



# A guide to Bristol Water and your water meter

At Bristol Water we deliver clean, fresh drinking water to approximately 1.2 million people and associated businesses in an area of almost 2,400 square kilometres centred on Bristol.

You may be a new customer to Bristol Water or have just moved within our region but we hope you will find the following information useful and informative. You can also read a lot more about Bristol Water and the services we offer on our website: [www.bristolwater.co.uk](http://www.bristolwater.co.uk)

## About Bristol Water

We have 68 different sources of water – including rivers, lakes, springs, wells and boreholes, linked by a 6,700 km distribution network of mains. During the year, we supply an average of 264 million litres of water per day (Ml/d) with almost half our daily water coming from the River Severn and a substantial proportion of the rest coming from our reservoirs in the Mendip Hills.

We are not responsible for providing sewerage services and depending where you live in our region these will be provided by one of 3 companies – Wessex Water, Thames Water or Severn Trent Water.





## Conservation and leisure

Our reservoirs and the land around them provide major conservation responsibilities and leisure opportunities, which we take very seriously. We own three major Sites of Special Scientific Interest, namely Chew Valley Lake, Blagdon Lake and Cheddar Reservoir and 2,500 acres of land in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Chew Valley Lake is renowned among trout and pike fishermen and offers various leisure and recreational facilities, from fishing and sailing to eating out, nature walks and bird watching, as well as being home to some rare species of plants and birds. Meanwhile at Blagdon, our Visitor Centre, built around two historic beam engines, tells the story of Bristol Water from 1846 to the present day.

## Treatment and quality

All the water sources available to us are naturally 'hard' and contain dissolved calcium and magnesium salts. Water hardness is a natural feature of the water supply in this area and does not mean that there is a problem with the water quality.

We use sophisticated treatment systems to ensure that the water we supply is always clean, safe and good to drink. As part of the treatment process, the water receives a small dose of chlorine to preserve the water quality whilst it is in our pipes on the way to your tap.

Some of our customers ask us whether we add fluoride to the water we supply – the answer is NO. The decision to add fluoride to the water supply lies with the Health Authorities.

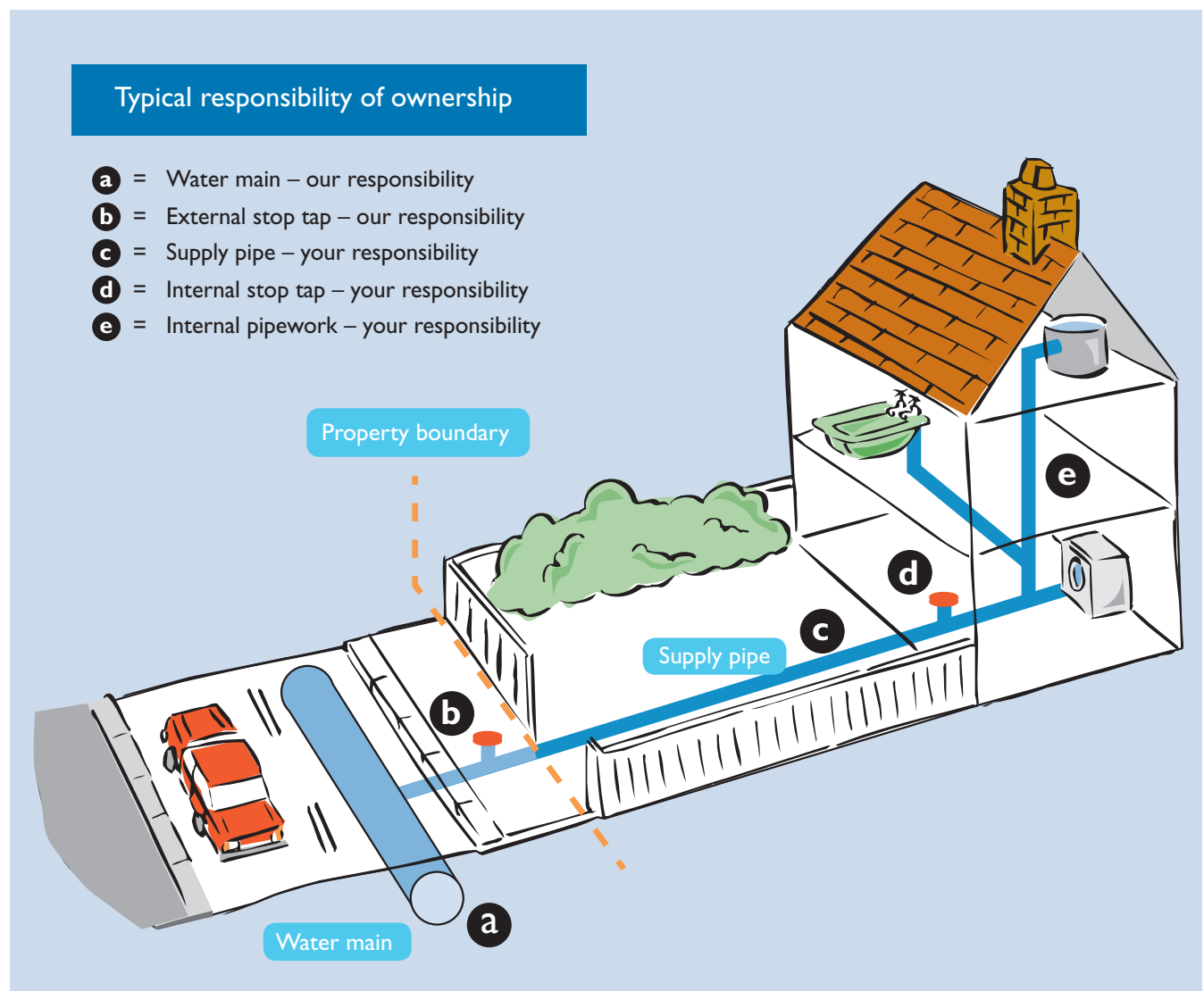
Each year around 89,000 water compliance tests are carried out on samples taken from both customers' properties and our own treatment works with an additional 340,000 being carried out following engineering works.

The Drinking Water Inspectorate audits us on the quality of our water and a public register of water quality information can be inspected at our Head Office in Bridgwater Road, Bristol. A free summary of this information is also available on our website – [www.bristolwater.co.uk](http://www.bristolwater.co.uk)

## Your responsibilities

Bristol Water is normally responsible for the water mains and pipes up to your property boundary; beyond that they are your responsibility. In some situations, you may be responsible for a pipe in adjacent land or even in the road if it serves your property. Sometimes this responsibility is shared with your neighbours. If we find a leak on pipes that are your responsibility, we will require you, under our legal powers, to repair the leak or in some cases replace the pipe.

Bristol Water has a scheme to assist domestic customers to repair leaks on their supply pipes, which are customers' responsibility. The LeakStop scheme is subject to conditions but in some situations the first repair on customers' supply pipe may be free.





## Your metered account

Your metered bill includes charges for water supplied by us and sewerage services provided by Wessex Water and these charges, which are billed in arrears, are collected by Bristol Wessex Billing Services Limited, our jointly owned company.

### Current domestic metered charges

	2015/16 Charges
<b>Water Supply Charge per m<sup>3</sup></b>	£1.1710
<b>Water Standing Charge</b>	£37.00
<b>Sewerage Charge per m<sup>3</sup></b> (assessed as 95% of water consumption)	£1.7910
<b>Sewerage Standing Charge</b>	£54.00

### Calculating your bill

Your water consumption is calculated by multiplying your water use in cubic metres by the cost per cubic metre. If you are connected for sewerage services your sewerage charge is worked out in the same way but is based on only 95% of the water used. The 5% allowance accounts for evaporation, car washing and garden watering and allows for variations during wet and dry years.

Standing charges are annual fixed charges based on the size of the meter and payable by all customers who receive water and sewerage services. Metered water standing charges cover the extra costs of maintaining and reading the meter and producing the bill and the sewerage standing charge includes the costs of dealing with surface water run-off from properties and highway drainage.

## Calculating your water use

To calculate your water use more accurately use the following table to see just how much water you use in your household.

Water Use	Quantity (litres)		Number of people	Total
<b>Personal Use</b> (drinking and personal hygiene – not bathing and showering)	175	x		=
Total number each week				+
<b>Toilet</b> Standard Flush	7.5 to 9	x		=
Dual Flush	5	x		+
<b>Bath</b>	80	x		=
				+
<b>Shower *</b> Normal shower	45	x		=
Power shower	80	x		+
<b>Washing machine</b> Old (pre 2000)	70	x		=
New	55			+
Water efficient	45			
<b>Use of kitchen sink</b> (cooking, cleaning and washing up)	9	x		=
				+
<b>Dishwasher</b> Normal	18	x		=
Water efficient	13			
Minutes used per week				+
<b>Garden/Outdoor Use</b> Hosepipe/sprinkler	10	x		=
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>				=
<b>Divide by 1000 to give cubic metres</b>				/ 1000
<b>Multiply by 52 weeks to give annual usage</b> (reduce the number of weeks if your property was empty during the year)				X 52
<b>TOTAL ANNUAL USAGE IN CUBIC METRES (m<sup>3</sup>)</b>				

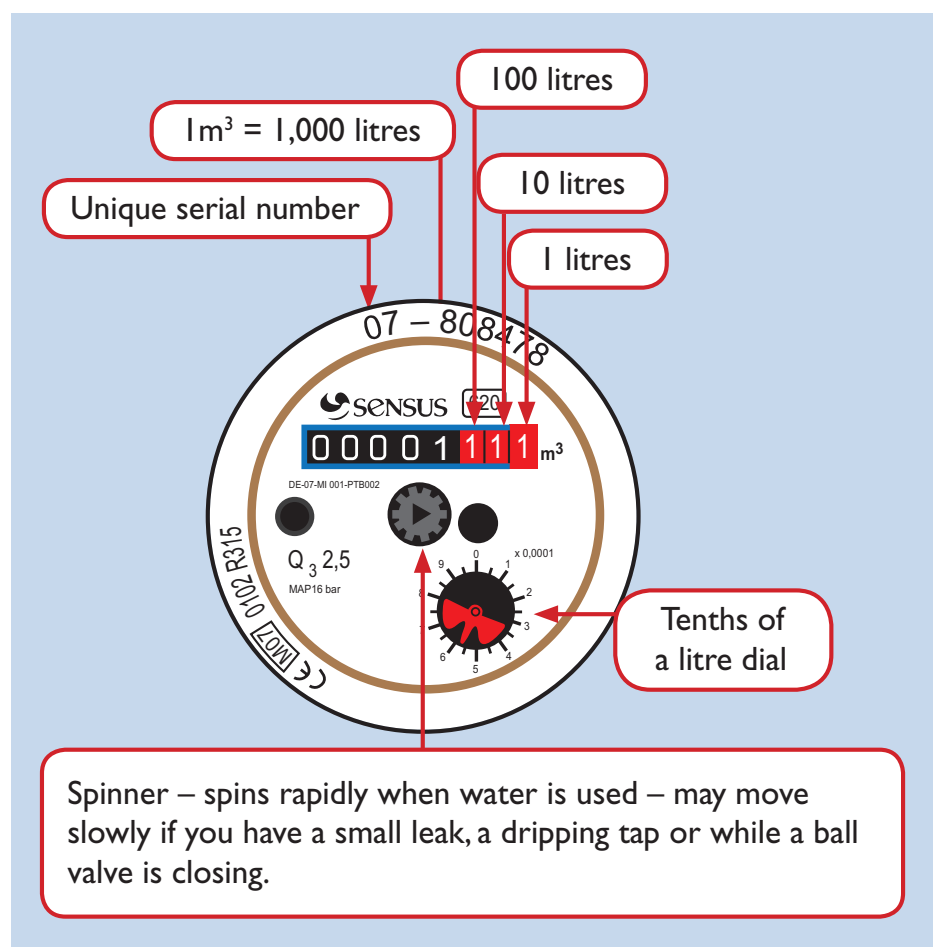
\*Assumes a five minute shower based on average flow rates.

### Comparing your expected water use with your bill

Work out your expected annual water use for your household in cubic metres (m<sup>3</sup>) and then divide this by 365 to get your expected daily usage. Compare this with the number of cubic metres for the actual period you have been billed for.

## Reading your meter and checking your water consumption

- First locate your meter – There are three common locations:
  1. In a box in your garden or drive
  2. In a box in the footpath
  3. Inside your property
- If the meter is in a box, open the lid with a suitable device. You may need a torch to help you read the meter, as it will be some way below ground. You may also need to clean soil or water from the box. Water in the meter box does not mean there is a leak as it may be ground water. If the water is moving or flowing in the box or water is there during a dry spell may indicate there is a leak. If the glass top of the meter is cloudy with condensation, tapping gently on the glass with a blunt tool will normally clear the droplets.
- The black figures on your meter register the amount of water used in whole cubic metres and these are the figures used for charging. The red figures record decimal fractions of a cubic metre and can be useful when checking for leaks, as can any dials on the meter.



## Meter Readings

We aim to read your meter at least once a year, but occasionally we may need to estimate your bill. If we are unable to read the meter because we cannot gain access or you do not reply to our request for a reading, we will estimate your consumption and show this on the bill. If you do not agree with the estimated consumption, you can read the meter yourself and either submit the reading online at [www.bristolwater.co.uk/your-home/water-meters/submit-a-meter-reading/](http://www.bristolwater.co.uk/your-home/water-meters/submit-a-meter-reading/) or telephone the meter reading message line on 0345 850 0018 (24 hours). This meter reading will also be used to calculate the charges for the disposal and treatment of your waste water and this charge is based on 95% of the water used.

## High consumption

By taking monthly meter readings, you can check for leaks and monitor your water use. There can be many reasons for an increase in water use, including a change in circumstances, such as visitors staying, having a baby, extra garden watering or even faults on internal plumbing i.e. dripping taps or faulty drop valves on toilets. Use the table below to record your readings – a sudden increase in use may indicate a leak.

Date	Meter Reading	Water Used

## Water meter maintenance

The meters we install are of a high quality and in usual situations require little or no maintenance and only our employees or agents are authorised to remove or replace the meter. If you damage the meter you will have to pay the repair or replacement costs including the costs of visiting and administration. We will be responsible for maintaining the meter box only where it is acting as our company stop tap.

For meters fitted in the footpath or within one metre of the property boundary, we accept responsibility for the meter, meter box and cover, all pipework and fittings within the box. For all other meter locations, we accept responsibility for the meter only. You are responsible for ensuring that the meter is protected from damage.

If you wish your meter to be sent for independent testing a fee will be payable by you if testing shows the meter to be working within the specified tolerances. If the meter is found to have been recording inaccurately to your disadvantage, no fee will be payable, the meter will be replaced and your account will be adjusted accordingly.

## Water Leaks

If you discover a leak on your pipe a speedy repair will prevent waste of water and damage to your property. If any of the dials or figures on your meter are moving when you are not using water, this may indicate a leak – do however check that your toilet cistern or roof tank are not refilling at the time.

### How to check for a water leak

Some metered customers believe they have a water leak when they receive a bill higher than expected. However, it is often useful for you to understand your water usage as the increase in consumption could be due to a change of circumstances or the frequent use of high water using appliances.

It is easy for customers on a water meter to check for a leak, follow these steps:

#### **Step 1 – Check your internal stop tap is working**

This is often located under the kitchen sink or in a connecting garage. It is important that your stop tap is working to complete all checks on your supply and to shut off your mains water in an emergency. If it isn't working then please call a plumber. If we need to check your supply for you we will not be able to do so if the internal stop tap is not working.

#### **Step 2 – Find your water meter and take a reading**

Make sure no appliances are operating and you are not using any water. If the dials on the meter are still moving you may have a leak on your private service pipe or within your property.

#### **Step 3 – Leakage check**

Firstly turn off the internal stop tap, turn on the kitchen cold tap and check that no water comes out – you may need to let it run for a few minutes before it stops. If the water continues to flow then you have not fully shut off the internal stop tap or it is faulty and needs repairing. In this case you will need to repair it yourself or call a plumber.

Once the internal stop tap is closed successfully, look at the meter again. If the meter dials are still moving it is likely there is a leak on the external service pipe. If the meter dials have stopped you may have a leak or problem with your internal pipework or fittings. You will need to locate and repair the problem yourself, or ask a plumber to investigate and repair this for you.

If you are unable to carry out these investigations yourself and you don't have anyone to help you, please call us on 0345 600 3 600 (Monday – Friday, 8am – 6pm).

For further advice call our Leakline on 0800 801011. We also operate a LeakStop scheme for domestic customers, which may allow you one free repair on your external pipework. For further information about our LeakStop scheme please call 0345 702 3797 between 8.00 am – 6.00 pm, Monday to Friday.

## Leakage Allowances

Metered customers are responsible for all water recorded by the meter and the maintenance of the service pipe, which is normally within the boundary of the property. Domestic customers should check their meter on a monthly basis to ensure that leaks are not occurring. If you believe you have a leak from an underground service pipe, telephone us and we will check it. If there is a leak and you get it repaired quickly, usually within 14 days, you may be eligible for a leakage allowance.

For more information relating to leakage allowances please refer to our Leakage Code of Practice for Domestic Customers which can be downloaded from our website – [www.bristolwater.co.uk](http://www.bristolwater.co.uk) or by calling 0345 702 3797 (8.00am – 6.00pm, Monday – Friday).

What you should do in an emergency

If you have any sort of emergency to do with your water meter or water supply you should ring Customer Services on 0345 702 3797 at any time.