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## Introduction

Measuring your organisations water allows you to understand the current usage, check for leaks and identify cost savings.

Water meters are used to measure the volume of water used by residential and commercial building that is supplied with water by a public water supply system. Recording meter readings on a regular basis (daily, weekly or monthly) will allow you to identify trends in water consumption.

Since 1 April 2008, all 130,000 business customers and public sector, charitable and not-for-profit organisations have been able to choose their supplier. The introduction of competition in the water industry in Scotland has brought wider choice and more tailored services, and is leading to lower prices.

## Monitoring & Measuring water – *‘if you don’t measure it, you can’t manage it!’*

There are three key things you can do to measure your organisations water usage:

- Taking meter readings
- Benchmarking water consumption
- Checking water bills

## Taking Meter Readings

Taking meter readings is the most accurate and reliable form of collecting water usage data. The first step is to locate and identify your meter, you then need to understand your meter. The majority of organisations in Scotland have metered water bills but there are some who pay a fixed rate. Metered water bills allow companies to identify and reduce their usage whilst fixed rates do not allow this.



After identifying the water meter, taking weekly or monthly readings on site would identify accurate usage as well as identifying any irregularities.

Water meter readings are charged in units of cubic metres of water used ( $m^3=1000$  litres). There are two types of meters, one is a dial type meter and the second is a digital one:

- On the dial meter you only need to note the black numbers. Depending on the type of meter, it may have four or five black numbers. You do not need to note any numbers in red as the black numbers are cubic meters used.
- On the digital meter you only need to note the top row only.

## Benchmark Water Consumption

Establishing a monitoring system will allow your company to understand the monthly water usage and set a target for efficiency improvements. Start to read the water meter monthly if safe to do so and record the data in a spread sheet, this will make it easy to collate data into graphs.

## Checking Water Bills

Using water bills is a good way to monitor consumption and ensure billing is correct, but taking your own regular meter readings is useful to highlight trends, spot any inconsistencies there may be due to leaks and help quantify any water reduction measures that have been installed.

Bills detail the readings, units, rates, VAT and charge. They are also split into water charges, water charges (toilets) and drainage charges (if you own the building). Look over your bill and identify the units used, the following information is useful when reading your bill:



- 1) Gross Rateable Value (GRV) – The majority of unmetered charges and drainage charges for metered bills are based upon the GRV of a property. Rates can be checked on the Scottish Assessors portal website to ensure that GRV used for water billing is not too high.
- 2) Meter Size – Minimum meter size is 15-20mm diameter. Based on Scottish Water guidelines, the flow requirements for a 20mm supply are 0 - 2609m<sup>3</sup>/yr or 0-2m<sup>3</sup>/hr. If water is only used for domestic and small scale catering purposes, most sites will require the minimum meter size i.e. 15-20mm.
- 3) Match meter numbers with those on site to ensure billing data is correct.
- 4) Unmetered to metered supply – conduct comparison using water balance data to ascertain if savings can be made by installing a meter. If you RV is high and water use is low, you could save money by installing a meter.
- 5) Check for drainage charges.

### What to do with your bills?

- Take all your previous water bills (over at least three years if possible) and group them together into individual years.
- Identify the total volume of water used by your premises by adding the water volumes (shown as m<sup>3</sup>) on your bills. Most commonly done on an annual basis or quarterly if your water use is likely to vary seasonally.
- Calculate the Average Daily Usage (ADU).

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