

Irish Water

Business Customer Codes of
Practice



December 2021

Introduction

Irish Water provides and manages public water and wastewater services on a national basis. We aim to provide high-quality, reliable water services to our customers. We aim to deliver our services through reliable systems, in an economic and efficient manner. We are committed to making sure that our customers are at the heart of all our business activities.

In this Code, we use the term 'business' to refer 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 that customers can easily get a copy.
- We will train our staff to deliver the services outlined in all our codes and will keep our training up to date.
- We will deal with all customer enquiries courteously and fairly.
- 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 six codes 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 contract or agreement will supersede (take the place of) the Business Codes of Practice obligations.

1.0 Metering Code of Practice

What is a water meter?

A water meter is a device that measures the amount of water supplied to your property.

The reading on the water meter is in cubic meters. This reading is taken as true evidence of the quantity of water supplied to you.

Not every premises will have a water meter for various reasons at this time. In some cases, we may not be able to install a meter due to technical or engineering issues.

Charges

To see the charges that apply to a particular business premises, you can visit www.water.ie/business/billing. The Commission for Regulation of Utilities have approved the charges for business customers. If there is any tax change, we will let you know in advance.

Meter installation

Before we install a meter at your business premises, we will write or phone you at least two days before we plan to install your meter. You can also contact us to let us know if you have a specific requirement when we are installing the meter. For example, you may have certain access requirements.

We try to install water meters in a professional way so that we cause as little disruption as possible to you, your premises and the surrounding area. In some cases, the ground repair work we do will be temporary and we will complete the permanent ground repair work as soon as is practicable.

We promise to fix any damage to your property that either our employees' or service providers' caused due to either their direct activities while installing the meter or their negligence to a reasonable extent.

Any repair of damage to a property during meter installation will go through the normal complaint handling procedures and standards unless the customer has come to an agreement with Irish Water.

Contact us to have your meter repaired and we will make sure this is carried out through our complaints process (unless we have agreed otherwise with you in advance).

If you do not have a water meter, you can ask us to fit a one at your premises. We will then:

- check if it is possible to install a meter(s),

- aim to complete these checks and respond to you within three weeks of your request, and
- fit a meter(s) within a further four weeks (unless there are issues outside of our control and we will tell you if so).

Location and access to the water meter

We aim to install water meters where you can easily access and read them. This means we usually install them on publicly accessible ground. However, the meter may have to 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 where the meter is, the meter remains the property of Irish Water.

If you have difficulty finding your meter, we will help you to help locate it. If we cannot find your meter, we will install a new meter, free of charge, within four weeks. This timeframe can change due to problems outside of our control, for example if we need to apply for a licence to open the road near your property. If this happens, we will discuss the timeframe with you.

We will facilitate access to the meter as required and provide information to you on how to access the meter whenever possible. You may open the meter box to read the meter or to isolate the water supply at the stop valve, if it is safe and possible to do so.

You can contact us (using the contact details on the first page of this Code) if you need us to give you access to the meter.

Meter testing

If you believe that your meter recording is wrong, you can ask us to check the meter. This **may** mean that we have to remove it. If we have to remove it to inspect and test it, we will tell you the fee you may have to pay for this before we remove the meter. You need to pay upfront. The fee is in line with the Water Charges Plan. We will tell you what the fee is before we remove the meter and then you can decide if you want us to proceed. We will return the fee to you after **if** the meter is faulty (due to damage other than that you may have caused).

Before removing a meter for testing, we may need to explore other reasons for unusual readings or bills. We then will remove the meter and do tests on it within a reasonable timeframe. Meanwhile, we will fit a replacement meter for your premises.

If the original meter is proven to be working properly, then we will take the readings from the meter as a true reading of the water supplied to you. If the meter is proven to be faulty (apart from damage caused by the customer), we will adjust your account to

reflect 'reasonable usage', We base this 'reasonable usage' on a method approved by the Commission for Regulation of Utilities (CRU).

Meter replacement by authorised people

Irish Water may replace a meter at its sole discretion and its own cost and with meter equipment of its choice. Only people we authorise may repair, connect, remove or work on a water meter.

Unauthorised interference

It is an offence under the Water Services Act 2007 to interfere with a meter or any devices attached to it. You should never remove, damage, alter or bypass the meter or any devices attached to it.

If a meter has been tampered with, Irish Water can see that a greater volume of water has been supplied to a premises than that shown on the meter. In this case, we will estimate the missing water consumption or discharge and recover any cost from the customer's account.

2.0 Billing Code of Practice

You can expect the highest standards of service from Irish Water. We will make sure that our customers' bills are in line with legislation. We will also make sure that bills are fair, clear and easy to understand. We will also not discriminate between customers.

We charge for water supply and wastewater services to non-domestic customers. Since 1 October 2021, a new Non-Domestic Tariff Framework has been in effect. The tariff sets out how you will be charged for water supply and wastewater charges. These charges tally with Irish Water's enduring Non-Domestic Tariff Framework (the Commission for the Regulation of Utilities approved this Framework on 3 July 2019).

General customer service in relation to billing

We will make sure that all charges, discounts and allowances are correct. This will apply to both planned and unplanned bills.

We will calculate your bills based on one of the following:

- **actual meter readings** taken by Irish Water employees or our agents;
- **meter readings from our customers;**
- **estimated readings:** an estimated bill is based on previous water consumption. This may happen if we have not been able to visit to read a meter. If you receive an estimated bill, you can call us within seven days of when we send the bill with your meter reading. We can then send you an updated bill within ten days;
- **assumed or calculated charges:** this is how you will be charged if you do not have a meter. Your meter may not be installed yet, or we may be unable to install one for technical reasons.

We will try to send bills to customers as soon as we can after we have read the meter. This is unless (a) you have agreed a different timeframe with Irish Water; or (b) we think the meter reading is wrong.

We will try to bill you based on a meter reading at least once a year.

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

We guarantee we will apply the correct discount or rebate to your bill for notices that declare water unfit for human consumption. This is in line with the Water Charges Plan, which has been approved by the Commission for Regulation of Utilities.

We may need you to pay a security deposit. If this is the case, the amount will be fair and easy to understand. We will also not discriminate between customers. We will let you know if we can refund this deposit.

You can contact us if you would like to receive your bill in an electronic format. You can switch back to paper billing at any time by letting us know.

Late bills

We will let you know, where possible, if we know there will be a delay in sending a bill that will exceed one full billing cycle. In this situation, we will try to contact with you to explain the reasons for the delay and what we plan to do to fix this.

Billing or meter-reading errors

If we discover an error in one of the following:

- your bill,
- your meter reading, or
- your meter number,

we will explore if you have been overpaying or underpaying for our services.

If we find you have been underpaying and have paid all your previous bills on time, you will only need to pay the balance for the previous 12 months from the date the error is corrected.

If we find you have been overpaying, Irish Water will refund in full any amount you have overpaid. This is unless any law limits or stops us from doing so.

High meter readings

If we find the reading on your meter is unusually high, we will let you know. It may mean that you have a leak on your pipes. Please note, however, that you are responsible for checking and repairing any leaks on your pipes.

Determining charging liability

Before the start of each tariff year, we will tell you the following:

- the annual quantity (AQ) of water supplied and/or wastewater collected over a prior 12 month period ; and
- the corresponding tariff class for your connection(s)

for the coming tariff year.

Every year, we will let you know the rules for how we work out a connection's AQ. We will make this information available to you as a non-domestic customer or as a potential non-domestic customer.

Where we send you a revised AQ that changes your tariff class or charges, we will:

- let you know what the change is and what it means;
- send you a revised annual bill at the new tariff class; and
- give you enough time to appeal the revised annual quantity figure with us.

If you are moving to a lower tariff class that means your annual bill will increase, we will let you know that you have the right to ask to stay on the same rates in your old tariff class.

Change in categorisation

It is possible to change the category of your premises from:

- a non-domestic premises to a domestic premises,
- a domestic premises to a non-domestic premises,
- either a non-domestic or domestic premises to a mixed-use premises,

You must contact us to apply make these changes. We will need to approve your application so we can work out how to charge you for our services.

Water in not equal to water out

You may apply to Irish Water if you believe that the volume of wastewater discharged from your business premises is **not** equal to the volume of water supplied to this premises. We will study your application to see if we can approve it. You make such an application under Section 22 (9) of the Water Services (No 2) Act 2013.

(For further details, 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. We will tell you how to apply for this allowance. We will consider and decide on your application. If we approve it, we will pay you the allowance.

When dealing with you about anything in any of the above, we will:

- Treat you in a fair and equal manner;
- Give you all the details you need (submission requirements, criteria, and so on) to make an application;
- Process applications and appeals in a reasonable timeframe;
- Give you our decision in writing and explain the reasons for our decision;
- Give you at least 30 days' notice of any proposed changes to the following:
 - annual quantity for a connection;
 - number of domestic allowances applied to the premises; or
 - categorisation of the premises.
- Allow you enough time to dispute our decision or proposed change.

Domestic allowances – advance notice given of changes

Advance notice will be given if we propose to change the number of domestic allowances applied to mixed-use premises. This also applies to changes to the categorisation of a premises (that is, a domestic, non-domestic or a mixed-use premises). Such changes may impact on the charges as well as domestic allowances applied to that premises. We will explain such a change to you, including charges and 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/>.

We will give you 30 days' notice of any change in the charges and/or tariffs we have already told you about. Any change to charges will be clearly marked on your bill. We will explain the reason for these changes on the bill or on a notice attached to the bill.

If we prorate bills at a tariff change, we will show and explain how we did this either on the bill or on an attached notice. (Prorate means to assess equally over a period of time).

Information on the bill

We will make sure that your bill is clear, simple and easy to understand. We will also make sure that the information provided on your bill is complete, accurate, transparent and clear.

The following information will be clearly shown on the bill:

- Billing address;
- Summary of your charges;
- Billing period covered;
- Water Point Reference Number (WPRN);
- Irish Water's emergency reporting contact number;
- Irish Water's general contact number, email
- Irish Water's customer queries contact details;
- How to send us a complaint;
- Premises/supply address if different from your billing address;
- Water meter number;
- Your tariff category;

- How often your bill is sent to you;
- Meter readings, upon which the bill is based, showing either of the following:
 - an actual reading by Irish Water;
 - an estimate; or
 - a reading submitted by a customer.
- A clear breakdown of the following:
 - tariff charges;
 - water consumption;
 - wastewater/trade effluent release unit data;
 - discounts, rebates, allowances or penalties.

A clear breakdown of the following separate charges:

- separate connection works;
- connection repair;
- meter testing;
- How you can access your Irish Water bills for the previous 12 months (where data is available). These 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 your payment is due (where applicable).

Presenting information on charges

We will:

- show all available standard charges on our website, including information about trade effluent charges and charging arrangements;
- explain the following on our website:
 - applicable tariff discounts;
 - allowances and processes about your charges;
 - bill or annual volume consumed or discharged;

- Make sure that you are given details on all applicable charges when you phone us; and
- Give you information on your water supply zone if you ask for it.

Payment methods

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

- **Direct debit**

If you wish to pay by direct debit, you can either:

- complete 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
- download a form online at https://www.water.ie/docs/IW_DD_Mandate_Form-Bus.pdf

You can choose to pay your entire bill or to pay monthly.

- **Standing orders**

You can set up a standing order to pay your water bill. The minimum amount is €5 per payment.

- **Online banking/Electronic Fund Transfer (EFT)**

You can pay your bills 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 your premises until you contact us to close the account. You will need to tell us the date you will be leaving the premises.

If a meter is installed at the premises, 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. This is where we visit your premises to read the meter. You may be charged for this reading. Charges are set out in the Water Charges Plan which is available at www.water.ie/about/our-customer-commitment/.

If you do not have a meter, we will prorate the charge to you until the date you leave the premises. For mixed-use customers, the domestic allowance charge is prorated up until the date of departure. We will send a final bill for water services at the premises you are leaving within six weeks of your request to close your account. We will send this bill to the new address you have given us.

We will close your account and stop billing you:

1. If you are unable to give us the details of the new customer at your old premises. We will try to carry out a closing meter read within ten working days of your request, as long as this is possible.
2. If you have contacted us to close your account and have accepted one of the closing meter read options.

If you have not accepted any of the closing read options, we will continue to engage with you until a satisfactory outcome is reached before closing the account.

We will also not keep your account open, unless there is an outstanding balance or we need to do a closing meter reading. We will make sure that your account is not linked to any new occupier or customer who is now registered at your old premises.

Arrears and arrangements for identifying and dealing with customers in financial difficulty

We promise to engage with you early if you are finding it hard to pay your bills. We will work together to reach an appropriate payment plan.

If you are finding it hard to pay your bill, please let us know as soon as you can.

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

If you are finding it hard to pay your bills, we can help you by making a payment plan. This plan will be agreed between you and Irish Water. We will agree a plan for you to repay any arrears in stages that will work for you.

We will take into account your ability to pay when agreeing the payment plan and we will confirm with you that it works for you.

If you enter into a payment plan with Irish Water, we will send you the details of the plan. We will clearly explain the new payment schedule and any terms you need to know about. We will use your preferred means of contact to get in touch with you about this.

Dealing with premises with no named non-domestic customer

If you have closed an account and no new account has been set up at that premises, the owner/occupier of the premises will be liable for any water/wastewater charges.

We will issue a notice in writing to the owner/occupier to tell them that they are now liable for water charges.

If we think a premises is rented to tenants and there are arrears on the account, we will work with other agencies to identify who owns the premises.

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

If we plan to disconnect a premises with no named non-domestic customer, we will issue at least one notice in writing to the new owner/occupier of the premises **at least** five working days before we disconnect the service. The notice will set out the charge for the disconnection. It will also 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 explains how we will communicate with our customers in an efficient and effective way.

If you would like to see our guidelines on the customer service and customer protection measures we plan, you can read them in our Customer Handbook. This can be found at <https://www.cru.ie/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/CRU20116a-Irish-Water-Domestic-Customer-Handbook-October-2020-.pdf>

Communication Principles

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

1. Plain English and Universal Design

We promise to use plain English in our communications. This includes using easy-to-understand language, to the greatest extent possible, and clear and user-friendly design. The water services industry often uses technical language, which we will explain using more everyday language.

We also promise to use Universal Design (UD) when we communicate with you. Universal design in this context means that information can be accessed, easily understood and used by everyone – certainly our intended readers (regardless of their age, ability or disability).

2. Our information is available in different formats

Where it is possible, we will make sure that any information we make available to the public is also available in formats that will 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

We will provide timely information about our planned operations in the most appropriate way for the customers living in areas likely affected. To lessen disruption for customers, we will let them know about any planned operations as soon as possible.

4. Accurate information

We will give you accurate information that will be as detailed as you need. This will make sure our customers know about any water-related matters affecting them.

5. Openness, transparency and fairness

We will always provide information in the spirit of openness, transparency, integrity and fairness.

6. Responsiveness

Our customer service team is trained to respond to your needs in a sensitive and kind manner. The team will listen to any concerns that you may have about our services.

7. Respect and courtesy

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

Communications on Operational Matters

Communicating with you during interruptions to supply

In this code, a 'supply interruption' is any incident related to Irish Water activities or assets (such as a burst in the pipework) that causes a disturbance in your water supply. This may include:

- a complete interruption of supply; or
- a significant drop in water pressure at your property.

Planned interruptions

We will provide regular up-to-date information before, and during, planned interruptions to normal supply. For example, we will publish supply interruption details on **www.water.ie** and publish details on our Twitter feed **@IWCare**. You can also ring our phone helplines for further information.

If you are going to be affected by interruptions, we will tell you (through the communication channels above):

- the planned timing of the interruption at least two working days beforehand; and
- how soon we believe normal supply will resume.

We also have specific notification requirements for customers registered on the Special and Priority Services Registers in accordance with the 'Code of Practice on Vulnerable Customers'.

We will use a range of communication channels set out above to share information about planned interruptions.

Unplanned interruptions

If there is an unplanned interruption to your water supply, we (and/or our service providers, which includes local authorities) will make sure you receive regular updates. Again, we will tell you:

- how long we think the interruption will last; and
- when normal supply is likely to resume.

We will publish this information no later than two hours after we become aware of the interruption (or five hours after, in the case of an extreme weather event). We will also provide these updates through a range of communication channels set out above.

Communications when water is unfit for human consumption

Our aim is to provide water that is fit for human consumption and to provide this service everywhere in the country. Where we do not reach this level of service, for whatever reason, and water is deemed unfit for human consumption, we will issue a:

Boil Water Notice: We issue a **Boil Water Notice** (BWN) to tell people that water from the water mains in their area is not safe to drink unless it is boiled and cooled beforehand.

We usually issue Boil Water Notices because of the risk of or confirmed contamination by harmful organisms (pathogens) such as E. coli or cryptosporidium.

Drinking Water Restriction Notice: We issue a **Drinking Water Restriction Notice** when there is contamination of the water supply, and boiling the water is not sufficient to make the water drinkable.

We usually issue a Drinking Water Restriction because there is an immediate risk of or confirmed contamination from a chemical contaminant (for example, hydrocarbons) which poses an immediate risk to public health.

For both Boil Water Notices and Drinking Water Restrictions Notices

We will only issue Boil Water Notices and Drinking Water Restriction Notices following consultation and agreement with the Health Service Executive (HSE). If the risk to public health is very high we may unilaterally put a notice in place, but only if we believe consultation with the HSE might cause a delay in informing the public. The HSE is the statutory consultee on public health matters.

We issue notices to inform you about what is happening and explain why. We also keep you up-to-date on our progress tackling the issue behind them.

Alternative water supply arrangements

For public health and safety reasons, or other emergency reasons, we provide you with alternative water supply arrangements. The latter could for example, be tankered water (tanks of drinkable water). If we do this, we will contact you and all affected customers through a range of communication channels such as phone, text, email, website or social media. ('We' here means Irish Water and/or our service providers.) We will contact you so that you know:

- a) why you have been provided with an alternative water supply and where it is located;
- b) the safety measures you need to take when using this water to ensure you remain healthy, particularly the requirement to boil the water from this supply before you drink it;
- c) how long we expect the alternative supply will be available; and
- d) what we are doing to fix the public water supply issue (if this is the cause of the issue) using published and other communication methods.

We will contact all customers on our Priority Services and Special Services registers directly to tell them the above information. We will also offer these customers extra help that they may need.

Customer engagement

Contact details on Irish Water's website

A range of channels which you can use to contact us is available on our website, www.water.ie.

Communicating with you through printed material

We will make printed material available to all our customers/potential customers on request. If you would like a copy our:

- Terms and Conditions of Water Services;
- Codes of Practice; and
- Customer Charter.

You can:

- visit our website (www.water.ie) to download a copy;
- phone us on **1800 278 278** or **+353 1 707 2828**;
- email us at customerservice@water.ie; or
- write to us at the address on the first page of this Code of Practice.

Customer contact in person

Sometimes one of our representatives (or a service provider, working on our behalf) needs to visit you in person at your property. They may need to do this for account management or for maintenance or operational reasons. They may visit either with or

without a arranging an appointment with you. Our representative or service providers will show you their identity card. This card shows:

- their full name;
- their photograph; and
- their name, business address and contact number of Irish Water.

If local authority staff are working on our behalf, they will show you their identity card which will show:

- a) their full name;
- b) their photograph; and
- c) the local authority's name, business address and contact number.

In both cases, the representative will tell you why they are calling to your home. You can contact us on **1800 278 278** to confirm the identity of our staff member or service provider. Please read the tips about people visiting your home below.

Unless a customer asks us to, and apart from maintenance and operational reasons, Irish Water will **not** contact you on:

- Christmas Eve;
- a public or bank holiday;
- Sundays; and
- times out **outside** the following hours:
 - 9am-9pm on weekdays; and
 - 11am-5pm on Saturdays.

Communicating with you by phone

All our customers (or potential customers) can phone us to find out more about:

- water or wastewater service supply;
- our connection policy;
- metering; and
- any other relevant area of our business.

You can find our contact details on the first page of this Code of Practice or you can find them online at **www.water.ie**.

Our friendly and helpful staff are trained to take your calls and help you as best they can. Please go to our website to find the telephone contact details you may need or on our printed documents.

Our contact centre opening hours are:

- for water supply queries and emergencies, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week; and
- for general customer service queries, 9am–5.30pm, Monday-Friday.

Unless a customer asks us, and apart from during an emergency or interruption to service, Irish Water will not contact a domestic customer by phone on:

- Christmas Eve;
- a public or bank holiday;
- Sundays; and
- times out **outside** the following hours:
 - 9am-9pm on weekdays; and
 - 11am-5pm on Saturdays.

Communicating with you by email

We may from time to time contact our customers by email. In all email correspondence, we will provide the following:

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

Communicating with you by SMS (text message)

We may from time to time send you text messages. When we use text messages, we will identify ourselves as Irish Water.

We will not contact a customer by text messages (apart from messages during or regarding emergencies or interruptions to service) on:

- Christmas Eve;
- a public or bank holiday;
- Sundays; and
- times out **outside** the following hours:
 - 9am-9pm on weekdays; and
 - 11am-5pm on Saturdays.

4.0 Network operations Code of Practice

We understand that you, as a business customer, 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
- the networks to which you are connected.

In addition, we know that you need to be able to understand the kind of service you can expect from your connection to the wider Irish Water public network. This Code of Practice gives you general information on water and wastewater services connections. It tells you where you can find further information about your 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.

If you want to understand where your responsibility for pipework begins and ends, please visit <https://www.water.ie/connections/developer-services/> on our website.

Here you will find examples of a customer's general responsibility for pipework, depending on the type of property. You will find this information in the 'Pipe Maintenance Responsibility' graphics, which can be filtered by property type.

If you seek clarification on pipework ownership in relation to your own property, we will come back to you to discuss your request within three working days. We aim to answer your query within a reasonable timeframe.

If you report a fault on an Irish Water asset, we will respond to you within two working days. We will let you know what we plan to do about the reported fault.

Network Interruptions

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

- **Planned interruption affecting customers:** We will try to restore supply to any affected customers within 24 hours the interruption, or as advised in planned works notification. We will meet all legal obligations with respect to providing alternative supplies to customers.
- **Unplanned interruption affecting customers:** If you are affected by an unplanned water supply interruption, we will try to restore supply within 12 hours. For large water main issues, Irish Water will try to restore 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 after repair work has been completed 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/help/supply/incident-management-and-e/>

Customer asset flooding

Customer asset flooding is severe flooding that occurs at a customer's property, which may cause damage or interrupt your business significantly.

If you experience customer asset flooding at your property, please contact us on **1800 278 278** or **+353 1 707 2828**.

Please contact us immediately if your building or property is flooded (by either water or wastewater) and this flooding is likely to have originated from an Irish Water asset. We will go to your property and try to stop the flooding within four hours of your initial contact.

If damage to your property has been caused by the failure of an Irish Water asset, we will work with you to solve or improve the problem.

An extreme severe weather event may be an exception to the above process. Such an event may cause the reasonable design capacity of Irish Water's assets to be exceeded.

Water pressure

If you experience reduced water pressure at your property, you can ask us to investigate this by contacting us on **1800 278 278** or **+353 1 707 2828**.

We will tell you:

- what is causing the reduced pressure if we can. Otherwise, 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 shows that the reduced pressure is caused by a leak in your pipework, we let you know;
- if the reduced pressure is caused by an issue due to an Irish Water asset or Irish Water activity, we will let you know within ten working days how we intend to fix this issue, where possible.

5.0 Disconnection for non-domestic customers Code of Practice

We will only disconnect your water supply for payment arrears as a last resort. We have clear procedures on this. All other methods of repayment must have been exhausted before we disconnect you.

We **may** disconnect your water and/or wastewater supply in the following circumstances:

For non-payment

- If you fail to pay a bill or honour a payment plan relating to the supply of water and/or wastewater services;
- If you fail to pay such a bill **and** have a shared supply with another non-domestic customer who has also failed to pay their water and/or wastewater bill to Irish Water for their premises;

Disconnection requested

- If you or an agent working on your behalf request a disconnection. Please note that any outstanding arrears on your account must still be paid;

Registered occupant can't be identified

- If we can't identify a registered occupant at the property;

Other relevant criteria

- If any other criteria for disconnection in line with the CRU approved Disconnection Policy applies.

We will **not** disconnect your supply in the following circumstances:

When disconnection would unfairly impact on other customers

- If your 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;
- If your 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;

When you are paying as agreed

- If you have entered into a payment plan (as applicable) and you are honouring that payment plan;

When you pay an unrelated bill

- If you fail to pay a bill that is not related to the supply of water or wastewater services. This could include bills for site works or section 16 licensing (a licence to discharge into the public sewer); or

When a formal complaint process – or challenge – is underway

- If you have sent a complaint to Irish Water and the complaint is related to the reason for disconnection. We will not disconnect your service over any disputed amount until the appropriate complaint process is finished;
- If you are challenging a bill. This applies to the bill you are querying only and not any previous or subsequent bills. These bills must be paid as normal.

Process for disconnection due to non-payment

We have a collections process which we follow before disconnecting you for failure to pay your account. We will contact you when you are in arrears (in writing, and in other formats – for example, by phone or by email). We will give you information on arrears payment options you can access to avoid disconnection.

Notification process for most non-domestic customers:

- We will provide you the opportunity to nominate someone to represent you at any point during your contact with us.
- We will issue at least one direct notice in writing to you and the occupier of the premises (if different and known to Irish Water) **at least five working days** before disconnection.
- We will try to phone you (if we have your phone number) and try to phone the occupier (if different and known to Irish Water). We will try to make these phone calls at least once and at least five working days before disconnection.

The above notification process above does **not apply** to Irish Water non-domestic customers who have individually negotiated contracts. We will provide a notification process for disconnection for these customers in line with the terms and conditions of their contracts.

Irish Water – Notice of Disconnection

Where we have exhausted our collections process and intend to carry out a disconnection, we will send you a Notice of Disconnection in accordance with the following:

- Notices will be sent to you and the occupier (if different and known to Irish Water). Disconnection for non-payment of your account must be sent in writing by letter or electronically where you have chosen this method of communication;
- The notice will tell you the reason for disconnection. However, if we know that you have gone into liquidation or receivership, we will reduce the notice period to two working days. If you have an individually negotiated contract with us, this timeframe will be outlined in the terms and conditions of your contract;
- The notice will highlight any charge for the disconnection;
- The notice will give you the contact details of debt handling/credit control or appropriate division so that you may contact them. If you wish to pay any bill arrears after the receipt of the notice, we will facilitate this;
- The notice will show that you cannot pay the arrears to anyone carrying out the disconnection.

We will not carry out a disconnection on the following days:

- Friday, Saturday or Sunday;
- the day before a public holiday; or
- a public holiday.

To be clear, we can carry out disconnections for safety reasons at any time. We carry out these disconnections to prevent injury to people or damage to premises. These disconnections are not within the scope of this Disconnection Code of Practice.

We will keep detailed records of all the steps taken and all considerations made if your premises is disconnected.

Settling arrears and restoring supply

You will be entitled to have normal supply restored if you have had your supply disconnected due to outstanding debt but later reached a settlement with us. This settlement could be through either a payment plan or by payment in full (including any applicable disconnection and/or reconnection charge).

If you have agreed a settlement, we will restore supply within two working days, subject to operational capacity.

6.0 Complaints Code of Practice

Introduction

Irish Water provides and manages public water and wastewater services on a national basis. We aim to deliver excellent customer service. This Code of Practice gives information and advice on how you can make a complaint with us, and how you can expect us to respond to your complaint.

If you are unhappy with any part of our service, we encourage you to let us know and we will do everything we can to resolve the matter quickly and to your satisfaction. We aim to resolve all complaints as quickly and as fairly as possible. We monitor complaints to help us to improve the quality of our service.

Our promise to you

- **Complaints information**
We will make customers aware of this Code of Practice on Complaints and we will be pleased to send you a copy if you ask us to.
- **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.
- **Our response to your complaint**
We will try to resolve all complaints as quickly and fairly as possible.

What is a complaint?

A complaint is defined as ‘the expression (through various channels, for example letter, email, phone call, physical claim) of a customer’s dissatisfaction and their explicit expectation for a response or resolution.’

The term ‘explicit’ means 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.

How do I make a complaint?

If you are unhappy with any service or contact with us, please let us know and we will do our best to fix the situation as quickly as possible.

You can send a complaint to us in 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**
ITRS: **1800 378 378**

We will also accept complaints from a recognised agency or a person you have nominated to act on your behalf.

The stages for making a complaint

There are two stages in our process for resolving customer complaints. These are:

Stage 1: the initial complaints process (when we receive your complaint); and

Stage 2: the escalation complaints process (if you are not happy with our response to **Stage 1**, you can take the complaint further).

The **independent review** stage: if you are unhappy with the outcome of **Stage 2**, you can take your complaint to the Commission for Regulation of Utilities).

These stages are explained in full in this Code of Practice.

Stage 1: Irish Water initial complaints process

- **Response within five working days**
We will respond to your complaint within five working days with a resolution or a plan on how we will resolve the issue (under normal conditions).
- **Update on or before tenth working day**
You will receive an update on your complaint on or before the tenth working day after you made the complaint, if it has not already been resolved.
- **Explain problems**
We will explain the issue to you and where relevant, apologise if we have made a mistake. In some circumstances you may be entitled to a charter payment – please see our ‘Domestic Customer Charter’ for further information. You can find this information at www.water.ie/about/our-customer-commitment/.

- **Decision within two months**

You will receive a final decision to Stage 1 of our complaints process within two months. Please note that you may be required to work with us during any investigation into your complaint. For example, we might need access to your property.

Lodging your complaint

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

- your name;
- your property address;
- your telephone number; and
- the details of the complaint, including:
 - dates (where appropriate);
 - reference or account numbers;
 - any information or documentation you think would help us to understand and investigate your complaint further; and
 - what you would like Irish Water to do to make things right.

You must present the above information to us as a complaint. If you do not present your complaint as a complaint, we will lodge it as a query and we cannot promise to respond within five working days. We advise you to use 'Complaint' when writing or talking to us about a complaint.

Our response 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 of receiving your complaint. At this time, we will either offer you a solution or explain the steps we need to take to resolve 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 a reference number to use when you wish to discuss your complaint with us.

If we need to visit your premises or site, we will talk to you to arrange a suitable timeframe for this.

If your complaint is still open after five days, we will contact you with an update on or before the tenth working day from when you sent your complaint to us.

We will send you a final decision on your complaint within two months from the date you first contacted us, along with the reasons for our decision. At this point, we will also let

you know that your complaint is closed. We may need you to work with us during the investigation to help us come to a decision on your complaint (for instance, we might need access to your property).

Stage 2: Irish Water escalation complaints process

Our promise to you:

- **Clear information**
We will make it clear how you can escalate your complaint (take your complaint further) within Irish Water if you are not satisfied with the outcome of **Stage 1**.
- **Decision within 10 working days**
We review your complaint at this point and we will provide a response within 10 working days. However, sometimes a site visit (or operational works) is required, which may take longer. In this case, we will tell you why this is needed and agree a likely timeframe with you.
- **Understanding and confidentiality**
We will treat your complaint with understanding 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 make sure we keep our promises. This includes, for example, monitoring phone calls to check the standard provided. Please see our Data Protection section below for more information.

If you would like the complaint investigated further

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 brought to the Irish Water customer services manager for review. To do this, your request must be put in writing to us by contacting:

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

Email: **business@water.ie**

Independent review by the Commission for Regulation of Utilities (CRU)

Taking your complaint to the CRU

If you are not happy with how your complaint has been dealt with, you can take your complaint to the Commission for Regulation of Utilities (CRU).

They can assist you once you have given us the opportunity to resolve the matter by following the process outlined in stage 1 and stage 2.

To avail of the CRU's dispute resolution service, you must be a registered customer of Irish Water when the reason for your complaint happened, have sent your complaint in writing to us and you must have followed Stage 1 and Stage 2 of our complaints process, which is outlined above.

You can contact the Commission for Regulation of Utilities at:

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

Telephone: **1800 404 404**

Fax: **(01) 4000 850**

Email: **customercare@cru.ie**

Web: **www.cru.ie/home/customer-care/water/**

Where the CRU is investigating a case of non-compliance (not following the rules) with a Code of Practice, Irish Water will wait until the CRU has decided on the matter before taking action if it relates to payment of monies that is in dispute.

When the CRU makes a final decision regarding a complaint, we will respond within three weeks or by a date specified by the CRU in its decision (if longer than three weeks). We will confirm that the CRU's final decision has been implemented.

Complaints about water quality or pollution

If your unresolved complaint is about water quality or pollution incidents, you should contact the Environmental Protection Agency at:

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

Telephone: **(053) 916 0600**
Web: **info@epa.ie**

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 you may receive a phone call or questionnaire after we have dealt with your complaint.

Protecting customers' legal rights

Our complaints procedure is a facility provided to and for customers and in no way prejudices (damages) 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 <http://www.water.ie/privacy-notice/>

Irish Text Relay Service (ITRS)

1800 378 378

What is ITRS?

ITRS translates text into voice and voice into text to make it easier for deaf and hard-of-hearing people to make and receive calls. ITRS agents receive your calls and texts and translate them.

Do I need to register for the ITRS App?

Only a phone number is required to register. No further information is required. You can download the app or go to **www.itrs.ie** for further information. The app will ask you to register the phone number you will be using to make or receive calls. Follow the instructions in the app or click on the 'Getting Started' tab on the ITRS home page.

How do I register my 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 be asked to phone the ITRS number to confirm your chosen phone number.
- Step 2: Leave the app and make the call from the phone number you are registering. You will only have 60 seconds to make this call.
- Step 3: Open the ITRS app again to receive confirmation that your number has been registered successfully.
- Step 4: To end, hang up the registration call and close the ITRS app.

Your phone number will now be registered and you can use the ITRS app.

Website: **www.water.ie**
Twitter: **[@IWCare](https://twitter.com/IWCare)**
Boards: **www.boards.ie/irishwater**
Email: **business@water.ie**