

Enhanced Optant Meter Programme: Frequently asked questions



What is an Enhanced Optant Meter?

Previously an Enhanced Optant Meter allowed a customer to receive an unmeasured comparison bill every 6 months, without committing to being on a metered supply. This enabled the customer to compare their unmeasured and measured bills. However, the situation has changed. By 2025, we'll be installing water meters for our customers who don't already have them. Our main metering programme will be getting underway in 2021, but in the meantime our Enhanced Optant Meter programme will continue.

Why have you fitted a meter when I haven't asked for one?

People with a meter tend to use less water which is good news for the planet, especially in this water-stressed area. By reducing demand on our network, we are less likely to need to place restrictions on our customer's water supplies during dry weather and we can reduce the impact on local rivers and wetlands. Around 55% of our customers already pay by meter, and they typically use about 15% less water than those on an unmetered tariff.

Can I choose to switch once the meter has been fitted?

You can choose to switch as soon as you like. Remember, by 2025, we'll be installing meters for customers currently without one and moving them to measured charging. You can find out how much you're likely to pay on a meter by visiting seswater.co.uk/getwaterfit

Will I be charged for having a meter fitted?

No. Your meter will be installed free of charge. Once a new owner or occupier moves into the property, they will automatically be switched to measured water charges.

Are you fitting meters to all homes in my neighbourhood?

Yes, where it is possible to do so.

Can I refuse to have a meter fitted?

The Government supports the need for water meters. Our powers are defined in the Water Industry Act 1991, as amended by the Water Industry Act 1999.

Does the fitting of a meter infringe my privacy?

By 2025, we're installing meters for our customers who don't have one already. The fitting of a meter does not infringe on privacy rights as we will only be taking meter readings once every six months. Monitoring household consumption is necessary for us to manage our water resources.

Will my water supply have been affected?

We have to turn off your water supply for a few minutes to fit the meter. Before using your kitchen tap we recommend running it for about a minute to remove any harmless particles (but please save the water for your plants!) If your water pressure is lower, try turning your internal stopcock (usually under the sink) on and off a few times.

What happens to my bill when I switch?

Once you've made the switch, we will send you a final unmetered bill. You will receive your first metered bill within six months. If you pay by direct debit we will adjust your payments automatically.

How will I know if I am better off on a meter?

Once we have read your meter we will send you a comparative bill showing the cost of both charges. Alternatively, to find out if you are an efficient user visit seswater.co.uk/meter to try our GetWaterFit Savings Engine to get bespoke water and energy savings advice. You may also qualify for a FREE home water efficiency check which includes fitting free water-saving devices and minor leak repairs.

water fact sheet

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What happens when I sell my house or a new tenant moves in?

Once a new owner or occupier moves into the property, they will automatically be switched to measured water charges.

What happens if there's a leak on the pipe that supplies water to my property?

It's really important that you get the leak repaired as soon as possible. Your insurance policy may cover the cost to repair it or you might prefer to call a local plumber. Alternatively, you can ask us to arrange to fix it. We'll do this for FREE. Just as long as the leak is discovered and repaired within 12 months of the meter being fitted.

Do I pay for the water if there's a leak?

You may be entitled to a one-off leakage allowance claim which compensates you for the water lost during a leak.

Who would carry out this work?

Only people employed by SES Water or a contracting partner as part of our metering programme will be carrying out this work. Our employees, or anyone working on our behalf, carry an identity card and will always produce the card for you to check. The card also has a braille strip on the back. If you are still worried then take the ID card, close the door and call us on 01737 772000 (this line is available 24 hours a day). They will be happy to wait outside while you do this.

How often will the meter be read?

Every six months. You will receive a bill twice a year and we will still read the meter even if you don't switch but you will not be billed based on your reading.

Can I read the meter?

The meter is in an underground box with your external stopcock and you can read it at any time by lifting the lid. The white numbers on a black background are cubic metres and used to calculate your bill – one cubic metre equals 1000 litres – or about 28 showers! Ignore the red numbers.

Who owns the pipe from the boundary to my property if I have an internal meter?

You still own the pipe from the boundary and are responsible for it.

What happens if a meter cannot be fitted?

We'll explore all of the possible options to fit a meter, if it is not possible we'll tell you and explain why.

What happens next?

Find out more at seswater.co.uk/meter or call us on 01737 772000 to speak with our Billing team between 8.30am and 5pm Monday to Friday. You can make the switch on our website seswater.co.uk/meterswitch, over the phone or by emailing meterswitch@seswater.co.uk. If you don't switch straight away, within the next six months we will still send you an example of what your metered bill would be which will be calculated on your actual usage.

Office Opening Hours:
Monday – Friday : 8:30am to 5pm

For further information contact the Customer Services team at
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Tel 01737 772000 or Fax 01737 766807 www.seswater.co.uk