



INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR HOT WATER METER

Your hot water meter allows us to measure hot water consumption within your building or apartment so we can charge for the water heated. This informational brochure is meant to provide you with a better understanding of your hot water charges, including meter reading and consumption factors. These charges are for the energy used to heat the water – we do not supply or charge for the actual water.

Locating your Hot Water Meter

Meters are usually installed by the builder or developer within the building, and are usually located in a Common area such as a hallway cupboard, garage, basement, behind a ceiling or wall access panel in the foyer or in the corridor on each floor.

In some cases, the builder may have installed the meter in your apartment. These can often be located under the sink or vanity unit in the bathroom or behind a hidden access panel in the wall.

Meters that are located in your unit, in the basement, in locked cupboards or fire stairwells are often difficult and inconvenient for meter readers to get to. The design and installation of meters is the builders or developers responsibility and can cause access limitations and restrictions for meter readers. Not every meter you find will be a hot water meter. There may be other meters on your site that measure electricity, gas or cold water.

Reading your Hot Water Meter

Your hot water meter is either read manually by a Meter Reader or read remotely via an electronic metering system. Each of these systems requires little disturbance to residents. In instances where our Meter Reader can not gain appropriate access to a meter an estimated read will be used.

Manual Meter Reading

Often more easily accessible areas, including common areas tend to have meters that are read manually. In these instances, we will have a meter reader attend the premises to do a manual meter reading. When necessary they will schedule a time with the Onsite Building Manager or appropriate person to gain access.

Remote Meter Reading

Typically, a remote reading system or a digital reader will be added to your hot water meter to enable us to routinely read the water meter without having to access your unit or physically attend the site.

Meter reads on remote reading systems rely on the turbine inside the meter to spin as water passes through the meter. This generates a small electronic pulse each time 10 litres of water pass through. Interestingly, the pulse is generated by magnets and does not rely on an electrical power source.

Each pulse therefore represents 10 litres of water passing through your meter. The electronic meter reading system senses this pulse and calculates your meter read.

A number of different remote metering systems are used today. Some of these systems rely on a modem and are dialled into via the fixed telephone lines or utilise mobile data SIM cards. Others require site attendance where a Meter Reader downloads the data directly into a hand-held device from a central location within the site.



Estimate Reads

Some meters are located in your unit, in the basement, in locked cupboards, fire stairwells and other inconvenient places. The design and installation of meters is the builders or developers responsibility and can cause access limitations and restrictions for meter readers.

In some cases, Onsite Building Managers are required to provide access and are not always available as a result of being called away or dealing with other issues for the site. In this case, when Meter Readers arrive to check the meters access is not always available. As a result of these limited access scenarios, sometimes it may be necessary to use an estimated reading instead of an actual meter reading.

Estimated Reads are an important part of our water meter reading process. The use of estimated reads ensures you can continue to receive your bills where information is not available. Estimated reads have generally been found to be a reasonable reflection of your usage.

An estimated read, enables a customer to budget appropriately. Without an estimated read, the customer would receive a bill for two or more billing periods at their next read (i.e. the period where a read was not available, and the next period where an actual read was collected).

Why am I receiving an estimated read if I have a Remote Metering System (REMs) in place?

Some REMs still require access to the remote metering unit on-site. This may be located in a common area such as a main foyer or locked storage room. Building access and room access will still be important in these instances to allow the Meter Reader to download the data.

Faults

Due to the quality of the construction of hot water meters, faults are rare. A faulty hot water meter will generally slow down as a result of age and water quality and will record less water passing though than actually does. This produces an outcome more favourable to the customer. However, to avoid faults, meters are replaced following a scheduled time frame. With electronic remote metering reading systems, on occasion, electrical or technical faults can interfere with obtaining a reading.



Method of Calculation

When an estimated read is to be taken, it is generally calculated on your average consumption for the same billing period of the previous year. This ensures that the read reflects seasonal usage patterns such as more water being used in winter and less being used in spring. At your next actual read, any over or under-estimation will be adjusted automatically.

As an example: Let us assume you were billed with an estimated read (E) in one billing period, that was slightly higher than your actual consumption for that period, had we been able to obtain an actual read.

At the end of the next billing period (3 months in Queensland and South Australia and bi-monthly in Victoria), the actual read (A) we obtain will reflect the correct total consumption for the past two (2) billing periods.

The first period will be slightly over-estimated and the second period will therefore include an adjustment for this period. Overall, however, the total will be correct.

| Period | Using Actual Reads (A) only | An Estimated Read (E) followed by an Actual Read (A) |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------|---|
| Opening Read | 10,200 (A) | 10,200 (A) |
| January - March | 14,600 (A) 4,400 litres consumed | 15,000 (E) 4,800 litres estimated consumption – Over-estimated by 400 litres |
| April – June | 19,100 (A) 4,500 litres consumed | 19,100 (A) 4,100 litres consumed – adjusting for the 400 litres over-estimation of water consumed in the prior period |
| Total Litres Consumed | 8,900 litres | 8,900 litres |

*Water reads are also referred to in our industry as Indices or Index reads. We account for litres of hot water consumed in Decalitres or lots of ten (10) litres.

CONTRIBUTING FACTORS IMPACTING HOT WATER CONSUMPTION

Several factors can impact the consumption of hot water in your apartment:

Number of Residents

- The number of people living at the property will increase your average daily hot water consumption as showers, sinks, the number of bathroom vanities and washing all increase on average with each additional person occupying the residence.

Showers

- Showers make up the majority of a customers' daily hot water consumption. An average (low flow rate) modern shower head uses around 9 litres of water a minute. Hot water typically forms 40% of the flow rate of the shower head - the balance being cold water mixed to produce warm water. This means an 8 minute shower will typically use 29 litres of hot water.

Building Design

- The original builders design has set the location of the main ring supplying hot water to each apartment. If your unit is some distance from the main hot water circulating ring in the building, then you may need to run your hot water tap for longer before you start feeling the water warm. All of the water that passes through the hot water meter is charged for. This is the same experience as residential homes where the hot water unit is some distance from the hot water taps.

Washing Machines

- Washing in hot water with a washing machine will increase your average hot water consumption.

Seasonal

- Increases in consumption can be seasonal as a result of change in weather. Almost all sites register an increase in hot water consumption during winter. This is predominantly as a result of taking longer and hotter showers.

Lifestyle

- Additionally changes in your lifestyle pattern, such as the addition of a new born and/or visitors staying for holidays like Christmas or Easter, will all impact adversely on your daily consumption and can cause seasonal or one-off spikes in hot water consumption. We often look for these signs around School Holidays.
- Similarly, taking long holidays or travelling for lengthy periods of time can result in a decreased bill. This can cause some confusion for customers for the following billing period when they see a larger bill than their last and cannot recall that their absence would have contributed to a smaller bill.

Leaking Taps

- Leaking taps that are not fixed will increase your hot water consumption over a billing cycle. A unit with dripping taps each losing 5 drips per minute can waste up to 5 litres of water per day or approximately 456 litres over a billing cycle.

Flick Mixer (Single handed taps)

- Flickmixer taps are single handled taps that mix the flow of hot and cold water out of a single handle - instead of having a hot and a cold water tap handle. As they rely on the movement of the handle from side to side to vary this mixture, it only takes a slight movement away from 'cold' to allow for the flow of hot water through the valve. A customer may not feel any measurable increase in heat from the water, however hot water is being fed into the flow of water and the customer is being charged. We recommend that a Flickmixer handle is always pushed hard against the cold side.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT 13 23 34