

Responsibilities of connected customers

1. Overview

1.1 At a glance

This policy explains the rights and obligations of customers who are connected to our systems. It covers:

- what pipes you are responsible for and which ones we will maintain
- conditions of staying connected to our systems
- what you must do if you want to disconnect
- how we manage unauthorised connections
- reasons we may contact you or enter your property.

1.2 Scope

This policy applies to all customers who are connected to Sydney Water's systems.

1.3 Objective

This policy aims to improve the way customers manage their connections to Sydney Water systems. It will:

- protect our assets and water quality
- improve customer service.

2. Policy in detail

2.1 Understanding our services and charges

What services does Sydney Water offer?

We offer customers access to our systems to:

- receive drinking or recycled water
- discharge wastewater
- discharge stormwater.

We may also give you permission to discharge trade wastewater, harvest stormwater or conduct sewer mining.

You also receive stormwater services if your property is in one of our stormwater catchment system areas.

When is your connection approved?

You have an approved connection to our systems if:

- we have given you written approval to connect
- your connection was made according to our conditions of approval
- you operate and maintain your connection in line with your conditions of connection, our Customer Contract and any additional services agreement we have with you.

Where do we publish information on the quality of our services?

We describe our service quality in our Customer Contract.

If there are any special conditions or levels of service that apply to your connection, we will list these in a separate additional services agreement with you. You must observe all the conditions in your agreement.

We cannot always guarantee an uninterrupted service.

How do we charge for our services?

We charge customers:

- a set quarterly service charge for being connected to our systems
- for the amount of water and recycled water they use
- a quarterly stormwater charge for properties in our stormwater catchment system areas.

We may also charge business and non-residential customers:

- for the amount of wastewater they discharge, if it is more than our discharge allowance
- for trade wastewater they discharge, and the level of pollutants in it.

How do we calculate wastewater charges for businesses?

We will apply a sewerage (wastewater) usage discharge factor (SUDF) to businesses and non-residential properties. The SUDF allows us to calculate how much wastewater you discharge.

If our calculations show that you discharge more than our discharge allowance, we will apply sewerage usage charges.

Customers who are exempt from wastewater service charges may still be liable for sewerage usage charges.

How do we bill you?

We will bill you at least once every three months. Property owners are responsible for paying for our services.

2.2 Requirements for drinking and recycled water services

What are our metering requirements?

All water connections (except those supplying fire sprinklers, hydrants and drenchers) must be metered with a Sydney Water meter. If your connection provides water for domestic and commercial uses as well as fire services, you must meter the domestic and commercial services.

Our [*Water meter installation guide*](#) shows approved locations for water meters.

The owner of the connected property is responsible for ensuring the property is metered.

If you have a property with an existing unmetered water connection we may exempt you from our requirements to install a water meter if it is too expensive to install the right pipework or the meter. You must install a water meter when you redevelop your property or replace the house plumbing. We may install a water meter when carrying out maintenance work related to the service to the property.

What are our backflow protection requirements?

All drinking and recycled water connections must have backflow containment protection. This reduces the backflow hazard your property might pose to our water supply system.

Property owners are responsible for ensuring their connected property has the correct backflow prevention device on their water service. The backflow prevention device in our 20 and 25mm water meters satisfies this requirement for properties with a low cross-connection hazard rating, such as most stand-alone houses.

Owners of commercial and industrial properties and all other properties with an onsite process must get an accredited backflow plumber to assess the cross-connection hazard rating of the property.

If you do not do this, or your plumber cannot assess your property's cross-connection hazard rating, we will classify it as 'high hazard'.

Property owners who are required to install backflow prevention devices that are not part of our water meter, must also maintain and test the devices in line with *AS/NZS 3500*. We may also direct you to test, install or repair a backflow device, in addition to the requirements of *AS/NZS 3500*. This work needs to be carried out by an accredited backflow plumber.

2.3 Using our wastewater services

How can you use wastewater services?

If you have a connection to our wastewater system, you may use it to discharge domestic quality wastewater from your home or business. Domestic quality wastewater generally includes wastewater from toilets, basins, showers, and non-commercial kitchens and laundries.

You may also apply to take water from our wastewater systems and reuse it. Refer to our Sewer mining policy. If we agree to your proposal, we'll have an additional services agreement with you.

How can you use trade wastewater services?

You must get our written permission before discharging trade wastewater into our wastewater system. Trade wastewater is wastewater polluted by business activities.

We may ask you to install pre-treatment equipment and prove your wastewater quality meets the standards we set in your additional services agreement. We must approve any pre-treatment equipment, before you install it. If you generate greasy wastewater you must participate in our greasy waste management program (WasteID).

You must let us know immediately, if your wastewater will:

- exceed the discharge limits for any substances included in your agreement
- affect the quality of wastewater or stormwater entering our system
- harm our staff, services or assets, or the environment.

If you have an existing business with a trade waste agreement, you must apply for a new agreement if:

- your operations change
- you move to a new property
- a new tenant with new business processes occupies a site you own.

If you do not comply with all the trade wastewater conditions in your additional services agreement, we may:

- require you to develop and follow an effluent improvement program
- review your agreement and risk rating
- charge you more
- suspend your agreement
- issue a non-compliance notice, fine or prosecute you
- restrict or disconnect your water or wastewater connection.

If you have an existing business with a trade waste agreement, you must tell us if your property becomes vacant or is no longer used for the purpose specified in the trade waste agreement.

2.4 Using our stormwater services

How do we decide who is a Sydney Water stormwater customer?

You are our stormwater customer if your property is in one of our stormwater catchment system areas or has a direct connection to our stormwater system.

You may not discharge wastewater from homes or businesses into any stormwater pipe or structure.

You must ensure that all stormwater that drains to our stormwater catchment system area is free from pollutants such as oil, grease, paint, soil and sediment, detergent or wastewater.

If anything happens that may harm the quality of stormwater in our stormwater system, you must inform us immediately.

You may apply to take water from our stormwater systems and reuse it. Refer to our [*Stormwater harvesting information*](#). If we agree to your proposal we will have an additional services agreement with you.

You must not discharge stormwater or roof water to our wastewater system.

2.5 Responsibilities for maintenance

What will Sydney Water maintain?

We will maintain our pipes and structures.

We will make free repairs to leaks to your private water pipes between the point of connection to the main and one metre along the pipe inside your property boundary if:

- your connection is authorised
- it is not a fire service, an extended private service, a private joint service or a combined service
- we can access your pipe
- the damage is not deliberate or negligent
- it is not connected to a privately owned watermain such as in a community title subdivision
- the pipework is installed in accordance with the appropriate codes, regulations and standards.

If we make repairs to your pipes and we find out that any of these conditions aren't met, we will bill you for the repairs.

We own the water meter and will replace it periodically to keep it accurate.

We will make free repairs to collapsed private wastewater pipes where the collapse is located within a footpath or roadway and a licensed plumber has confirmed that the fault cannot be repaired without excavation of the footpath or roadway and replacement of the collapsed wastewater pipes.

However, if the problem is assessed by Sydney Water as able to be repaired without excavation, you will remain responsible for the cost of repair. We will not reimburse any plumbing costs.

We will not provide this service for unauthorised wastewater systems installed contrary to appropriate codes, regulations and standards.

We own the junction where your wastewater pipe connects to our main, unless an additional services agreement says otherwise.

Who is responsible for private pipes and equipment?

A property owner is responsible for all of their private service except the water meter. A property owner's private water and wastewater service starts at the point of connection to our main.

Property owners are responsible for:

- ensuring water services are used according to laws and Water Wise Rules
- maintaining private water and wastewater services from the point where they connect to our system. This includes any joint or encroaching services you benefit from.
- paying for damage caused if private services fail
- keeping the water meter free from damage and maintaining access to it
- maintaining backflow prevention devices that aren't part of the water meter
- maintaining private equipment Sydney Water requires as a condition of connection
- paying our charges.

You can engage a private plumber at your cost to repair any part of your private water service, even if it is between our main and a water meter inside your property boundary.

Other maintenance responsibilities are set out in the Customer Contract.

2.6 Changing existing connections

What should you do to change an existing connection?

You must apply to us for written permission before you:

- make new connections to our pipes or structures
- disconnect from our pipes
- alter existing connections
- move or change the size of the water meter
- change the quality, nature or timing of your wastewater discharge
- build near our pipes or structures.

2.7 Dealing with problems and complaints

What should you do if you have a problem or complaint?

If you have a problem or complaint about our products, services or staff, call us on 13 20 92 during business hours or use our web feedback form. Contact your Business Customer Representative if we have allocated one to your business. Refer to our Customer complaints policy for more information on how we handle complaints.

How will we respond to unauthorised connections?

If we think there is an unauthorised connection at your property, we will send you a letter, asking you to fix the unauthorised connection and any damage to our assets within 21 days.

If you do not comply with instructions in any notice we give you, we may restrict your water supply or disconnect the unauthorised connection.

If you bypass a water or wastewater service restriction or disconnection made by Sydney Water we may:

- disconnect you
- fine you for an unauthorised connection
- fine you for water theft
- recover any costs we incur disconnecting your service or doing work to ensure it complies with our policy, connection requirements, additional services agreement and Customer Contract.

2.8 Reasons we will contact you or enter your property

When will Sydney Water contact you?

Common reasons we will contact you about your connection are to:

- change your additional services agreement
- alter your sewerage usage discharge factor
- remind you to test your backflow containment device or send the test result to us.

When does Sydney Water need access to your property?

Common reasons why you must give us access to your property include:

- to repair your water service between your connection and one metre along the pipe inside your property
- to maintain our pipes, equipment or assets
- to read or replace water meters

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- to inspect equipment that is a condition of your connection, such as backflow prevention containment devices, wastewater tanks, pumps, treatment devices or discharge points
- to monitor wastewater quality.

3. Definitions

Term	Definition	Source
Additional services agreement	An additional services agreement is a document that outlines your responsibilities for non-standard connections. It will also explain the level of service we can offer you, if it is different to that contained in the <i>Customer Contract</i> .	Connecting to Sydney Water systems policy
Backflow	Backflow is the unintended reverse flow of water into pipes, which could contaminate the water supply system	Asset and Location Business Glossary
Backflow containment	Backflow containment ensures that any backflow event is contained within the plumbing of a private property and does not affect our water supply system.	Asset and Location Business Glossary
Backflow prevention device	A backflow prevention device is equipment that stops water from flowing back into Sydney Water's pipes to prevent potential contamination of our water supplies. Our 20 and 25mm water meters include a backflow prevention device that is suitable for low hazard properties, such as most stand-alone houses.	Asset and Location Business Glossary
Combined service	A combined service is a single water connection used to provide both firefighting and domestic water needs.	Asset and Location Business Glossary
Cross-connection hazard rating	Cross-connection hazard rating is a three-level rating of the potential for any condition, device or practice in connection to the water supply to cause nuisance, endanger health or cause death	Asset and Location Business Glossary
<i>Customer Contract</i>	The Customer Contract outlines your rights and obligations as a customer and sets out the minimum standards of customer service that you can expect. It is our service guarantee to our customers. It also outlines Sydney Water's rights and obligations to help us meet our key objectives.	Customer Contract 2015-20
Discharge allowance	A discharge allowance is the volume of wastewater that business customers can discharge before we apply wastewater charges.	Asset and Location Business Glossary
Encroaching services	An encroaching service is a private pipe that crosses another property, without a legal easement or access agreement.	Asset and Location Business Glossary
Exempt customers	An exempt customer is a customer whose property is exempt from service charges. Examples of these are properties are used by churches and religious groups, registered charities, not-for-profit day cares, aged care and health centres, non-government schools with church on-site, local councils for public parks, reserves, playgrounds, sportsgrounds, swimming pools, libraries, cemeteries and other public spaces.	Asset and Location Business Glossary
Extended Private Service	A private service to the property, where the property is not considered to have a main for connection.	This policy
Fire service	A fire service is a water connection used to supply essential fire safety measures, such as fire sprinklers, drenchers and hydrants. Combined Services are considered to be Fire Services.	Asset and Location Business Glossary
Greasy wastewater	Greasy wastewater is wastewater that is contaminated with high levels of grease from business activities. For example, take away food shops may generate a lot of greasy wastewater.	Asset and Location Business Glossary
Junction	A junction is the point at which the customers wastewater pipe connects to our wastewater pipe	Asset and Location Business Glossary

Term	Definition	Source
Point of connection	A point of connection is where your private pipes join our mains. This can be a wastewater connection point (junction), the tapping ball valve on a water connection or the tee and valve on a very large water connection.	Asset and Location Business Glossary
Pre-treatment	Pre-treatment is any method of treating wastewater before it is discharged into Sydney Water's wastewater system	Asset and Location Business Glossary
Private joint service	A private joint service is a private water or wastewater pipe that serves more than one property.	Asset and Location Business Glossary
Recycled water	Recycled water is highly treated wastewater used in industrial processes, irrigation in agriculture, urban parks and landscapes and in households for flushing toilets, car washing and watering gardens. It is not for drinking or personal use.	Business glossary
Roof water	Roof water is rainfall that runs off building rooves and enters Sydney Waters stormwater assets which carry the water into creeks, rivers, harbours and oceans.	Asset and Location Business Glossary
Sewer mining	Sewer mining is the extraction and treatment of wastewater from a Sydney Water pipe, so that it can be used as recycled water.	Asset and Location Business Glossary
Sewer Usage Discharge Factor (SUDF)	The Sewer Usage Discharge Factor is the calculation of how much wastewater you generate compared with how much of our water you use.	Asset and Location Business Glossary
Stormwater	Stormwater is rainfall that runs off the land and enters Sydney Waters stormwater assets which carry the water into creeks, rivers, harbours and oceans.	Asset and Location Business Glossary
Stormwater catchment system area	A stormwater catchment system area is a geographical area in which stormwater is collected, transported and discharged using Sydney Water's stormwater assets.	Asset and Location Business Glossary
Stormwater harvesting	Stormwater harvesting is the extraction and treatment of stormwater from a Sydney Water pipe or channel, so that it can be used as recycled water	Asset and Location Business Glossary
Trade wastewater	Trade wastewater is any wastewater generated from or as a result of an industrial or commercial activity undertaken, other than at domestic or household.	Asset and Location Business Glossary
WasteID	WasteID is an electronic tracking system Sydney Water uses to monitor the generation, collection, transport and disposal of grease trap waste.	Asset and Location Business Glossary
Wastewater	Wastewater is the used water that goes down sinks, toilets and drains.	Business glossary
Water meter	A water meter is a device that is used for measuring how much drinking water or recycled water passes through a pipe.	Asset and Location Business Glossary
Water Wise Rules	Water Wise Rules are simple rules for outdoor water use which apply to both residents and businesses. Contravention of these rules can result in fines.	Asset and Location Business Glossary

