aged care and health centres
- non-government schools with a church on site
- local councils for public parks, reserves, playgrounds, sportsgrounds, swimming pools, libraries, cemeteries and other public spaces.

These organisations are still required to pay for the water and wastewater they use, via water and wastewater usage charges.

The exemption does not apply when the property is leased for private or commercial purposes or by state or federal government departments or agencies.

For exemptions for council owned swimming pools, the property must be leased to a third party and generate no more than \$2M earnings per annum.

Groups wishing to apply for a service charge exemption should write to Sydney Water and provide a copy of their Articles of Association or Constitution.

Applications should be sent to:

CaseManagementTeam@sydneywater.com.au

Or

Sydney Water
Case Management Team
PO Box 399
PARRAMATTA NSW 2124

Or

Fax: 1300 362 092

2.8 Ask us about your bill

Contact us on 13 20 92 if you think your bill is not correct. If Sydney Water has mistakenly charged you, we will provide a credit on your next bill or issue a refund.

If the problem occurs because you were unaware of, or incorrectly followed, our policy, we are not obliged to offer a credit or refund. It is your responsibility to inform Sydney Water when your property situation changes as this could affect your charges. Contact us on 13 20 92 if you have questions.

If you are not satisfied with Sydney Water's response to a charging issue, you can contact the Energy and Water Ombudsman of NSW (EWON) on 1800 246 545 and ask them to review your case.

3. Definitions

Term	Definition
IPART	The independent regulator for the electricity, gas, water and transport industries in NSW.
Sydney Water Tap in	An online service where customers can request connections, building plan approvals and diagrams.
Recycled water	Water that has been recycled from wastewater and delivered to properties through a separate pipe network. Only some areas and businesses have a recycled water service. It is only used for gardens, toilets and washing machines in residential properties and is identified by lilac (pale purple) taps and meters.
Rouse Hill land charge	This charge is for Sydney Water to buy the grass channels and wetlands used for draining stormwater.
Rouse Hill stormwater charge	(Formerly known as the River Management charge) this charge covers the cost of Sydney Water managing bush generation, weed control and trash racks on the land.
Stormwater	Water that runs across gardens, roads and parks following periods of rain and draining into stormwater drains and creeks, some of which are owned and managed by Sydney Water.
Wastewater	Also known as sewage, this is water from toilets, showers, sinks and other sources that is removed through the sewerage network.