

# Irish Water Business Customer Codes of Practice



## Contact details

**If you have questions about your account or water services, we are ready to help.** When you contact us, please have your 10 digit Irish Water account number to hand. You will find your account number on the front of your bill. To protect your account, we can only discuss account information with the account holder or an authorised representative.

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

Irish Water  
PO Box 448  
South City Delivery Office  
Cork City

### General enquiries

9am–5.30pm, Mon–Fri

Telephone: **1850 778 778** or **+353 1 707 2827**

### Water supply and emergencies

24 hours a day, 7 days a week

Telephone: **1850 278 278** or **+353 1 707 2828**

Please note that the rates charged for calls to 1850 (CallSave) numbers may vary across different service providers. Calls made using mobiles may be more expensive.

**02 October 2017**

## **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 in a modern economy. 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](http://www.water.ie)

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

## **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.

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. To view the charges that apply to particular premises, customers can visit [www.water.ie/business](http://www.water.ie/business). The existing business charges will apply, by default, until new charges are approved by the Commission for Regulation of Utilities. Customers will be communicated with in advance of any tariff change being implemented.

### Notification of meter installation

If Irish Water intends to undertake a meter installation programme we will communicate with the customer 14 days before commencement of works; another notification will be delivered at least 2 days in advance of 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've 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, typically in three working days but within a maximum of ten working days.

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).

### Location and access to the water meter

We will endeavour to install meters on publically accessible grounds; 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 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 to read the meter or to isolate the water supply using the stop valve.

### **Meter Testing**

Customers may request to have their water meter tested for accuracy. Please note, such a request may incur an additional charge. If, following notification of the amount of an additional charge, the customer agrees to proceed with the testing of the meter, we will arrange for this to be performed within a reasonable period of time. If the original meter is proven to be operating correctly the readings taken from the meter will be deemed definitive evidence of the water supplied. If, however, for any reason, a meter is proven to be faulty (excluding damage caused by the customer), we will adjust the relevant account to reflect reasonable usage and refund any additional charge paid by the customer for such testing. The meter will be replaced at no cost to the customer in this instance.

### **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

Prior to the establishment of Irish Water business customers were charged for water and wastewater services by their local authorities. This is still the case but Irish Water is undertaking to migrate and commence billing business customers directly in 2014 through to 2015. It is anticipated a consumer profiling period will follow migration before a long term charging structure is established. This charging structure will be determined by the Commission for Regulation of Utilities.

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 decision on Irish Water's Water Charges Plan. Once a Business Customer migrates to our billing system, Irish Water will automatically apply the discount as a credit to each applicable Business Customer's account. In circumstances where Business Customers have not yet migrated to Irish Water's billing system, any applicable discount will be applied retrospectively post migration or earlier if feasible.

The requirements set out below apply to business customers during the transition to Irish Water billing systems and any future business charging regimes.

### Disconnection of Water Supply

Irish Water may disconnect an account holder's water supply in the following circumstances:

- a) Failure to pay a bill relating to the supply of water/wastewater services;
- b) Upon request of the account holder;
- c) No registered occupant at the property has been established after attempts to determine occupancy /ownership; or
- d) Where the customer has entered into a payment plan and that customer fails to honour that plan.

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

- a) Where the business premises has a known shared supply pipe with another customer and disconnection of the business customer would also disconnect supply to another customer;

- b) Where an account holder has entered into a payment plan (as applicable) and is honouring that arrangement;
- c) Where an account holder is pursuing a genuine 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;
- d) In the event that an account holder 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;
- e) For failure to pay a bill which is not related to the supply of water or waste water services; for example site works charges;
- f) For failure to pay a bill based on a regular 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 an account holder due to non-payment of their account. We will contact and notify the account holder they are in arrears (in writing and in other formats) and provide information on arrears payment options the account holder may be able to use to avoid disconnection.

- If an account holder wishes to nominate a third party to represent them we will facilitate this.
- We will issue at least one direct notice in writing at least 5 working days in advance of carrying out a disconnection. Please note this does not apply to Irish Water customers who have individually negotiated contracts. Irish Water may provide for an alternative notification process for these 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 customer a Notice of Disconnection in accordance with the following:

- Any notice sent to an account holder regarding disconnection for non-payment of their account must be sent in writing by letter.
- The notice will specify the reason for disconnection. However, where Irish Water is aware that a business customer has gone into liquidation or receivership the

notice period is reduced to 2 working days or whatever contractual arrangement Irish Water may have with the account holder.

- The notice will highlight any charge for the disconnection as well as any charge which may apply to the account holder if the disconnection is cancelled or no access is possible at the premises.
- The notice will specify the contact details of debt handling/ credit control/ or appropriate division so that the account holder may make contact. Irish Water will facilitate customers who wish to pay immediately any bill arrears after the receipt of the notice.

### **Settlement of Arrears and restoration of supply**

Where an account holder has had supply disconnected due to outstanding debt and subsequently reached a settlement with Irish Water through payment plan or payment in full, the account holder shall be entitled to have normal supply restored.

Where the account holder has agreed a settlement, Irish Water will restore supply within two working days, subject to operational capacity.

### **Dealing with premises with no registered account holder**

Where an account holder has closed an account and no new account has been registered to that property, the liability for water/wastewater charges will fall to the owner.

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

Where applicable, we will work with other agencies in identifying ownership of property our services (water supply and/or wastewater services) where a property 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 account holder registered on our systems.

Where we intend to disconnect a premises with no account holder we will issue a notice, in writing by letter, to the new occupier of the property at least 5 working days in advance of disconnecting the property. That notice will set out that a cost will apply due to disconnection of the premises and will refer the account holder to where they can learn more about the actual costs that will apply.



## 3.0 Customer Communications Code of Practice

### 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.

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 at least two days in advance of the event. Notification of a planned interruption may be through direct communication with the customer or through a range of appropriate communication channels and information shall be made available to customers through telephone helplines. Supply interruption details will also be published on [www.water.ie](http://www.water.ie)

We will ensure regular up to date information is available to customers affected by an unplanned interruption to water supplies. This information shall be publicised through a range of communication channels and shall be made available to customers through telephone helplines. Supply interruption details will also be published on [www.water.ie](http://www.water.ie)

#### Water unfit for human consumption

Our goal is to provide water that is clean, wholesome and 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:** This is issued on the advice of the Health Service Executive or Environmental Protection Agency in circumstances where it is essential for customers to boil all water used in the preparation of food and for direct consumption.

**Drinking Water Restriction Notice:** This is issued on the advice of the Health Service Executive or Environmental Protection Agency advising the customer not to use the water for drinking or food preparation.

In the event that there is a “Boil Water Notice” or “Drinking Water Restriction notice” issued for a particular geographic area as a result of an issue with the public water supply, Irish Water or its agents will communicate with all anticipated affected customers through appropriate communication channels to:

- a) 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;
- b) Provide an explanation for the need for the boil water notice or drinking water restriction notice to the customer;
- c) Indicate to the customer the anticipated duration of the boil water notice or drinking water restriction notice; and,
- d) Provide regular updates to the customer on progress to rectify the issue causing substandard supply.

Updated information on the duration of a Boil Water Notice or Drinking Water Restriction Notice will be regularly publicised through social media, customer emails, website information and local broadcasts, and will be made available to customers through telephone helplines.

### **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 agents shall communicate with all anticipated affected customers through a range of communication channels to:-

- a) Inform the customer that the water from the alternative water supply should be boiled before drinking and explain the reasons why;
- b) Inform the customer of any other precautionary measures that should be taken;
- c) Inform the customer where we will locate and facilitate alternative water supplies;
- d) Highlight to the customer the anticipated duration of the alternative supply; and
- e) 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 contractor, working on Irish Water's behalf has a need to visit in person for maintenance or operational reasons at a customer's premises (with or without a prearranged appointment) or by personal contact, the representative shall:

- a) Produce an identity card that shows his or her full name and photograph and the name, business address and contact number of Irish Water;
- b) 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;
- c) Advise the customer of the purpose of the visit.

### 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 are shown at the end of this Code of Practice or they can be found online at [www.water.ie](http://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:

- a) Irish Water's name and address;
- b) Irish Water's email address or other means of electronic contact; and
- c) 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 in the text 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, please contact Irish Water on **Callsave 1850 778 778 or + 353 1 707 2827** or visit our website on [www.water.ie](http://www.water.ie)

## 4.0 Network Operations Code of Practice

We understand and acknowledge that business customers need to have access to information (1) on how to connect to the water services network (public water and wastewater network provided by Irish Water) and (2) 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 services connections generally and to give guidance on where a business customer can find further information in relation to their own water services connection.

### Responsibilities for pipework and responding to faults

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

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:** Endeavour to restore supply to affected customers within 24 hours of the supply being cut off, or as advised in planned works notification.
- B. **Unplanned interruption affecting customers:** Investigate the cause of the unplanned interruption and area affected. Endeavour to restore supply within 12 hours or 24 hours (where the issue is a larger water main issue) of discovery of the cause of this interruption.

**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**

## Customer asset flooding

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 the issue.

## Water pressure

If a customer experiences reduced water pressure at their property, they can request an investigation into reduced pressure by contacting us at on **Callsave 1850 278 278 or + 353 1 707 2827**. There may be an additional fee for water pressure tests under the "Additional Services" charges approved by the Commission for Regulation of Utilities. In the interim, the current practice will apply. We will, where notified:

- Supply information directly to the customer as to the likely cause of the reduced pressure, or, agree to investigate the cause within five working days. 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 ten working days, how they intend to rectify this issue, where possible.

## 5.0 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.

### Our promise to you

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

- **Complaints information**

We will promote this Code of Practice and issue customers with a copy if requested;

- **Simple complaints process**

We will provide customers, or a person nominated to act on their behalf, with an easy process to use to make a complaint;

- **Efficient complaints process**

We will formally record complaints and attempt to resolve them as soon as possible;

- **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;

- **Explain problems**

We will provide an explanation of the issue where relevant and apologise if we make a mistake;

- **Final decision within two months**

If customers engage with us, they will receive a final decision which includes an answer from us within two months;

- **Clear way to escalate your complaint**

We will have a transparent escalation procedure if customers remain dissatisfied with the first steps of the complaints procedure;

- **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.

## **What is a complaint?**

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

## **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: **Callsave 1850 778 778 or +353 1 707 2827**

Website: [www.water.ie](http://www.water.ie)

Email: [business@water.ie](mailto:business@water.ie)

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

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**

### **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.

### How we will respond to your complaint

We aim to resolve your complaint immediately. If this is not possible, we, or our agents, 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 details as a future point of contact.

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

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

### 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 and reviewed. In order to do this, your 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

or

Email: [business@water.ie](mailto:business@water.ie)

The decision will be reviewed and a response provided within ten working days.

Following this review (which must be in writing as set out above), if you are not satisfied, we will refer you to this 'Code of Practice on Complaint Handling' and provide you notice in writing that your complaint has been closed with Irish Water.



## 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. We will issue a response to your complaint in writing, telling you we have closed your complaint and we will give you details for the Commission for Regulation of Utilities Customer Care Team for an independent review.

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

Post: Customer Care Team  
Commission for Regulation of Utilities  
PO Box 11934  
Dublin 24

Phone: 1890 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/)

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

Phone: 053-916 0600

Web: [www.epa.ie/enforcement/report](http://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

Irish Water and its agents recognise the rights of the customer under data protection legislation. We will only use personal information for the purposes for which it was collected. Information may be passed to our agents in order to provide services for the customer but only insofar as is necessary to provide Water Services to the customer. All agents are fully trained with regard to the relevant legislation and only act in accordance with our instructions. Further information on data protection can be accessed on Irish Water's Data Protection Notice at [www.water.ie](http://www.water.ie)

## How to contact us

If you need help or assistance please contact us at:

**Irish Water**  
**PO Box 448**  
**South Delivery Office**  
**Cork City**

General queries:

**Callsave 1850 778 778 or +353 1 707 2827**

9am-5.30pm Monday to Friday.

Water Supply queries and emergencies:

**Callsave 1850 278 278 or +353 1 707 2828**

24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Please note that the rates charged for 1850 (Callsave) and 1890 (LoCall) numbers may vary across different service providers. Calls made from mobiles may be more expensive.

Minicom:

**LoCall 1890 378 378**

(for hearing impaired customers with their own Minicom equipment).

Website: [www.water.ie](http://www.water.ie)

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

Boards: [www.boards.ie/irishwater](http://www.boards.ie/irishwater)

Email: [Business@water.ie](mailto:Business@water.ie)

### **Contacting the Commission for Regulation of Utilities**

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

Post: Customer Care Team  
Commission for Regulation of Utilities  
PO Box 11934  
Dublin 24

Phone: 1890 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/)