

WONDERFUL ON TAP

SEVERN

TRENT

Metering Matters – A guide to our Fixing Any Faults policy

Severn Trent
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Customer guide for our water meter faults policy

We have created this guide to provide support and guidance to our customers who believe they have an issue with their meter. Some, although not all, meter issues may cause higher usage than expected. This guide sets out what issues could cause higher usage and how to get in touch so we can investigate this for you.

Why is my bill higher than expected?

There are several reasons why you could have received a higher than usual bill:

- You have started using a sprinkler
- You have had more people than usual in your house
- You have had building work
- You have a new appliance
- You have been at home more than usual
- You could have a leak

A higher bill doesn't always mean you have a leak

A higher bill than usual can be surprising, but it may be because you have used more water than usual over the last six months.

For example, if you have used a garden sprinkler during the bill period, your bill will be higher.

However, if you are confident that you have not used extra water, further investigation may be required to establish what has caused the increase.

It is possible that you may have a leak either in your water pipes or the meter, we recommend that you carry out a flow test.

How do I do a flow test to see if I have a leak?

A flow test is used to check if your property has a leak. You can carry one out yourself by following these steps:

1. Turn off all taps in the house and make sure that there is no water being used (e.g. check no appliances such as the washing machine or dishwasher are running).
2. Read the meter and take a note of the exact meter reading (read the numbers from left to right).
3. Do not use the taps, appliances or flush the toilet for at three hours.
4. After the three hours is up take a second reading. Ensuring that no water has been used in the meantime.
5. If the second reading is higher, you may have a leak.

If you are unable to complete a flow test yourself at home, please contact us and we'll arrange for one of our engineers to visit your property at a suitable time for you to investigate.

Signs of a possible leak

There are other signs that could indicate you have a leak. Things to look out for are:

- Areas of lush vegetation during dry periods
- Patches on the floor that are consistently damp
- Constant noise coming from the pipes in your home
- Noise from the toilets (noise from toilets is caused by water constantly flowing through to the toilet overflow. This can happen with new bathroom fittings).

If you think the leak is in your supply pipes or internal pipework please [read our advice for finding and fixing leaks on private pipes.](#)

Incorrect meter readings

The first time most people become aware of an incorrect meter read is when they receive an unusually high or low bill from us.

These issues can be a result of human error or "crossed meters". Many meters are read by radio scanners, but other meters rely on someone physically reading the meter.

Verifying a meter reading

If you notice a mistake has been made when providing a meter read, which has created an inaccurate bill please contact us.

Depending on the exact circumstances, the meter type and the size of the error you can either take a photo or we will send out a meter reader for independent verification.

If the meter read has been confirmed to be inaccurate, we will correct it in our systems and then confirm the correction with you by letter.

Contact us if you think your bill is wrong

If you think your bill is wrong, please [contact us](#) to provide information about why you believe your bill is wrong and we'll investigate this for you as quickly as we can.

If we investigate and find out that your bill is wrong, this will be amended and rebilled, and any overpayments you've made will either go towards your next 6 monthly bill, or we will send a refund to you.

Accuracy of water meters

Water meters are approved for accuracy by the [Office for Product Safety & Standards](#) as well as the manufacturer, before leaving the factory.

Our metering contractors will show you how to read the meter after it has been installed.

Requesting a 3rd party water meter test

You can request for meters to be tested if you think it might be inaccurate.

The meter will be replaced and sent back to the manufacturer for testing on specially calibrated equipment by an independent measuring company to confirm the meter's accuracy.

An organisation called [Juniper carry out independent water meter tests](#).

If the meter is confirmed to be inaccurate, you will not be charged for the test.

Paying for the test

If the meter is confirmed to be inaccurate, you will not be charged for the test.

If the independent checkers find that that meter is accurate, you will be charged for the test.

Tests vary by the size and type of the meter, but a typical meter test will cost £70 plus VAT.

Refunds and certificates

If the meter has over-recorded, we will refund you with the amount we estimate has been overcharged on your latest bill. If it has under-recorded, we will not claim anything back from you.

If the meter is proved to be accurate then we will receive a certificate from the testers, which we will pass on to you.

No meters have over-recorded

Test records in recent years show that no meters have failed for being inaccurate by over-recording.

They have been within accuracy limits or have failed for under-recording.

We sometimes decide to test meters if we believe it is necessary, for example if we believe that the consumption is lower than expected.

We will pay for these tests and will inform you of any outcome if it is not accurate.

Mechanical faults with water meters

Most meters work fine for their entire lifetime and they very rarely break unless they are accidentally disturbed or damaged.

Sometimes mechanical faults do happen though, and this is where there are physical faults with the meter. These issues include:

- **Noise:** the meter starts to make an unusual noise
- **Leaks:** the meter is leaking
- **Damage:** the cover is cracked or damaged

- **Inaccurate:** the meter is not accurately measuring the amount of water passing through it.

Tell us if you think your meter has a problem

You should [contact us if you have a leak or another mechanical issue](#) on your meter.

When a problem on a meter is reported to us, we will take you through some checks to determine the issue.

This may result in a visit to your property by either a Severn Trent engineer or our metering contractors.

When we'll fix the problem

If your issue is determined to be of high priority, a leak for example, you will receive a call from our metering contractor within 2 hours who will diagnose the issue over the phone so that they can arrive with the right equipment to solve the problem.

If the problem is deemed to be less urgent then we will aim to contact you within 5 working days.

We will aim to have the problem completely resolved within 12 days of you reporting the issue.

Other potential faults

Stopped/slowng – Meters can start to slow or stop recording completely in some cases with age. This could result in an incorrect bill being issued. We will exchange the meter for a new one in this case.

Damaged – Sometimes the glass on the meter face which protects the meter as well as allowing it to be read can become damaged due to wear and tear or with age. In this instance, we will replace the meter with a new one. When the old meter is removed an actual reading is obtained, so billing is unaffected.

Touchpad failure – Some meters have an external touchpad device connected which we use to read the meter without disturbing you. If the touchpad fails, we will replace your meter. If an actual reading can be obtained from your meter, we will use this for your bill, or we may need to estimate this based on your previous or current usage (once the meter has been exchanged).

How we can support you and your family

We understand that sometimes you or your family may need long term support.

We are able to provide tailored support for you and your household if you [join our Priority Services Register](#).

This is a free service and means we can learn a bit more about you and help us understand your specific needs.

Our Priority Service Register is here to support everyone, whether you or a family member are facing ill-health, financial worries, language barriers or physical/psychological ill-health.

We are here to try and provide some support to you and your family during that period.

Contact us if you have any questions

You can [contact our team](#) if you have any questions about our metering policy, our team will be happy to help you. You can also read our Metering Matters – Installation Guidance, which explains how and when we're able to help with problems regarding installing a water meter.