

About your water meter



This publication is available in Braille, on CD and in large text format on request by calling 1890 278 278.

If you have any questions or require further information please contact us:

Web:	www.water.ie	Irish Water
		PO Box 860
Twitter:	@IrishWater	South City Delivery Office
		Cork City

Telephone: **1800 278 278** or **+353 1 707 2828**

Minicom: **1800 378 378**
(for hearing impaired customers
with their own minicom equipment)

24 hours a day, 7 days a week

Safeguarding your water for your future

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Introduction

Irish Water is the national water utility responsible for providing public water services throughout Ireland. Our purpose is to safeguard water as a precious natural resource, and to deliver water services in a way that protects the environment and meets the needs of all citizens and industry now and in the future.

Irish Water is installing water meters outside homes around the country. Domestic meter installation will help you to keep track of how much water you use and allow Irish Water to improve its management of the public water network.

The water meter outside your home is part of the public water network operated by Irish Water. We are responsible for fitting and maintaining the meter and for ensuring that it meets the required specification.

This booklet explains some of the questions which people have about water meters. If you require further information, please visit **www.water.ie** or phone us on **1800 278 278**.



Frequently asked questions

1. Why is Irish Water installing meters?

Water meters are an important tool for providing information about household water usage. Knowing more about how much water you use will help you to manage and control your bills.

The meters also help Irish Water to account for water delivered more accurately and take steps to reduce leakage, both in the public distribution system and within customer properties.

Irish Water is installing water meters under the Water Services Acts, 2007-2014.

2. What is a water meter?

A water meter is a device that measures the amount of water supplied from the mains water supply to your home. The meter is fit to the pipe supplying water to your home and measures the volume of water that goes into your home in cubic metres (1 cubic metre = 1m³ = 1,000 litres).

Irish Water is installing water meters outside residential properties around Ireland. Water meters are in common use in Ireland (for business properties) and across Europe. The water meters being installed outside residential properties in Ireland are manufactured by Itron and Diehl in accordance with the EU Measuring Instruments Directive and all applicable technical standards.

You can see illustrations of these meters on page 12.

3. What is a meter box?

A meter box is a plastic container that is inserted into the ground and is connected to the public water mains on one side, and connected to the supply pipe to your home on the other side. The water meter and the outside stop valve are contained within the meter box (the outside stop valve controls the water supply from the public mains to the supply pipe to your home.) The meter box also has a frost plug to guard against frost damage, and a sealed lid.

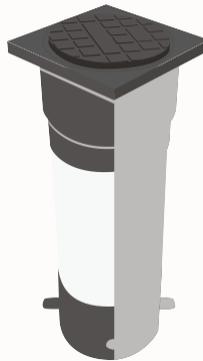


Figure.1: Illustration of water meter box

4. Where are water meters installed?

If it is possible, the meter will usually be placed underground in a meter box in the footpath or verge outside your home. For further information follow our step-by-step guide to metering, or watch our Metering Explained video at www.water.ie/metering.



Figure.2: Illustration of water meter location

5. How do I turn my water on or off?

There are two ways to control the water supply to your home:

1. The inside stop valve (ISV) is the control for your water supply in your home. It is usually found under the kitchen sink or where the mains water supply enters your home. It allows you to turn your water on or off at any time, for example, if you are doing plumbing work. If you do not know where your ISV is located, or it is not working, or you do not have an ISV, we recommend that you call a registered plumber to find, fix or install your ISV.
2. The outside stop valve (OSV) is the control for the water supply from the public mains. It is usually located underground in the footpath or verge outside your home, and is where we would access your water supply to turn it on or off when carrying out maintenance work. If you have a water meter, your OSV is contained in the meter box. Irish Water is responsible for the maintenance and repair of both the OSV and the water meter.

We recommend, where possible, that you use your ISV to control the water in your home. In the event of an emergency, turn off the water supply at your ISV and contact a registered plumber or Irish Water.

Please read the 'Accessing your meter – safety guidelines' on page 7 for more information on safety and security when accessing your meter.

6. How will my water meter be read?

Irish Water meters feature Automatic Meter Reading (AMR) technology where a transmitter periodically sends your meter reading to a receiver unit in one of our branded, meter reading vehicles. This means we usually won't need to open the meter box or lift the meter lid to take a meter reading as it can be read remotely.

Irish Water's meters keep a record of the reading at midnight on the last day of each month. This provides Irish Water with an accurate month end/month start cumulative consumption on an ongoing basis. We will collect these month end records each time a scheduled drive-by reading is carried out as part of the normal read cycle. This usually happens every three months. This information will be used to calculate your bill.

Irish Water meters are very safe when measured against the international safety limits of radio wave energy. Radio frequency waves are a form of electromagnetic energy and are present all around us from natural sources such as the sun and other stars, the movement of the Earth's crust, and from man-made devices that utilise use radio frequency waves, such as microwave ovens, mobile phones and other wireless devices.

For more information on Irish Water meters and AMR technology, please visit www.water.ie to view our information booklet 'Irish Water meters and AMR technology' or phone us on **1800 448 448** to request a copy.



Figure.3: Drive-by meter reading

7. Can I read my water meter?

Your water meter will be read remotely using Automatic Meter Reading technology on a quarterly basis. This meter reading, along with month end readings, will be provided to you as part of your bill. However, if you wish to read your meter, please make sure that it is safe for you to do so or ask friend or family member to help.

Important: Please read our safety guidelines below for more information on safety and security when accessing your meter. If your meter has a metal lid, please contact Irish Water.

Accessing your meter – safety guidelines

When accessing your meter, please be aware of your surroundings, your personal safety and the safety of others. We try to locate meter boxes out of the way of traffic. However, always be aware of cyclists, pedestrians and other road users.

If you have mobility difficulties, we recommend that you ask a neighbour or family member to help you access your meter. Do not try to read the water meter yourself as it may involve bending, crouching and kneeling on the ground.

Guidelines

- > Make sure that you have enough light and never read your meter when it is dark.
- > Make sure the ground and meter box are free from debris.
- > Wear appropriate safety clothing such as a high visibility vest and gloves. Use a knee rest or knee protectors, where necessary.

- > The meter box can be opened by slowly and carefully prising off the meter lid. You will see small slots around the edge of the meter lid where you can insert a safe implement, such as the flat handle of a spoon, to carefully prise off the plastic lid. If the lid is difficult to remove, do not force it – please contact Irish Water.
- > When you open the meter box, you will see a frost plug which is provided to guard against frost damage. This must be removed if you wish to examine the meter. The frost plug is typically made of foam material, white in colour and may be round or oval in shape.
- > You should be able to see the water meter at the bottom of the meter box. However, if there is water or any other debris obscuring it, please do not put your hand into the box to try to clear it – please contact Irish Water.

Remember

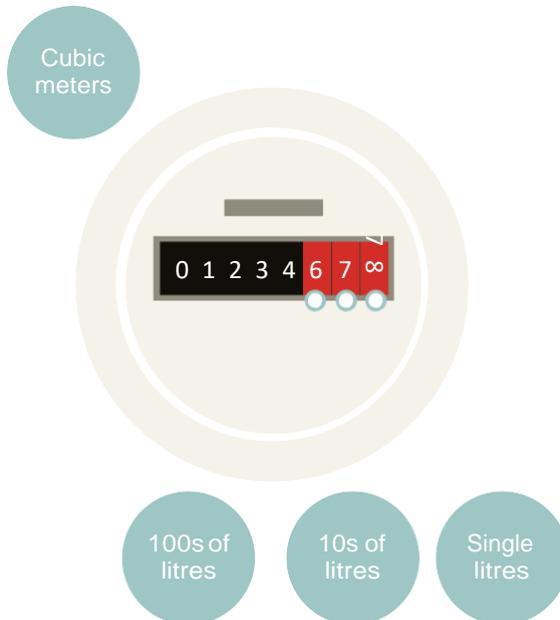
- > Never leave the lid open and unattended. This is to prevent people falling into the meter box or tripping over the lid.
- > The frost plug protects your meter from frost, so please make sure you replace it when you are finished.
- > It is important that the meter lid should not be forced open, and should be replaced properly and shut firmly to ensure that the meter box remains watertight. Check that the rubber seal around the edge of the lid has not been dislodged before you put the lid back in place.

8. How do I read my water meter?

All domestic Irish Water meters measure the volume of water used in cubic metres. As shown in the diagram below, the black dials, with white numbers, record cubic metres and the red dials, with white numbers, record single, tens and hundreds of litres.

One cubic metre = 1,000 litres.

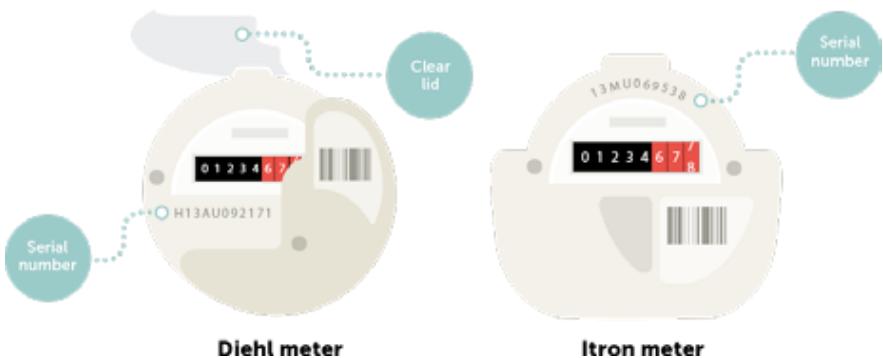
For the purposes of billing you will see cubic metres and tens and hundreds of litres. Your bill will not include single litres. Please refer to the illustration for guidance on where to locate cubic metres and tens and hundreds of litres.



Taking a meter reading

1. The serial number on your meter will match the serial number on your bill. The meter serial number is a combination of both letters and numbers of either 10 or 11 characters long depending on the type of meter that you have. There are two types of water meters, namely Diehl and Itron. Please see the illustrations below to see where the serial numbers are located on each of these meters. The serial number on your bill will be referred to as the 'Meter no.' in the 'Bill detail' section. By checking that the serial number on your meter matches the serial number on your bill will help you to read the correct meter.
2. You will see that the dials are divided into two sections - a black and red section. Read the dials from left to right taking note of all the digits in the black dials and the first two digits in the red dials.

Note: The Diehl meter has a clear lid which covers the dials. You must lift the lid in order to see the dials. The last digit in the red dial, which represents single litres, is obscured by the AMR (Automatic Metre Reading) unit. Your bill will not include single litres.



9. Can I remove my water meter?

No. Interference with or removal of a water meter is a criminal offence under the Water Services Act 2007, and may cause interruption to or contamination of your water supply.

The water meter outside your home is part of the water network operated by Irish Water. To ensure a safe and clean supply of water, all works to your water meter and the water network should only be carried out by fully trained and authorised personnel. Water meters are being fitted by personnel who are fully trained in meter installation and water hygiene.

10. Who is responsible for the water meter?

The water meter outside your home is part of the water network operated by Irish Water. We are responsible for ensuring that the water meters meet the required specification, and we are also responsible for the fitting and maintenance of the meters.

Your home is linked to a network of pipes that supply water and enable wastewater to be removed efficiently and safely. These pipes are connected to the public water main and sewer systems, responsibility for which is split by law between householders and Irish Water. Ultimately, pipe responsibility is governed by the Water Services Acts 2007 to 2014. For more information on how this responsibility is divided, please visit **www.water.ie** or phone us on **1800 278 278**.

11. Will the meter require servicing or repair?

If a meter requires servicing and repair due to wear and tear, this work will be carried out by Irish Water.

12. Are water meters tested before they are installed?

All Irish Water meters are tested before they are installed as part of the manufacturing process. If you have reason to suspect the accuracy of the reading, please contact Irish Water.

13. Where can I view my meter readings?

Your meter readings will be provided to you as part of your bill. For more information on billing visit **www.water.ie** or phone us on **1800 448 448**.

14. How will using meters reduce water leakage?

Leakage on the water supply network in Ireland is unacceptably high. Irish Water is targeting reduction in water losses as a key priority in delivering a better and more cost effective water supply service to customers.

Water meters installed by Irish Water to date are providing data that gives a unique insight into the extent and nature of customer side leaks. Irish Water will notify you and provide advice if your water meter indicates a leak on your property.

15. What happens if I move property?

If you are moving house, you will need to phone us on **1800 448 448** on the day you're moving. You will need to:

1. Provide your name, address and/or account number;
2. Provide the address of the property that you're moving into so we can transfer your account, or provide a forwarding address so we can send you your bill;
3. Agree a meter reading if your property is metered.

For your convenience, we will generate an estimated meter reading to close your account. Alternatively, if it is safe to do so (please refer to the safety guidelines on accessing your meter on page 7), you can read your meter and provide a meter reading yourself.

If you do not agree to the estimated meter reading and you cannot read the meter yourself, we can read the meter for you. Your meter will be read within five working days. In this instance, please contact Irish Water.

17. What do I do if I have a query in relation to my water meter?

If you have a query regarding your water meter, please phone us on **1800 278 278**.

Irish Water's 'Stay Safe Guide'

Irish Water staff and installers are trained to always identify who they are and who they are representing. They will always present their identity card, and our meter installers will not ask to enter your home. This Stay Safe Guide is a series of sensible steps everyone should follow when dealing with people calling to your home:

1. Always look through a window or door viewer before opening the door.
2. Only open your door after connecting a door chain lock or placing your foot behind the door.
3. Switch on outside lights when it is dark.
4. Request and examine identity cards.
5. Always think 'safety' – do not leave strangers alone on your doorstep while you go into another room.
6. Always close the door if you need to do this. Do not leave strangers alone in your home.
7. Take precautions – if you are unsure or suspicious, please refuse access.

If you still have doubts about the identity of the person at your door, you can phone us on **1800 278 278** to make sure that the person is visiting on behalf of Irish Water. Always take time to check the caller's identity thoroughly.

Be water smart

Please be considerate in your use of water. Here are some tips on how to be water smart in the home:

- > Make sure your washing machine and dishwasher are always fully loaded before you put on a wash. A modern washing machine uses approximately 65 litres of water per cycle while a dishwasher uses 20 litres.
- > Only fill your kettle with as much water as you need. By only boiling the amount of water you need will help you save water and also reduce your energy bill.
- > Use a basin in the sink. A basin is useful for washing dishes by hand or collecting the water you use to rinse fruit and vegetables, which can be then be used for watering plants. When rinsing utensils or washing vegetables, don't leave the tap running.
- > Spend less time in the shower. Taking a shorter shower can help save water. An average shower uses 10 litres of water a minute.
- > Remember to turn off the tap when brushing your teeth. A running tap can use up to six litres of water a minute so avoid leaving the tap running when brushing your teeth, shaving or washing your face.
- > Use a water butt to harvest rainwater from gutters. Collect rainwater to use in your garden instead of using drinking water from the tap.

For more ways to be water smart visit

www.water.ie