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IMPORTANT THINGS TO NOTE

- Meter installations are free, unless additional work outside the scope of a normal installation is required or requested.
- The location of the meter will depend on your individual property. Where possible we will install outside of the home in an existing boundary box.
- The details of the meter will always be given to you after the installation is complete.
- Updates to your bill will be done automatically.

1. OWNERSHIP AND RESPONSIBILITY

The water meter will remain the property of Essex & Suffolk Water. This means that we are responsible for maintaining and eventually replacing it. We will do this at our own expense, unless the water meter has been tampered with.

Tampering with a water meter is a serious offence. You should not remove the water meter, obstruct access to it or carry out any work on it without our permission. We will recover the costs of any expense, loss or damage from the person responsible.

We cover any work to install or replace your meter for 12 months. The apparatus itself is ours, but internal fixtures and fittings are the responsibility of the homeowner.

Irrespective of where the meter is fitted, you're responsible for any repairs to your supply pipe serving your property. This is usually the section of pipe from the boundary of your property (often the garden wall) into your property. In some cases, particularly in rural areas, you may be responsible for more pipework between the part of the street in which our main pipe is laid and your property or where the supply pipe crosses someone else's land. If you are in any doubt about your responsibility, more information may be available from the deeds of your property.

2. TENANTS

If you rent your home and pay your water bill directly to us, you do not need your landlord's permission to have a water meter fitted (Renters' Right's Act 2025).

However, your tenancy agreement may say you need permission if any alterations are made to the property. When we fit a water meter, we may need to make small changes, such as cutting into cupboards or replacing the boundary box outside. We'll always let you know if this is needed before we start.

If your landlord does not agree to alterations to your property, you should get advice from [**Citizens Advice**](#) before applying for a meter.

For more information about fitting water meters please go to Section 4 – Location of terms and conditions.

3. TYPE OF METER

From 2021 we are only installing smart capable meters. These meters will become fully smart once connected to a network.

There is no choice between smart and non-smart assets. If you have an older non smart meter and it needs to be replaced, the replacement will also be smart capable.

You can find more information about smart meters, data protection and the network [here](#).

4. LOCATION

We are required by law to install water meters so they are reasonably accessible for reading, inspection, testing and maintenance. Meters are usually (but not always) fitted where your external stop tap is located if you have one. The stop tap and the meter are apparatus that belong to us.

External installations

We only fit meters externally if a boundary box is already in place and is in a condition that allows for the meter to be installed without additional work.

Boundary boxes are normally on the footpath or verge outside your property, or just inside your property boundary.

A meter installed outside a building must be installed as near as is reasonably practicable to the boundary of the premises supplied. If this is not possible, then we will discuss all options available to you during your installation visit.

If we need to dig a hole to install the external meter, we will reinstate the hole once the meter is in place. The works may take longer, as we will need to arrange for a team to excavate and fully reinstate the area. The level of reinstatement following completion of the works will depend on the material excavated, for example:

- Where we've carried out works in your garden or in soft ground, we will reinstate the soil only and you will need to carry out any replanting yourself.
- If we've removed paving slabs, bricks (block paving), shingle or chippings, we will put back what we removed.
- Where we've excavated an area of black tarmac/concrete, we will reinstate only the excavated area with new black tarmac/concrete. The reinstated area may appear a different shade to the surrounding area due to natural fading of the original material.
- If you have any special finishes such as bespoke or nonstandard construction materials (including resin, bounded surfaces or printed/patterned concrete), we are unable to reinstate. We can discuss the works we can complete but any aesthetic remedies will be at your own expense.

Internal installations

A meter installed inside a building must be installed as near as is reasonably practicable to the point where the supply pipe enters the building or to the stop-tap. This will usually be under the kitchen sink or wherever your internal stop tap is located.

This may mean we need to cut some pipework, remove or cut a hole into the backboard of cupboards.

If you have no external chamber, but you do not want your meter installed inside, there may be a cost implication. The technician will discuss the options and potential costs with you at the time.

Moving a meter

If you want to have your meter moved, please contact us and we will arrange for someone to visit you and carry out a survey. If you decide to go ahead with the work, you will be charged for the cost of moving your meter unless you have specific special needs or need special assistance. We will confirm any costs associated with moving a meter before we do the work.

5. UNABLE TO FIT A METER

Depending on your property type, it may not be possible to fit a water meter in your home. For example, if you share your water supply with other properties, you have more than one supply of water to your property, or your pipework is not suitable.

If this is the case, we will review your account to see if paying your bill based on an assessed charge is a cheaper option (the amount you pay depends on the type of property you live in and occupancy, unless you are eligible for our affordability tariffs). If appropriate, we will arrange for your tariff to be updated and let you know via a letter and a revised bill.

6. WAITING TIMES

All applications need to go through a process which includes checking our records for details of the pipework and assets and it may involve a physical survey.

Once these checks are completed, your installation can take place. From 1 October 2025, we aim to fit your meter within 56 days (eight weeks). The timing depends on demand and the meter's location. If it takes longer, once your meter is installed, we will adjust your bill to remove water charges and apply only sewerage charges from day 57 until the installation date.

We will keep you updated on where you are in the process and what the next steps are.

7. REMOVAL OF METERS

If you've chosen to have a water meter installed but later change your mind, we're unable to remove it. This is because Essex and Suffolk are designated as seriously water-stressed areas, and as part of our long-term plan, we aim to install smart water meters in all homes and businesses by 2035 to help manage water more sustainably.

8. ACCURACY OF METERS

The water meter installed is manufactured and tested to a British Standard specification (BS5728/1 and ISO4064/1).

If you think the meter is not recording accurately, you can ask for it to be tested. On request, we will remove the meter and send it to an independent testing facility in accordance with the Water (Meters) Regulations 1988. A replacement meter will be installed and will remain in place regardless of the test result. If the results show the meter to be accurate, you will be liable for the cost of the test up to £70 plus VAT. In the unlikely event that the test shows the meter is inaccurate and has affected your consumption, we will revise your bill.

If we decide that your meter should be sent for testing, we will not charge you a fee, regardless of whether the test is found to be necessary or not.

METER OPTION INSTALLATION TERMS & CONDITIONS

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

9. MEASURED CHARGES AND YOUR BILL

When you choose to have a meter installed, measured charges are applied to your account within one month of the meter being fitted at your property, not the date of application.

Because Essex and Suffolk are considered seriously water stressed, we are installing meters to all available households and businesses. Your bills will be changing but we will be in regular contact with you before it happens to let you know if you are affected.

You will receive a final unmeasured bill with details of any under or over payments. We'll send you details, including changes to any payment plan, in preparation for your first measured bill based on an estimation. Your existing payment arrangement, i.e. Direct Debit, will be transferred to your new measured account. The payments will be adjusted to reflect your estimated bill.

You'll see the following services on your bill:

- **Water charges:** covers the cost of treating and supplying you with clean, clear, great tasting tap water.
- **Sewerage charges:** covers the cost of removing, treating and disposing of waste from your home safely. You pay for the water you use, measured in cubic meters.
- **Fixed charges:** covers the cost of maintaining and reading your meter, and surface water and highway drainage. If rainwater from your home doesn't drain into our sewers, you can claim an allowance on the sewerage charges you pay.

Estimated Bills

There are different reasons why you may receive an estimated bill after the meter has been installed. This may include:

Issue	Remedy
No access to the meter.	If the chamber or meter is obstructed, we will contact you to remove the obstruction and revisit to take a reading if you are unable to provide one.
Damaged display.	We will arrange for any damaged meter to be replaced. Your next bill should then be based on the accurate reading from the new meter.
Readings are not in keeping with previous bills.	The readings may be higher than normal and so we will work with you to find out if there is a change in circumstances that could have caused this. We would not want to charge you a larger amount if unnecessary. If it is lower than normal, there may be something wrong with your meter, so would look to understand and replace this if required.
Smart meter has stopped communicating for longer than 30 days.	The network may be down, or there might be an obstruction. As we will know about the lack of readings, we will investigate the cause and find a resolution.

METER OPTION INSTALLATION TERMS & CONDITIONS

Estimated bills are based on previous bills and usage.

10. READINGS

Smart connected meters:

If your meter is smart and connected to a network, we do not need to visit your home to read the meter. You also do not need to provide a meter reading. These are sent to us automatically.

Non-smart meters:

We are obligated to provide one reading every 13 months, but we aim to provide a reading every six months.

These readings will be aligned to your bill cycle so you can have the most accurate bills possible. If your meter is inside your home:

- we will knock when we are in the area.
- If you are not in, we will leave a card for you to provide your own reading or contact us to arrange an appointment.

If your meter is outside your home:

- we may be able to read the meter by a Bluetooth device,
- or we will manually look at your meter – so it's important that it is not obstructed by plants, buildings or vehicles.

Unable to read your meter:

There may be occasion when we cannot read your meter. If this is before your bill is due, you will be issued an estimated bill.

To maintain accurate bills and prevent any increase in payments, it's important that we can read the meter before your bill is due. You can provide your own reading at any time by visiting [here](#).

We will continue to monitor the reasons why we are unable to read the meter and work with you to rectify the issues.

11. CONSIDERATIONS

You need to have a working stop valve either internally or externally to have a meter fitted. If you don't know where it is, our technician can try and trace it during the visit. Depending on the location and accessibility, we may need to install a new stop valve. We will discuss with you at the time if there is a cost implication to do this.