

Irish Water Business Customer Codes of Practice



December 2021

Introduction

As Ireland's national water utility, Irish Water aims to meet our customers' expectations through the provision of high quality, reliable water services, delivered through resilient systems, in an economic and efficient manner, reflecting the customer service levels expected. We are committed to ensuring that our customers are at the heart of all our business activities.

Please note, where the term "Business" is used in this document, we are referring to non-domestic customers as defined in the 'Water Charges Plan' which is available at www.water.ie.

These Codes of Practice for Business Customers cover: Metering, Billing, Customer Communication, Disconnections, Network Operations and Complaint Handling.

Our commitment

- We will promote these Business Codes of Practice so customers can easily get a copy.
- We will train our staff to deliver the services outlined in this code and will keep our training up to date.
- We will deal with all customer enquiries courteously and fairly while in accordance with stated policy.
- We will keep personal information given to us in the strictest confidence and in accordance with Data Protection laws.
- We will monitor the service we give to make sure we are keeping our commitments.
- The following Codes of Practice apply to business customers. However, where a business customer has entered into an individual contract or agreement for water and/or wastewater services and those terms conflict with the obligations set out below in the Business Customer Codes of Practice, the terms of the individual agreement/contract will supersede the Business Codes of Practice obligations.

1.0 Metering Code of Practice

What is a Water Meter?

A water meter is a device which measures the quantity of water supplied to a customer's premises. Where a meter is installed, the index reading on the water meter shall be taken at face value as evidence of the quantity of water supplied. We may record index readings using either manual or automatic meter reading methodologies.

It should be noted that not every premises will be metered at this time. For example, in some cases it may not be possible to install a meter due to technical or engineering issues.

Charges

To view the charges that apply to particular premises, customers can visit www.water.ie/business/billing. The business charges will apply as approved by the Commission for Regulation of Utilities. Customers will be communicated with in advance of any tariff change being implemented.

Meter Installation

When Irish Water intends to undertake meter installation, we will communicate (either in writing or by phone) with the customer at least two days in advance of the anticipated installation. If customers have a specific requirement during the meter installation process you can contact us to let us know.

Installation of water meters by Irish Water will be undertaken in a professional manner causing as little disruption as possible to the property and the surrounding area. Where we have installed a meter box, we will then return the area excavated to its proper condition. This is an essential part of the work and again we will, whenever possible, keep disruption to a minimum. This ground repair work might initially be temporary. We will complete permanent ground repair work, or reinstatement, as soon as is practicable.

We will remedy any damage to a property which has occurred during meter installation, solely and directly as a result of Irish Water's employees'/agents' activities and/or negligence. This will be done free of charge to the customer. Remedy of damage to a property during meter installation shall be processed through the normal complaint handling procedures and standards (if not otherwise agreed between Irish Water and the customer).

An unmetered customer can request that Irish Water fit a meter(s) at their premises. We will check if it is practicable to install a meter(s) and we will endeavour to complete these checks and respond to you within three weeks of your request. If a meter(s) can be fitted, we will complete this work within a further four weeks, subject to constraints outside of our control.

Location and Access to the Water Meter

We will endeavour to install meters on publicly accessible ground; however, the meter may also be located on your property or inside a building. Where possible, the meter will be placed in an underground meter box or chamber in the footpath or verge outside the premises. Regardless of the meter location, the meter remains the property of Irish Water.

We will facilitate access to the meter as required and provide information to the customer on how to access the meter whenever possible. Customers may open the meter box, where feasible and safe to do so to read the meter or to isolate the water supply using the stop valve. Customers are not permitted to remove anything from the meter box. If you have any questions in relation to your meter, please contact Irish Water using contact details contained within this Code.

If you have difficulty locating your meter, we will engage with you and work with you to help identify the location of the meter. If your meter cannot be located, Irish Water will install a new meter, free of charge, within four weeks, subject to constraints outside of our control e.g. dependencies on road opening licenses. Irish Water or its agents are responsible for reading the meter.

Meter Testing

If you have reason to believe that the meter is not recording correctly, you may request the meter to be checked. Before removing a meter for test, we may undertake investigations to exclude other reasons for abnormal readings or bills. We will facilitate such tests within a reasonable timeframe. If you request the meter to be tested, you will incur an up-front, cost-reflective charge as per the Water Charges plan (available at <https://www.water.ie/about/our-customer-commitment/>). We will notify you of this charge in advance and will provide you with an opportunity to decide whether you wish to proceed with the testing. This charge will not be returned if the meter is proven to be operating correctly. On removal of the water meter for testing, a replacement meter will be installed in place of the original meter.

If the original meter is proven to be operating correctly, then the readings taken from the meter will be deemed definitive evidence of the water supplied to you. If, however, a

meter is proven to be faulty (excluding damage caused by the customer), we will adjust your account to reflect reasonable usage on the basis of a methodology approved by the Commission for Regulation of Utilities and will refund the charge paid by you for the meter inspection and testing.

Meter Replacement

Irish Water may replace the meter at its sole discretion and its own cost and with meter equipment of its choice. Only persons authorised by Irish Water may repair, connect, remove or work on a water meter.

Unauthorised Interference

Where, in the opinion of Irish Water, there has been any unauthorised interference with a meter, whereby a greater volume of water than registered by a meter is supplied to a premises through that meter, we may estimate the unrecorded or unauthorised consumption or discharge and recover this cost via the customer's account.

Further, it is an offence under the Water Services Act 2007 to interfere with a meter or its ancillary devices (for example, to remove, damage, alter or bypass the meter).

2.0 Billing Code of Practice

Irish Water is responsible for providing and managing public water and wastewater services on a national basis. You can expect the highest standards of service from Irish Water. Irish Water will ensure that the charging of customers is in line with legislation, equitable and is clear and easy to understand.

Irish Water applies charges for water supply and wastewater services provided to non-domestic customers. A new Non-Domestic Tariff Framework came into effect on 1st October 2021. From 1st October 2021, water supply and wastewater charges will be applied in accordance with Irish Water's enduring Non-Domestic Tariff Framework, as approved by the Commission for the Regulation of Utilities on 3rd July 2019.

General Customer Service in Relation to Billing

Irish Water will ensure that all relevant charges, discounts and allowances, scheduled or otherwise, are calculated accurately based on one of the following:

- Actual meter readings conducted by Irish Water employees or its agents;
- Customer meter readings;
- Estimated readings - where Irish Water has not been able to visit and/or read a meter, an estimated bill can be issued based on historic or assessed consumption volumes for the customer's premises;
- Assumed or calculated charges for unmetered customers (where water meters are not yet installed or cannot be installed for technical reasons);
- Irish Water will endeavour to issue scheduled bills to customers within a reasonable time frame after the completion of scheduled meter reads for the billing period involved. Exceptions to this may be the customer has agreed otherwise with Irish Water; or the meter reading data appears erroneous.

If you receive an estimated bill, you may provide Irish Water with a reading within seven days of the issuing of the bill and, on your request, we will issue you an updated bill within ten days.

We will endeavour to bill you based on a meter reading at least once a year and will endeavour to issue scheduled bills to customers within a reasonable time frame after the completion of scheduled meter reads for the billing period. Exceptions to this are where the customer agrees otherwise or where the meter reading data appears erroneous.

Irish Water will make every effort to issue a prompt, revised bill in the event of a meter reading affecting the outcome of a payment plan agreement or proposed disconnection.

We guarantee to apply the applicable discount/rebate to your bill in relation to notices that declare water unfit for human consumption in line with the Commission for Regulation of Utilities' approved Water Charges Plan.

Should Irish Water require a security deposit from a non-domestic customer, the deposit will be fair, transparent and reasonable in terms of the amount requested from the non-domestic customer. Irish Water will also not discriminate between customers. In addition, we will inform you of the conditions under which the deposit will be refunded.

If you wish to receive your bill electronically, you must contact us to opt-in for this type of billing. If you wish to switch back to paper billing, you must contact us to let us know.

Late Bills

Where we become aware of an unexpected delay in the production of a bill that will exceed one full billing cycle, we will, where reasonably practicable, make contact with customers to explain the reasons for the delay and the actions being taken to remedy the situation.

Billing or Meter Reading Errors

Where an error is discovered in relation to the billing applied to a customer or the meter readings or meter number associated with a customer, Irish Water will determine whether the customer has been in effect over or under paying for the water and/or wastewater services supplied. Where the customer has been determined to have been underpaying and has previously paid bills in a timely manner, the customer will only be required to pay the balance for the previous 12 months from the date the error is corrected. Where the customer has been in effect overpaying and unless any law limits, restricts or prevents Irish Water from doing so, Irish Water will refund in full any amount overpaid by the customer as established by investigation.

High Meter Readings

A significant increase in a customer's metered consumption may indicate leakage on the customer's pipes. If we find that a meter reading shows an unusual and significant increase, we will let you know. Please note - it is the customer's responsibility to check for and repair leaks on the customer's pipes.

Determining Charging Liability

In advance of each tariff year, Irish Water shall inform each non-domestic customer of the annual quantity and corresponding tariff class for the non-domestic customer's connection(s) for the coming tariff year.

Irish Water shall make available for both its existing and potential non-domestic customers the rules for how we determine a connection's annual quantity and how this can be appealed by the non-domestic customer.

Where a revised annual quantity has been issued for a non-domestic customer's connection that will have a material effect on the connection's tariff class or charges, we will:

- notify the non-domestic customer of the material impact, including a forecasted annual bill at the new tariff class; and
- provide a reasonable timeframe to allow the non-domestic customer to appeal the connection's revised annual quantity figure with us.

Irish Water will inform customers every year that they have the right to challenge their Annual Quantity (AQ) and assigned tariff class. Irish Water will provide a reasonable timeframe for customers to submit a challenge.

Irish Water will inform customers that are moving to a lower tariff class and facing a higher annual bill as a result and that they have the right to request to stay on the tariff rates of their old tariff class.

Change in Categorisation

If you want to request to change the categorisation of a premises from a non-domestic premises to a domestic premises or a mixed-use premises, or vice versa, for the purposes of determining charging liability, you must contact us and apply to Irish Water and such an application will be subject to our approval.

Water In Not Equal to Water Out

A non-domestic customer may submit an application to Irish Water, under Section 22 (9) of the Water Services (No.2) Act 2013, to avail of a variation to the assumption that the volume of wastewater discharged from a premises is deemed to be equal the volume of water supplied to that premises and such an application will be subject to our approval (see <https://www.water.ie/business/billing/charges/wiwo-application/>)/

Leak Allowance

If you think you are entitled to a leak allowance, you must contact us and apply to Irish Water and such an application will be subject to our approval.

When engaging with our non-domestic customers in relation to any of the above, we will, where relevant:

- Assess and treat all non-domestic customers in a fair and equal manner with no undue discrimination between customers;
- Provide all non-domestic customers with all the required details (submission requirements, criteria etc.) necessary to make an application;
- Process applications and appeals in a reasonable timeframe;
- Inform non-domestic customers of our decision in writing and set out the reasons for same;
- Notify non-domestic customers with at least 30 days' notice of any Irish Water proposed changes to the Annual Quantity for a connection, number of domestic allowances applied to the premises or categorisation of the premises in advance of a change taking effect; and
- Allow sufficient time for a non-domestic customer to dispute our decision or proposed change.

Domestic Allowances

Where Irish Water is proposing to change the number of domestic allowances applied to a premises that is classified as mixed-use and/or the categorisation of a premises (that is, a domestic, non-domestic or a mixed-use premises) that impacts the charges and/or domestic allowances applied to that premises, Irish Water must provide advance notice of, and explain this change to the customer and the resulting change to the charges and/or domestic allowances.

Communication of Charges to Customers

Our charges and tariffs are regulated by the Commission for Regulation of Utilities. For full details, please see the Water Charges Plan (as approved by the Commission for Regulation of Utilities), on our website at <https://www.water.ie/about/our-customer-commitment/>.

In the event that there is a change in the charges (which have been notified to you) and/or tariffs, you will receive 30 days prior notice of the change. Where there is a change in charges, this will be clearly indicated on the bill and the method of application will be explained on the bill or in an accompanying insert. Where Irish Water uses a

method of prorating bills at a tariff change, this will be indicated on the bill and the methodology explained on the bill or in an accompanying insert.

Information on the Bill

Irish Water will make sure that your bill is clear, simple and easy to understand. Irish Water will also ensure that the information provided on your bill is complete, accurate, transparent and not misleading.

The following information will be placed on the bill in a manner that allows you to find it easily:

- Your address;
- Summary of your charges;
- Billing period covered;
- Water Point Reference Number (WPRN);
- Irish Water's emergency reporting contact number;
- Irish Water general enquiries contact number and contact email and contact details for customer queries;
- How you can register a complaint with Irish Water;
- Premises/supply address if different from your address;
- Water meter number;
- Your tariff category;
- Bill frequency;
- Meter readings, upon which the bill is based, including an indication as to whether the readings are either i) an actual reading by Irish Water, ii) an estimate or iii) a reading submitted by a customer;
- Clear breakdown of tariff charges, water consumption and/or wastewater/trade effluent release unit data, including any applicable discounts, rebates, allowances or penalties;
- Clear breakdown of any separate connection works, connection repair, meter testing etc. where these are being applied to you as separate charges;
- Information as to how you can access your historical Irish Water bills for the previous 12 months (where data is available). The bills will contain, where relevant, consumption volumes, wastewater discharge volumes, the unit price and standing charge for services provided, and any discounts/allowances

provided. This information will be made available to you through an online system and through the telephone;

- A list of payment options;
- The date upon which your payment is due (where applicable).

Presentation of Information on Charges

Regarding the presentation of information on non-domestic charges, and where relevant, we will:

- Display all available standard charges on our website, including information about trade effluent charges and charging arrangements;
- Display on our website explanatory information on applicable tariff discounts, allowances and processes that relate to or impact your charges, bill or annual volume consumed/discharged;
- Ensure that if you enquire about charges by telephone, that you are given detail on all applicable charges;
- Should you request information on your water supply zone, Irish Water must provide it.

Payment Methods

Irish Water offers a range of options for you to pay your bill:

- **Direct Debit**
You can sign up to Direct Debit by completing the Direct Debit Mandate form on the back of your bill, call us on **0818 778 778** or **+353 1 707 2827** to request a form or you can download a form online at www.water.ie. You can either pay your entire bill or pay on a monthly basis;
- **Standing Orders**
You may set up a Standing Order to pay your water bill, subject to a minimum amount of €5 per payment;
- **Online Banking/Electronic Fund Transfer (EFT)**
You can pay through your bank's online payment option. To do this, you will need your Irish Water account details and the following:
IBAN: IE29 AIBK 9333 8464 3085 94 **BIC: AIBKIE2D**
Remember to quote your 10-digit Irish Water account number (including leading zeros), found on the front of your bill, in the reference field;

- **Debit or Credit Card**
You can call us on **0818 778 778** or **+353 1 707 2827** to make card payments. Please have your Irish Water account number and your Water Point Reference Number (WPRN) to hand. You can find both of these numbers on the front of your bill;
- **Mybills.ie**
You can pay through An Post's free online service at www.mybills.ie by using your debit card;
- **Cash**
You can pay your bill at any retail outlet where you see the Payzone or PostPoint signs or at any Post Office.
Please bring the payment slip on the bottom of your bill with you. In these outlets you can pay your bill or make a part payment of a minimum value of €5;
- **Cheque**
You can post a cheque, together with a completed payment slip (on the bottom of your bill), to: **Customer Services, Irish Water, PO Box 860, South City Delivery Office, Cork City, Ireland.**

Please do not send cash by post. Please allow up to five days for your payments to appear on your account.

Closing your Account and Issuing a Final Bill

Please note that you will be liable for water charges at the premises until you contact us, asking us to close the account at that premises, and telling us the date you will be leaving the premises.

If a meter is installed at the premises you are leaving, then we will need to find out the final meter reading through:

- an estimated read; or
- an actual reading taken by you; or
- a special reading (where we visit your premises to read the meter). A charge may be applied for such readings. Charges are set out in the Water Charges Plan which is available at www.water.ie/about/our-customer-commitment/.

For unmetered customers, we will prorate the appropriate charge to bill customers until the date of departure from the premises. For mixed-use customers, the domestic allowance charge is prorated up until the date of departure of the premises. We will issue a final bill for water services at the premises you are leaving within six weeks of

you asking us to close your account. We will send this to the new address you have given us.

We will not keep a customer's account open due to a customer being unable to provide the details of the new customer at the relevant premises.

We will endeavor to conduct a closing meter read within 10 working days of the request from the customer, subject to operational capacity.

We will not keep a customer's account open and bill the customer indefinitely for continued consumption where the customer has made contact to close their account and has accepted one of the closing read options.

If none of the closing read options have been accepted by the customer, Irish Water shall put in place a process for addressing this. This process shall include engaging with the customer until a satisfactory outcome is reached before closing the account.

We will not keep a customer's account open, apart from when there is a requirement to collect an outstanding balance or to collect a closing read and, in this case, Irish Water must ensure this account is not linked to the premises where a new occupier or customer has been registered at the premises.

Arrears and Arrangements for Identifying and Dealing with Customers in Financial Difficulty

Irish Water will be proactive in engaging early with you if you are having payment difficulties to establish appropriate payment plans.

We will advise you to contact us at an early stage if you are having difficulty making payment on your bill.

We will direct you to a copy of our 'Code of Practice on Billing' at an early stage during the follow-up action for non-payment of an account or for failure to keep to an agreed payment arrangement.

Payment Plans

Irish Water can assist you by making a payment plan, a staged repayment of the account arrears agreed between Irish Water and the non-domestic customer.

Irish Water will take into account your ability to pay when agreeing the payment schedule and we will confirm with you that it is manageable for you.

If you enter into a payment plan with Irish Water, we will issue you the details of the payment plan, including a clear explanation of the new payment schedule and any

associated terms appropriate through communication channel(s) requested by the customer.

Dealing with Premises with no Named Non-Domestic Customer

Where a non-domestic customer has closed an account and no new account has been set up at that premises, the liability for water/wastewater charges will fall to the owner/occupier of the premises.

Irish Water will issue a notice, in writing by letter, to the owner/occupier to inform them that they are now liable for water charges.

Where applicable, we will work with other agencies in identifying ownership of premises that use our services (water supply and/or wastewater services) where a premises is believed to be rented to tenants and arrears have occurred.

We will make all reasonable attempts to contact the party ultimately liable for water/wastewater charges where there is no named non-domestic customer on our systems.

Where we intend to disconnect a premises with no named non-domestic customer, we will issue at least one notice, in writing by letter, to the new owner/occupier of the premises at least five working days in advance of disconnecting the premises. That notice will set out that a cost will apply due to disconnection of the premises and will refer the non-domestic customer to where they can learn more about the actual costs that will apply.

3.0 Customer Communications Code of Practice

This Code of Practice outlines how we will maintain efficient and effective communications between our customers and Irish Water. To view the other guidelines for Irish Water in terms of required levels of customer service and customer protection measures to be implemented, please see the ‘Non Domestic Customer Handbook’ which is available at <https://www.cru.ie/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/CRU20117-CRU-Decision-on-Irish-Waters-Non-Domestic-Customer-Handbook-PDF-October-2020.pdf>

Communication Principles

The following seven communication principles are central to the quality of engagement and information that we provide to our customers:

1. Plain English / Universal Design

The water services industry, by nature, uses technical language and terminology. We commit to using non-technical and easy-to-understand language, to the greatest extent possible when we communicate with our customers. We commit, to the greatest extent possible to using plain English and apply the principles of Universal Design (that is, to communicate so that information may be accessed, understood and used to the greatest extent possible by all people regardless of their age, size, ability or disability¹) in all communication with customers;

¹ Source: <http://www.universaldesign.ie/exploreampdiscover>

2. Access to information communicated

We will, to the greatest extent possible, make sure that any information we make available to the public is also available in alternative formats to suit the needs of all our customers. You will be able to download any of our publicly available information from our website www.water.ie;

3. Timeliness

Information relating to Irish Water's planned operations will be published in the most appropriate media for the customers living in an area impacted by the operations. The information will be provided in a timely manner to minimise inconvenience to our customers;

4. Adequacy

All information will be as detailed as possible, clear and accurate so that customers are informed on all water-related matters affecting them;

5. Openness, transparency and fairness

All information will be provided in the spirit of openness, transparency and fairness with a commitment to integrity at all times;

6. Responsiveness

Our customer service team is trained and prepared to respond to the needs of our customers in a sensitive and compassionate manner. The team is prepared to listen to any issues or concerns that customers may have regarding our services;

7. Courtesy, dignity and respect

We are committed to engaging with all our customers in a friendly, courteous and respectful way.

Communications on Operational Matters

Interruptions to supply

For the purpose of this code, a "supply interruption" is any incident related to Irish Water activities or assets that causes a customer's supply to be significantly impacted. This may include a complete interruption of supply, or a significant drop in pressure at the customer's premises.

Planned interruptions

We will provide regular up to date information in advance of, and during, planned interruptions to normal supply. We will indicate the scheduled timing of the interruption and the anticipated likely time of restoration of supply. We will notify customers who we

consider will be affected during a planned interruption via a range of appropriate communication channels at least two days in advance of the event.

Unplanned interruptions

We will ensure regular up to date information, including the likely duration and anticipated time of restoration, is available to customers affected by an unplanned interruption to water supplies. This information shall be publicised by us through a range of communication channels no later than two hours after we become aware of the interruption (or five hours after, in the event of an extreme weather event).

Water Unfit for Human Consumption

Our goal is to provide water that is fit for human consumption and to provide this service uniformly across the country. Where this level of service is compromised, and water is deemed unfit for human consumption the following notices will be issued:

- **Boil Water Notice (BWN):** means a formal notice issued by Irish Water advising all premises in an area that drinking water from the water mains is not safe to drink unless it is boiled and cooled beforehand. Except for exceptional circumstances where public health is considered to be at immediate risk, Irish Water will only issue a Boil Water Notice after consulting with the Health Service Executive (HSE), the statutory authority on public health matters. Boil Water Notices are typically imposed due to the risk of, or confirmed contamination by harmful pathogens such as E. coli or cryptosporidium.
- **Drinking Water Restriction Notice (DWRN):** means a notice issued by Irish Water advising premises in an area where there is contamination of the water supply, and boiling the water is not sufficient to make the water potable. Except for exceptional circumstances where public health is considered to be at immediate risk, Irish Water will only issue a Drinking Water Restriction Notice after consulting with the Health Service Executive (HSE), the statutory authority on public health matters. Drinking Water Restriction Notices are typically imposed due to the imminent risk of, or confirmed contamination from a chemical contaminant at levels which pose an immediate risk to public health; for example, Hydrocarbons.

In the event where notices that declare water unfit for human consumption are issued i.e., “Boil Water Notice” or “Drinking Water Restriction Notice”, for a particular geographic area as a result of an issue with the public water supply, Irish Water or its service providers will communicate with all anticipated affected customers through appropriate communication channels to:

- Inform the customer it is not safe to drink the water or that it needs to be boiled and to inform the customer of any other precautionary measures as advised by the Health Service Executive;
- Provide an explanation for the need for the boil water notice or drinking water restriction notice to the customer; and
- Provide regular updates to the customer on progress to rectify the issue causing substandard supply.

Updated information on the Boil Water Notice or Drinking Water Restriction Notice will be regularly publicised through a range of appropriate communication channels. When Irish Water becomes aware of when the water supply has been deemed to be safe for consumption, we will communicate this information accordingly.

Alternative Water Supply

In instances where (for public health and safety reasons, or other emergency reasons) customers are provided with alternative supply arrangements, Irish Water and/or its service providers shall communicate with all anticipated affected customers through a range of communication channels to:

- Inform the customer that the water from the alternative tankered water supply should be boiled before drinking and explain the reasons why;
- Inform the customer of any other precautionary measures that should be taken;
- Inform the customer where we will locate and facilitate alternative water supplies;
- Highlight to the customer the anticipated duration of the alternative supply, where known; and
- Provide regular updates to the customer on progress to rectify the issue causing substandard supply.

Customer Engagement

Meeting our customers in person

If an Irish Water representative or a service provider working on Irish Water's behalf has a need to visit in person for account management, maintenance or operational reasons at a customer's premises (with or without a prearranged appointment) or by personal contact, they shall:

- Produce an identity card that shows his or her full name and photograph and the name, business address and contact number of Irish Water;
- Where Local Authority staff are working on behalf of Irish Water, they will also produce an identity card that shows their full name and photograph as well as the Local Authority name, business address and contact number; and
- Advise the customer of the purpose of the visit.

You can contact us using the details set out in this Code of Practice to confirm the identity of our staff member or service provider.

Communications with our customers by telephone

We may sometimes need to phone our business customers to discuss billing or operational matters.

All of our customers (or potential customers) can communicate with us by telephone to find out further information about public water or wastewater service supply and any other relevant area. Our contact details will be made easily visible on our website, on bills and in print media. Our contact details are shown in this Code of Practice or they can be found online at www.water.ie.

Customer contact by email

We may sometimes send electronic mail to communicate with customers. When we do use email, we will provide the following information:

- Irish Water's name and address;
- Irish Water's email address or other means of electronic contact; and
- Irish Water's contact number.

Customer contact by SMS

We may sometimes send our customers text messages. When we use text messages, we will identify ourselves as Irish Water.

Communicating with customers through printed material

Irish Water will make available relevant printed material upon request from a customer or potential customer. If you require a copy of our Codes of Practice or other documents, please visit our website on www.water.ie, email us at business@water.ie, write to us at the address or by using the phone numbers set out on this Code of Practice.

New Customers

When setting up a new account, Irish Water will:

- clearly explain how the customer will be billed, including billing frequency;
- explain how the customer can make payment against the bill and any budgeting options available;
- direct the customer as to where they will find water conservation information on the Irish Water website;
- direct the customer as to where they will find a copy of Irish Water's Terms and Conditions of supply of water and wastewater services contract and the rates that apply to the service(s) that they are signing up to. If the customer requests a copy, we will send a copy in the post or in an email, with key terms highlighted and explained;
- provide a simple method for customers to add a third-party contact to their account;
- confirm with any other named person on the account that they wish to be named as soon as possible after the initial account opening, where a joint account is to be opened.

4.0 Network Operations Code of Practice

We understand and acknowledge that business customers need to have access to information:

- on how to connect to the water services network (public water and wastewater network provided by Irish Water); and
- regarding the networks to which they are connected.

In addition, customers need to be able to understand the levels of service they can expect from their connection to the wider Irish Water public network. To cater for this, we have developed this Code of Practice to provide some detail on water and wastewater services connections generally and to give guidance on where a business customer can find further information in relation to their own water and wastewater service connections. If you would like any information on how to get a connection to Irish Water, please visit <https://www.water.ie/connections/>.

Responsibilities for Pipework and Responding to Faults

Irish Water is responsible for the public water and wastewater infrastructure only.

To enable you to understand where your responsibility for pipework begins and ends, we have examples of a customer's general responsibility for pipework, depending on the type of property. This is shown in the 'Pipe Maintenance Responsibility' graphics, which are available at <https://www.water.ie/connections/developer-services/>.

Where a customer seeks clarification on pipework ownership in relation to their own property, we will engage with the customer regarding this request within three working days of receiving the request and we will provide an answer to the query within a reasonable timeframe.

Where a customer has reported a fault on an Irish Water asset, we will respond within two working days to the customer and outline the planned action in relation to the reported fault.

Network Interruptions

Where there is an interruption to supply originating from an Irish Water asset, we will, where it's a:

- a. Planned interruption affecting customers:** Irish Water shall endeavour to restore supply to the affected customers within 24 hours of supply cut off, or as advised in planned works notification. We will meet all legal obligations with respect to providing alternative supplies to customers.

- b. Unplanned interruption affecting customers:** Where customers are affected by unplanned water supply interruptions, Irish Water will endeavour to restore supply within 12 hours. For large water main issues, Irish Water will endeavour to return supply within 24 hours. We will meet all legal obligations with respect to providing alternative supplies to customers.

Note: Depending on the size of the area affected, it may take some hours following completion of repair work for full service to be restored to properties on higher ground.

We have information available on our website detailing the processes we have in place to protect our customers during emergency events. Please find further information at <https://www.water.ie/about/our-customer-commitment/>

Customer Asset Flooding

If a customer experiences customer asset flooding at their property, please contact us on **1800 278 278** or **+353 1 707 2828**.

Where a customer's building or wider property is flooded (by either water or wastewater) and this flooding is likely to have originated from an Irish Water asset, we will react and attend the property within four hours of the notification of the flood and attempt to stop the flooding.

Where it is proved that damage to a customer's property has been caused due to the failure of an Irish Water asset, we will engage with the customer to agree how to resolve or ameliorate the issue.

There is an exception to the above if there is an extreme or severe weather event which causes the reasonable design capacity of Irish Water's assets to be exceeded.

Water Pressure

If a customer experiences reduced water pressure at their property, they can request an investigation into the reduced pressure by contacting us on **1800 278 278** or **+353 1 707 2828**.

We will, where notified:

- Supply information directly to the customer as to the likely cause of the reduced pressure, or, we will confirm with you within five working days that we will investigate the cause of the pressure reduction in a timely manner (subject to operational capacity). If the investigation highlights that the reduced pressure is

likely to have originated from a leak in the customer's pipework, we will inform the customer;

- Where the reduced pressure is caused by an issue originating from an Irish Water asset or Irish Water activity, we will inform the customer within 10 working days how we intend to rectify this issue, where possible.

5.0 Disconnection for Non-Domestic Customers

Irish Water has clear internal procedures which ensure that we will only disconnect the water supply of a non-domestic customer for arrears as a measure of last resort i.e. when all other methods of arrears repayment have been exhausted.

Irish Water may disconnect a non-domestic customer's water and/or wastewater supply in the following circumstances:

- Failure to pay a bill relating to the supply of water and/or wastewater services;
- Upon request of the non-domestic customer/agent working on their behalf. Please note that any outstanding arrears on the account must still be paid;
- Where no registered occupant at the property has been established after Irish Water attempts to determine occupancy/ownership;
- Where the non-domestic customer has entered into a payment plan and that non-domestic customer fails to honour that plan;
- Failure to pay a bill relating to the supply of water and/or wastewater services by a non-domestic customer who also has a shared supply with another non-domestic customer who has also failed to pay their water and/or wastewater bill to Irish Water in respect of their premises; or
- Any other criteria for disconnection that is in line with the CRU approved Disconnection Policy.

Irish Water will **not** initiate disconnection of a non-domestic customer's supply in the following circumstances:

- Where the non-domestic premises has a known shared supply pipe with another non-domestic customer and disconnection of the non-domestic customer would also disconnect supply to another non-domestic customer who is paying their water and/or wastewater bill;
- Where the non-domestic premises has a known shared supply pipe with a domestic or mixed-use customer and disconnection of the non-domestic customer would also disconnect supply to a domestic or mixed-use customer;
- Where a non-domestic customer has entered into a payment plan (as applicable) and is honouring that arrangement;
- Where a non-domestic customer is pursuing a complaint and the complaint is related to the reason for disconnection. Irish Water may not initiate a disconnection in relation to the disputed amount until the appropriate complaint process is exhausted;

- In the event that a non-domestic customer is disputing a bill this clause only applies to the disputed bill and not any previous or subsequent bills which must be paid as normal;
- For failure to pay a bill which is not related to the supply of water or wastewater services (for example, site works charges or section 16 licensing); or
- For failure to pay a bill based on an estimate unless it is fair and reasonable in the circumstances (for example, access to read a meter is refused).

Process for Disconnection Due to Non-Payment

Irish Water has a collections process which will be followed in advance of disconnecting a non-domestic customer due to non-payment of their account. We will contact and notify the non-domestic customer when they are in arrears (in writing, and in other formats – for example, by phone or by email) and provide information on arrears payment options the non-domestic customer may be able to use to avoid disconnection.

- If a non-domestic customer wishes to nominate a third party to represent them, we will facilitate this;
- We will issue at least one direct notice in writing to the non-domestic customer and the occupier (if different and known to Irish Water) at least five working days in advance of carrying out a disconnection;
- We will attempt to contact by telephone (if known) the non-domestic customer and the occupier (if different and known to Irish Water) at least once at least five working days in advance of carrying out a disconnection;
- Please note this does not apply to Irish Water non-domestic customers who have individually negotiated contracts. Irish Water may provide for an alternative notification process for these non-domestic customers in the Terms & Conditions of their contracts.

Irish Water - Notice of Disconnection

Where Irish Water has exhausted its collections process and intends to initiate a disconnection, we will send the non-domestic customer a Notice of Disconnection in accordance with the following:

- Any notice sent to a non-domestic customer and occupier (if different and known to Irish Water) regarding disconnection for non-payment of their account must be sent in writing by letter or electronically where the customer has chosen this method of communication;

- The notice will specify the reason for disconnection. However, where Irish Water is aware that a non-domestic customer has gone into liquidation or receivership the notice period is reduced to two working days or whatever contractual arrangement Irish Water may have with the non-domestic customer;
- The notice will highlight any charge for the disconnection;
- The notice will specify the contact details of debt handling/credit control or appropriate division so that the non-domestic customer may make contact. Irish Water will facilitate non-domestic customers who wish to pay immediately any bill arrears after the receipt of the notice;
- The notice will highlight that the payment of arrears cannot be made to the persons carrying out the disconnection.

Irish Water will not carry out a disconnection on a Friday, Saturday, Sunday, the day prior to a Public Holiday or a Public Holiday.

For the avoidance of doubt, disconnections for safety reasons to prevent injury to persons or damage to premises may be made at any time and are not within the scope of this Disconnection Code of Practice.

Irish Water will maintain detailed records of all the steps taken and all considerations made in relation to the disconnection of a non-domestic premises.

Settlement of Arrears and Restoration of Supply

Where a non-domestic customer has had supply disconnected due to outstanding debt and subsequently reached a settlement with Irish Water through payment plan or payment in full (including any applicable disconnection and/or reconnection charge), the non-domestic customer shall be entitled to have normal supply restored.

Where the non-domestic customer has agreed a settlement, Irish Water will restore supply within two working days, subject to operational capacity.

6.0 Complaints Code of Practice

Introduction

At Irish Water we are committed to ensuring that our customers are at the heart of all our business activities. We will do our best to meet customer needs by providing a first-class complaints resolution service. However, no matter how hard we try, we may sometimes get things wrong. That is why we have produced this Code of Practice to give information and advice about how we will respond to customer complaints. If customers are unhappy about any part of our service, we encourage them to let us know and we will do everything we can to resolve the matter quickly and to the customer's satisfaction.

Our aim is to resolve all complaints as quickly and as fairly as possible. We will also monitor the reasons for complaints to help us to find out how we can improve the quality of our service.

What is a Complaint?

A complaint is defined as “the expression (through various possible channels, for example, letter, email, phone call, physical claim) of a customer's dissatisfaction and his/her explicit expectation for a response or resolution”.

The term “explicit” denotes that the customer state they are seeking some action to address their concern, even if they are not able to identify and state what action is required.

For clarity a customer in this context is defined as any person that wishes to complain to or about Irish Water.

Our Promise to You

As a minimum, Irish Water promises our customers the following:

- **Complaints information**
We will promote and refer complainants to this Code of Practice and issue customers with a copy if requested;
- **Easy complaints process**
We will provide you or a person/you name to act on your behalf, with a clear and easy process to make a complaint.

We will try to resolve all complaints as soon as possible.

Irish Water has a two-stage process for resolving customer complaints. These include the initial stage and the escalation stage.

Stage 1: Irish Water Initial Complaints Process

- **Response within five working days**
Under normal conditions, we will respond to customer complaints within five working days with a resolution or an outline plan for resolution of the issue;
- **Update on 10th working day**
You will receive an update on your complaint on the 10th working day, if it has not already been resolved;
- **Explain problems**
We will provide an explanation of the issue where relevant and apologise if we make a mistake;
- **Decision within two months**
You will receive a final decision to stage one of our complaints process within two months (you may be required to engage with us during the investigation, e.g. a customer might need to provide access to its premises).

Stage 2: Irish Water Escalation Complaints Process

- **Clear way to escalate your complaint**
We have a transparent escalation procedure if customers remain dissatisfied with the first steps of the complaints procedure;
- **Decision on escalation within 10 working days**
We will review your escalated complaint and will provide a response within 10 working days (unless a site visit/operational works is required and, in these instances, we will advise you of why these instances may take longer and agree with you of the likely timeframe);
- **Empathy and confidentiality**
We will treat customer complaints with empathy and confidentiality;
- **Trained staff**
We will train our staff to deliver on the promises we make in this Code of Practice;

- **Monitored service**

We will monitor and measure the service we give and ensure we keep our promises.

How to Make a Complaint

If a customer is unhappy with any service or contact with us, please let us know and we will do our best to rectify things as quickly as possible.

Complaints can be registered with us in any of the following ways:

Post: **Irish Water,
PO Box 448,
South City Delivery Office,
Cork City.**

Phone: **0818 778 778 or +353 1 707 2827**

Website: www.water.ie

Email: business@water.ie

Twitter: [@IWCare](https://twitter.com/IWCare)

ITRS: **1800 378 378**

We will also accept complaints from a recognised agency or third party who are confirmed as acting on the customer's behalf.

How We Will Handle Your Complaint

Stage 1 – Irish Water Initial Complaints Process

Lodging your complaint

When lodging a complaint with us, please provide the following information:

- Your name;
- Property/Supply address;
- Telephone number;
- Details of the incident or issue, including:
 - dates (where appropriate);
 - reference or account numbers;
 - any information or documentation you believe would assist us to understand and investigate your complaint further;

- what you would like us to do to make things right.

Please note that you must provide the above information to Irish Water in order for your complaint to be lodged as a complaint, otherwise it will be lodged as a query and timelines in this Code will not apply.

How we will respond to your complaint

We aim to resolve your complaint immediately. If this is not possible, we, or our service providers, will contact you within five working days with a resolution or an outline plan of the steps we need to take to achieve a satisfactory resolution to your complaint, under normal conditions.

We will document all complaints. We will always record your phone number, contact details and a summary of your complaint. Our Customer Service Advisor will give you their name as a future point of contact.

If a site visit/operational works is required, it will be arranged within a reasonable timeframe.

If your complaint is still open after five working days, we will contact you with an update on the 10th working day from when you registered your complaint with us.

We will issue a final decision to your complaint within two months from when you registered your complaint. We will provide reasons for our decision and inform you that your complaint is closed. In order to achieve this, we may need you to engage with us during the investigation.

Stage 2 – Irish Water Escalation Complaints Process

If you would like further investigation

In the event that you are not happy with our response to a complaint or the way it was handled, you may request the decision to be escalated to the Customer Service Manager and reviewed.

In order to do this, your request to escalate the complaint must be put in writing to Irish Water by contacting:

Post: **Irish Water Customer Services Manager**
PO Box 448
South City Delivery Office
Cork City

Email: business@water.ie

The decision will be reviewed and a response provided within 10 working days, unless a site visit/operational works is required. If a site visit/operational works is required we will agree a timeline for response with you.

Following this review (which must be in writing as set out above), we will issue a response to your complaint in writing, telling you we have closed your complaint and we will direct you to this 'Code of Practice on Complaint Handling'. We will also give you details for the Commission for Regulation of Utilities Customer Care Team for an independent review.

Escalation to the CRU on Completion of Stages 1 and 2 of Irish Water's Complaints Process

Commission for Regulation of Utilities

If you feel your complaint has not been dealt with to your satisfaction, you can escalate your complaint to the Commission for Regulation of Utilities.

They can assist you once you have provided us the opportunity to resolve the matter in line with our complaint handling procedures.

To avail of this service, you must be a registered customer of Irish Water when the issue to which the complaint relates occurred, have communicated your complaint in writing to Irish Water and you must have completed our complaints process (both initial and escalation stages).

The Commission for Regulation of Utilities can be contacted by the following means:

Post: **Customer Care Team
Commission for Regulation of Utilities
Grain House
The Exchange
Belgard Square North
Dublin 24,
D24PXW0**

Phone: **1800 404 404**

Fax: **01 4000 850**

Email: [**customercare@cru.ie**](mailto:customercare@cru.ie)

Web: [**www.cru.ie/home/customer-care/water/**](http://www.cru.ie/home/customer-care/water/)

Where the CRU is investigating a case of non-compliance with a Code of Practice, Irish Water will refrain from taking follow up action in relation to any monies that are the subject of a dispute. No follow up action will take place prior to the CRU issuing a decision on a breach of non-compliance with a Code of Practice. This does not mean that Irish Water cannot follow up additional monies accrued before or after the bill in dispute which remain unpaid.

When the CRU makes a final decision regarding a complaint, Irish Water is required to respond within three weeks or by a date specified by the CRU in its decision (if longer than three weeks), confirming that the CRU's final decision has been implemented.

If the unresolved complaint is in relation to water quality or pollution incidents, the appropriate body is the Environmental Protection Agency.

The Environmental Protection Agency can be contacted by the following means:

Post: **Environmental Protection Agency PO Box 3000**
Johnstown Castle Estate
Wexford
Y35 W821

Phone: **053-916 0600**

Email: info@epa.ie

Web: www.epa.ie/enforcement/report

We value feedback from our customers and are keen to hear suggestions about how we can improve our service.

We regularly carry out surveys to measure customer satisfaction, so the customer may receive a phone call or questionnaire after we have dealt with their complaint.

Protecting Customers' Legal Rights

Our complaints procedure is a facility provided to and for customers and in no way prejudices a customer's legal rights.

Data Protection

As part of a customer's interaction with Irish Water, a customer may provide personal data to Irish Water. All personal data will be treated in accordance with General Data Protection Regulation (Regulation (EU) 2016/679) and the Data Protection Act 2018. In

order to provide services to our customers, Irish Water engages service providers to help us deliver our services. Accordingly, personal data may be passed to our service providers or collected by service providers on Irish Water's behalf but only insofar as is necessary to provide water services to the customer.

For further information about how Irish Water processes personal data, data protection rights or to raise a query, please see our Privacy Notice at www.water.ie/privacy-notice/.

Irish Text Relay Service (ITRS):

1800 378 378

What is it?

ITRS translates text into voice and voice into text to facilitate Deaf and Hard of Hearing people in making and receiving calls in Ireland. Calls are relayed through ITRS agents who perform this translation.

How do I use it?

Do I need to register for the ITRS App?

There is no registration required, just download the app or go to www.itrs.ie. The app will require you to register the phone number you will be using to make or receive calls. Just follow the instructions in app or click on the "How Do I Use ITRS" tab on this site.

Register your number

To use the ITRS app you must first register the phone number you will be using to make and receive calls on the app:

- Step 1: In the ITRS app, go to "Menu" then "Registration". Enter your phone number and then press "Register". You will then be asked to make an activation call.
- Step 2: Leave the app and make the activation call from the mobile or landline number you are registering. You will only have 60 seconds to make this call.
- Step 3: Open the ITRS app again to receive confirmation your number has been registered successfully.
- Step 4: To end simply hang up the registration call and close the ITRS app.

Website: www.water.ie

Twitter: [@IWCare](https://twitter.com/IWCare)

Boards: www.boards.ie/irishwater

Email: business@water.ie