

Severn Trent Water

Severn Trent Water Ltd

2297 Coventry Road
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www.stwater.co.uk

This publication is available in alternative formats, including large print and Braille. For further information please: call 08457 500 500
textphone 0800 328 1155
customer.relations@severntrent.co.uk

WM 2007/08.193.TB

Guaranteed Service Standards



Our Code of Practice

Our Codes of Practice

We operate under a licence that is granted by the Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. This means that there are many laws and regulations which govern what we do and these include the rights you have as a customer. Independent regulators monitor our business to ensure that we operate fairly. In addition to this we have introduced our own policies and services which go beyond our regulatory obligations.

Our Codes of Practice exist to ensure that you as a customer and we as a company enjoy a regulated relationship that benefits us all. They have been produced in consultation with the Consumer Council for Water (CCWater) and have been approved by the Water Services Regulation Authority (Ofwat), the water industry economic regulator. From time to time we may revise the Codes and update them to include our improvements in services to you.

This leaflet sets out our Code of Practice relating to our Guaranteed Service Standards. Separate leaflets are available that deal with other aspects of our full company Code of Practice. These are;

- Metering your water supply
- Your water
- Leakage
- Your bill (this includes our debt code)
- What to do if you are unhappy with our service

You can get a copy by downloading it from www.stwater.co.uk or by telephoning our Customer Contact Centre on **08457 500 500**.

Nothing in our Code of Practice affects your legal rights, nor is it a contract between you and the company. Our Codes apply to both domestic and business customers.

All of the numbers you need to contact us can be found at the back of this leaflet.

Guaranteed Services Standards – Our Code of Practice

How can I tell you about your service?

We aim to provide an excellent customer service so please get in touch with us if something is wrong. We are here to help, even if you just need some information.

If our service falls short of your expectations, we want you to tell us. We welcome comments from you that allow us to learn and improve and we want to deal with things quickly and effectively.

We have contact centres across the region which are organised so that the staff are experienced specialists in a particular field. This ensures that you speak to someone who is best placed to deal with your enquiry.

For enquiries about your water bill call our Customer Contact Centre on **08457 500 500**. Our staff are available Monday to Friday 8am to 8pm and Saturday 8am to 1pm. Calls are charged at local call rate.

For enquiries about our water and sewerage services please call our Customer Operations Service Centre on **0800 783 4444** between 6am and 10pm. This number can also be used 24 hours a day to report emergencies such as leaks and floods.

You can request our leaflet 'What to do if you are unhappy with our service' by calling our Customer Contact Centre or by visiting www.stwater.co.uk. You can also request our 'Have we made your day?' leaflet, explaining how to nominate a staff member for a good service award, in the same way.

What are your guarantees of service to me?

We work hard to ensure that we deliver an excellent service to you. We back this up with service guarantees and payments to you if we fail to meet the required standard. You can find the amount that we will pay you, and the number of working days that you can expect to receive a payment in, by looking at the table on pages 14-17.

Some of our guarantees are set by government regulations but we also have our own guarantees to make sure that we focus on services which you have told us you value most. All of our guarantees are listed below.

We guarantee the following specific standards of service:

- **Making and keeping written/telephone appointments**

If you need an appointment with us we will always aim to:

- 1) offer you an am/pm appointment or, if you request it, an appointment within a 2 hour time slot.
- 2) give you 24 hours notice if we need to cancel an appointment that we have made with you.
- 3) keep all appointments that we make with you.

If we do not meet these aims you may be entitled to a payment.

- **Account queries**

If you write to us to query the correctness of your bill we will aim to provide you with a response within 5 working days of receiving your letter. However, should we take longer than 10 working days, you may qualify for a payment.

- **Payment arrangements**

If you ask us to change your payment method and we cannot meet your request, we will aim to let you know why within 5 working days of receiving your letter. If we do not, you may qualify for a payment.

- **Complaints**

If you make a written complaint about our water or sewerage services we will respond within 10 working days of receiving your letter. However, should we take longer than 10 working days, you may qualify for a payment.

- **Interruption of your water supply for planned works**

If we plan to do maintenance or repairs to our water mains we may have to turn off your water supply. If we know this will take longer than 4 hours, we will give you at least 2 days advance notice in writing and tell you when the supply will be interrupted and restored. If we fail to provide you with 2 days notice before a planned interruption you may qualify for a payment.

We do not have to provide advance notice if we have to do emergency repairs and need to turn your water supply off, for example, when we have a burst water main.

- **Restoration of your water supply for planned works**

If we have interrupted your supply we will restore the supply by the time we promised on the warning card or letter that we have delivered to you. If we do not you may be entitled to a payment. For each further complete 24 hours you are without water you will be entitled to an additional payment.

- **Interruptions in an emergency**

If there has been an unplanned interruption, for example due to a burst main, we will restore the supply within 12 hours. If the leak or burst is on a strategic water main we will restore the supply within 48 hours. If we do not meet these targets you may be entitled to a payment. For each further complete 24 hours you are without water you will be entitled to an additional payment.

- **Flooding from sewers**

In rare circumstances some properties suffer from internal flooding from our sewers. If it is our fault you will be entitled to a payment that is equal to your annual sewerage charges (minimum £150, maximum £1,000) for each flooding incident.

If you are affected by external flooding you may be entitled to a payment that is equal to 50 percent of your annual sewerage charges (minimum £75, maximum £500).

You can request our 'Floodcare' leaflet by calling our Customer Contact Centre or at www.stwater.co.uk. It gives more details about these circumstances.

- **Poor pressure**

If you experience particularly low pressure under normal operating conditions you may be entitled to a payment. You are entitled to one payment in any financial year (1 April – 31 March). You will qualify if the pressure in our service pipe falls below 7 metres head of water for longer than an hour twice in 28 consecutive days. However, if the low water pressure is a result of necessary routine or emergency maintenance work on our systems, you will not be entitled to a payment.

- **Emergency water restrictions**

If we have to interrupt or cut off essential supplies because of a drought we will pay you for each day or part of a day that you are affected. The maximum payment will be the average cost of your household water bill in the previous year. If you are a business customer we will pay you in similar circumstances, up to a maximum of your previous annual water bill or £500 if no water charges were paid or a third party is responsible for the water charges. We will not pay if, in the opinion of Ofwat, the circumstances are so exceptional that the interruption or cut off could not reasonably have been avoided.

- **Boil water notices or do not drink notices**

In the unlikely event that the water we supply does not reach its usual high standard, we may issue a 'boil water' or 'do not drink' notice in writing. If this happens we will make a payment. However, if the problem occurs on your private supply pipe you will not be entitled to a payment. We will not pay if the circumstances are exceptional (see page 8).

How and when will you pay me if you do not meet a standard?

If we are aware that we have caused a problem, we will make service guarantee payments to you automatically within 10 or 20 working days depending on the circumstances (with the exception of external sewer flooding where you must make a written claim for payment). If the payment is not made within the timescale we give we will automatically pay you. The table on pages 14-17 sets out how many working days you can expect to receive your payment in and how much you will receive.

We will pay automatically if we know that there has been a problem. If you think that you should have received a payment please contact us because we may not know about it. Please do this within three months of the problem occurring.

Are there circumstances when you won't make a payment?

In some rare and exceptional circumstances we may not be able to meet our standards because of events that are beyond our control. If this happens our service guarantees do not apply and payments may not be due. Examples include:

- Severe weather
- Industrial action
- Third party action
- Actions or equipment for which you are responsible

If you are unsure about whether you should be paid please contact our Customer Operations Service Centre (see page 18).

There are some other circumstances which are specific to each standard. These can be found by looking at the table on pages 14-17.

Payments under our service guarantee scheme do not affect your legal rights and they do not mean that we admit liability.

Do you review your service standards?

Yes. We ask a selection of customers what they think of our service each year and we also invite feedback from anyone who is not approached to do this. We use the information we gather to make more improvements in our service to you.

As well as the service guarantees, we have set other standards to make sure that our service is as good as you expect it to be. We continuously review these standards and compare them against other companies who provide services to you.

What happens if I have a dispute?

We understand that if something goes wrong, you want us to resolve it quickly. If you make a complaint we will follow our complaints procedure which is set out in our leaflet 'What to do if you are unhappy with our service'. You can request this by contacting us (see page 18) or by visiting www.stwater.co.uk.

The Consumer Council for Water (CCWater) is there to review all issues that affect your interests as a water customer, liaising with us and making representations on your behalf. CCWater staff can give you free independent advice on issues that affect you as a water customer and they will investigate any complaints that you can't resolve directly with us through our own complaints procedures. They will also advise you if the matter you have raised is a dispute that can be settled by our regulator, the Water Services Regulation Authority (Ofwat). You can contact CCWater at:

Consumer Council for Water Central
1st Floor Victoria Square House
Victoria Square
Birmingham B2 4AJ
0121 345 1017 or **0845 702 3953**
central@ccwater.org.uk
www.ccwater.org.uk

There are certain types of dispute where Ofwat can decide the outcome and certain types where an independent arbitrator can be appointed. Ofwat can settle:

- any dispute about whether or not you are entitled to a payment under the Guaranteed Service Standards scheme.
- any dispute about the cost of connection to, security for payment for or the terms of certain conditions of connection to a water main.
- any dispute arising from us telling you that you are required to have a separate supply to your existing one (by serving you a section 64 notice). This will depend on which part of the section 64 notice we have used to serve on you.

- any appeals about the adoption of sewers, of sewage works and certain other sewerage disputes. These can include disputes about your right to make a physical connection to such sewers, our request for alterations to a proposed drainage system or our decision to close or place restrictions on the use of a public sewer.
- any dispute about maintaining pressure and supply or the effectiveness and capacity of your water tank.
- disputes regarding requisitioning of water mains or public sewers (including public lateral drains)
 - any dispute about the amount we ask you to pay or the undertakings or securities we expect you to give.
 - any dispute about our proposal to extend the period of 3 months which we are given to provide a water main after you ask for it, or about the point where a service pipe will connect with the main.
 - any dispute about our proposal to extend the period of 6 months which we are given to provide a public sewer after you ask for it, or about the places where private drains and sewers will connect with the public sewer.
- disputes regarding water meters
 - any dispute about whether it is practical to install a meter or where there is a dispute about whether fitting a meter would involve unreasonable expense.

In the case of streetworks, if there is a dispute about compensation after we have done work in the street and we can not agree on a mediator, Ofwat can decide on one.

Who regulates the service that you provide?

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)

DEFRA lays down the standards of quality of drinking water which include the European Commission's requirements. It also ensures that we comply with these standards.

The Water Services Regulation Authority (Ofwat)

DEFRA has appointed a Chairman of the Water Services Regulation Authority (Ofwat) whose duties include protecting your interests and ensuring we comply with DEFRA conditions. These conditions include restrictions on the increases we can make in our charges, controls on the levels of service we must provide and requirements about the information we give to you. The Chairman also has a duty to investigate some matters.

Contact the Chairman of the Water Services Regulation Authority at:
Ofwat, Centre City Tower, 7 Hill Street, Birmingham, B5 4UA
Or call **0121 625 1300**

The Environment Agency (The EA)

The EA is responsible for controlling the pollution of rivers, draining land, controlling floods and issuing fishing licences. The EA regulates how much water we may take from the rivers and other inland and underground sources for water supply and our return of the water to rivers after it has been used and treated.

Contact the EA at:
Sapphire House East, 550 Streetsbrook Road, Solihull, B91 1QT
Or call **0121 711 2324**

The Drinking Water Inspectorate (DWI)

The DWI acts as technical assessor for the Government on the monitoring, recording and reporting of drinking water quality. It carries out technical audits of companies, investigates incidents, initiates actions to achieve compliance with legal requirements and provides expert advice to the Government on drinking water policy. It also oversees improvement schemes that companies like us are legally committed to.

Contact the DWI at:
Room M03
55 Whitehall
London
SW1A 2EY



I have individual needs – how can you help?

We need to know if you have individual needs so please contact us to join our Access register.

Being on the register means you can access the following services:

- Correspondence in Large print, Braille, Electronic or Audio formats
- Bill reading service
- Textphone service
- Confidential password to help identify our staff who may call at your door
- Special meter reading arrangements
- Special water supply arrangements if you are a home dialysis patient
- Help with the provision of free bottled water during a supply interruption

For further information or if you wish to be added to our Access register, please contact us on **08457 500 500**. We will take your details and arrange for our Access team to contact you or send an Access information pack.

Bogus callers

If a Severn Trent Water employee asks to come into your home, they will show you an ID card with their name and photograph on it. You can check their identity by calling **0800 783 4444** and we will confirm if they are genuine. Do not call any other number they give you or accept any excuses. If you are in any doubt, do not let them in. For your protection, we have a password scheme which can protect you against bogus callers. For more information please download our 'Stop' leaflet from www.stwater.co.uk or telephone **08457 500 500** to request a copy. If you use a textphone you can also contact us on **0800 328 1155**

Our Code of Practice

Guaranteed Service Standard or Company Standard	How much will you pay me if you do not meet the guaranteed standard?	How quickly will you make the automatic payment to me?	How much will you pay me if you do not pay me in the time you stated?	Are there any times when you won't pay?
Making appointments	£20 (Household) £20 (Business)	Within 10 working days	£10 (Household) £10 (Business)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When it is not in connection with the supply of water or sewerage service In exceptional circumstances (severe weather, industrial action or the action of a third party)
Keeping appointments	£20 (Household) £20 (Business)	Within 10 working days	£10 (Household) £10 (Business)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If you cancel the appointment If we cancel with more than 24 hours notice In exceptional circumstances (severe weather, industrial action or the action of a third party)
Responding to written account queries	£20 (Household) £20 (Business)	Within 10 working days	£10 (Household) £10 (Business)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If you do not want to continue with the enquiry If the enquiry is sent to the wrong company address If the query is frivolous or vexatious In exceptional circumstances (severe weather, industrial action or the action of a third party)
Responding to written requests to change your payment method	£20 (Household) £20 (Business)	Within 5 working days	£10 (Household) £10 (Business)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If you do not want to continue with the enquiry If the enquiry is sent to the wrong company address If the query is frivolous or vexatious In exceptional circumstances (severe weather, industrial action or the action of a third party)
Responding to written complaints	£20 (Household) £20 (Business)	Within 10 working days	£10 (Household) £10 (Business)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If you do not want to continue with the complaint If the complaint is sent to the wrong company address If the complaint is frivolous or vexatious In exceptional circumstances (severe weather, industrial action or the action of a third party)
Giving you notice of planned interruptions to your supply	£20 (Household) £50 (Business)	Within 20 working days	£20 (Household) £50 (Business)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If it is impractical for us to identify you as being affected and you don't claim within 3 months of the incident In exceptional circumstances (industrial action or the action of a third party)
Restoring your supply when we say we will after a planned interruption	£20 (Household) £50 (Business) Each extra complete 24 hours you are without water: £10 (Household) £25 (Business)	Within 20 working days	£20 (Household) £50 (Business)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If it is impractical for us to identify you as being affected and you don't claim within 3 months of the incident In exceptional circumstances (severe weather, industrial action or the action of a third party)

Our Code of Practice (continued)

Guaranteed Service Standard or Company Standard	How much will you pay me if you do not meet the guaranteed standard?	How quickly will you make the automatic payment to me?	How much will you pay me if you do not pay me in the time you stated?	Are there any times when you won't pay?
Restoring your supply after an emergency supply interruption	£20 (Household) £50 (Business) For each extra complete 24 hours you are without water: £10 (Household) £25 (Business)	Within 20 working days	£20 (Household) £50 (Business)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If it is impractical to identify you as being affected and you don't claim within 3 months of the incident • In exceptional circumstances (severe weather, industrial action or the action of a third party)
Dealing with sewer flooding (inside your property)	A payment that is equal to your annual sewerage charges up to a maximum of £1,000 (minimum £150) for each flooding incident	Within 20 working days	£20 (Household) £50 (Business)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If it is impractical to identify you as being affected and you don't claim within 3 months of the incident • If your actions have caused the problem • If your private drains or sewers are inadequate • In exceptional circumstances (exceptional weather or industrial action)
Dealing with sewer flooding (outside your property)	A payment that is equal to 50% of your annual sewerage charges up to a maximum of £500 (minimum £75) for each flooding incident	Within 20 days of you making a claim	£20 (Household) £50 (Business)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If your actions have caused the problem • If your private drains or sewers are inadequate • In exceptional circumstances (exceptional weather or industrial action) • If you don't make a written claim within 3 months of the incident • If you are not materially affected • If we have already made a payment for internal flooding for the same incident
Providing you with adequate water pressure	£25 (Household) £25 (Business)	Within 10 working days of the payment being due		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If we have already made a payment in the financial year • If the low pressure is because of necessary works • If it is impractical for us to identify you as being affected and you don't claim within 3 months of the incident • In exceptional circumstances (industrial action or the action of a third party) • If we don't know about the problem
Making emergency restrictions on water use	£10 per day/part day (Household) up to a maximum of the cost of your water bill for last year £50 per day/part day (Business) up to a maximum cost of your water bill for last year or £500			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If, in Ofwat's opinion, the circumstances are so exceptional that the interruption or cut off could not have been reasonably avoided
Issuing a boil water notice	£25 (Household) £25 (Business)			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the problem is because of something on your private supply pipe • In circumstances beyond our control

How can I contact you?

Our website is designed to provide you with answers and advice for many queries you may have. You can also pay your bill, apply for a meter, update your meter reading, check your water quality, change your address or report a leak.

Visit us at www.stwater.co.uk

For general enquiries or complaints about your bill, please contact our Customer Contact Centre on: **08457 500 500**

8.00 am to 8.00 pm Monday to Friday

8.00 am to 1.00 pm Saturday

You can also email on: customer.relations@severntrent.co.uk

If English is not your first language and you need help, please call and ask for our Language Line service.

For operational emergencies (leaks/burst mains/sewer blockages/sewer flooding/dangerous apparatus) and general operational information or complaints about your water and sewerage services, please contact our Customer Operations Service Centre on: **0800 783 4444**.

The centre is operational 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

The postal address is;

Severn Trent Water Ltd

Customer Operations Service Centre

Sherbourne House

St Martins Road

Finham

Coventry

CV3 6SD

If you use a textphone you can contact us on **0800 328 1155**
(available 24 hours a day)

Our headquarters are located at:

2297 Coventry Road

Birmingham B26 3PU

www.stwater.co.uk

0121 722 4000

If you only receive sewerage services from Severn Trent Water, your water may be supplied by South Staffordshire Water Plc. In this case you should contact us if you have a query about your sewerage service and South Staffordshire Water if you have a query or complaint about your water supply or bills. Contact South Staffordshire Water at:

South Staffordshire Water Plc,

Green Lane,

Walsall,

West Midlands,

WS2 7PD

Or call: **01922 638 282** (general enquiries)

0845 607 0456 (billing enquiries)

0800 389 1011 (supply queries)

If you want to contact the Consumer Council for Water please use the following details:

Consumer Council for Water Central

1st Floor

Victoria Square House

Victoria Square

Birmingham

B2 4AJ

0121 345 1017 or **0845 702 3953**

central@ccwater.org.uk

www.ccwater.org.uk