

WATER METER POLICY



Responsible Department: Infrastructure Delivery
Responsible Section: Water Services
Responsible Officer: Manager Water Services

Objective

The objective of this policy is to set out both Council's responsibility and Property Owners role in relation to the connection and maintenance of water meters.

Each individual property connected to Council's reticulated potable water supply, will be metered such that water demand can be measured, managed and be relied upon as a justifiable basis for water supply charges.

Introduction

Water meters measure the amount of water used. This measurement helps to accurately charge customers for the water they've used. It also helps customers to gauge their water use.

Most houses have their own meter. This is usually located towards the front of the property, near the left or right boundary. In duplexes, flats or strata titled properties, there may be only one meter servicing all of the dwellings or one for each building.

Council owns the water meter but it is the responsibility of the property owner to ensure that it is not damaged and accessible for reading.

Council installs water meters for domestic supply pursuant to the:

- Local Government Act 1993.
- Local Government (General) Regulation 2005.
- Water Act 2000.
- Plumbing & Drainage Regulation 2003.
- AS 3500.1.2.1998 (Water Supply) Section 5.3 (reference to proximity to other services (ie electrical cables, gas pipelines)).
- AS 3565 Meters for Water Supply - Cold Water Meters.

Under Sections 191, 191A or 192 of the Local Government Act, 1993, Council has powers of entry to private property to carry out water supply work such as meter reading, repairs and maintenance. In the case of conducting repairs, Council will first take reasonable steps to contact the property owner. If the owner cannot be contacted, Council may enter the property and carry out the necessary work. In such cases, Council will place a card in the property's letterbox advising that Council has entered the property

Policy

Installation

Council is responsible to supply and fit a water meter assembly when installing a connection to Council's water supply, the cost of the meter assembly and installation is borne by the property owner as outlined in Councils Fees and Charges.

The size of the connection (and thus the size of the meter) is determined by Council, with reference to guidelines in AS 3500 New South Wales code of practice - Plumbing and drainage.

Generally, the water service is to be located in a position determined by Council in accordance with existing cross road conduits, mains tapplings, and the like.

All meters are to be installed above ground. In cases where the Director of Engineering Services determines that an above ground meter will adversely impact on the adequate function of a driveway, formed walkway, gate, fence line or other such immovable structure the meter will be placed in a pit.

Water meters are to be installed, maintained and replaced by Council (staff or contractors). The water supply may be disconnected for a few minutes whilst carrying out this work. Meters will be replaced as soon as possible after having registered 7,500 kilolitres, or as deemed warranted by the Director Engineering Services

Only water meters conforming to AS3565 or having achieved patented approval under the relevant code are to be used in Council's water service connections.

Where Council's Director of Engineering Services determines that it is not financially practical to install a water meter the property owner will be subject to a non metered charge in accordance with Council's fees and charges.

Domestic dwellings are to be serviced by one water meter only, with that connection being either a 20mm or 25mm water connection (25mm is the preferred minimum size meter).

Council's maintenance responsibility of a water service ceases at the outlet of a water meter or the outlet of a backflow prevention device that has been fitted to a water meter by Council staff.

Alteration

Any alteration to the water service connection from, and including, the water meter back to the water main, is the responsibility of Council. The water service connection and its components (water meter, ball valve, and fittings) always remain the property of Council. Council may consider a written request to alter the location or size of a water service connection and if approved the cost of the works will be met by the property owner in advance.

Any alteration to the water service on the property owner's side of the water meter is the responsibility of the owner of the connected property.

It is an offence under Section 636 of Local Government Act, 1993 to tamper or interfere with the normal operation of water meters.

Damage

The property owner will be responsible for the cost to repair or replace a damaged water meter, unless the damage is the direct result of Council workmanship.

The possibility of household water meter breakage occurs with the onset of frosty conditions. Ice can swell and burst water meters, resulting in pipe damage and loss of water supply. Property owners can collect a free frost cover (from Council's Administration building in Narrabri) if their water meter is at risk of being damaged by frost (ie. if the water meter is not in a sheltered area). Property owners can place the protective covers over water meters themselves without needing any tools or equipment. Council will record who collects the covers and the intended address, and reserves the right to reject requests for multiple covers.

Accuracy

Meters will be tested for accuracy by an independent laboratory on payment of the appropriate fee (and its clearance), for a meter test, (refer to current year fees and charges). Payment will be reimbursed if the meter is proven faulty or inaccurate (ie reads outside plus or minus 3 %).

Sale of new or used Council meters to the public is prohibited.

Council reserves the right to average a customer's water billing account from previous consumption figures where a water meter malfunctions or to estimate an account based on related available information.

References

- Local Government Act 1993.
- Local Government (General) Regulation 2005.
- Water Act 2000.
- Plumbing & Drainage Regulation 2003.
- AS 3500.1.2.1998 (Water Supply) Section 5.3 (reference to proximity to other services (ie electrical cables, gas pipelines).
- AS 3565 Meters for Water Supply - Cold Water Meters.

Measure of Success

- That all properties within Narrabri Shire be measured.

History

MINUTE NUMBER	MEETING DATE	DESCRIPTION OF CHANGE
753/2009	20 October 2009	Adopted
26/2012	21 February 2012	Reviewed
607/2013	3 September 2013	Reviewed