



Policies, Procedures and Guidelines

WATER METER POLICY

CODE INF 021

1. Purpose:

This policy outlines the responsibilities that Lachlan Shire Council (Council) and Property Owners have for the installation, maintenance and management of water meters.

Each individual property connected to Council's reticulated potable water supply, will be metered such that water demand can be measured, managed and be relied upon as a justifiable basis for water supply charges.

2. Scope:

This policy applies to cover all aspects of water meters including the installation, maintenance, measuring of supply, and access to meters and testing.

Water meters measure the amount of water used. This measurement helps to accurately charge customers for the water they have used. It also helps customers to gauge their own water use. All premises should have their own water meter. The water meter should be located towards the front of the property, near the left or right boundary but within one meter of the boundary. There is to be a minimum of 300mm clearance around each meter. In duplexes, flats/ units or strata titled properties; there may be one Master meter with Sub Meters servicing each of the dwellings. Properties connected to Council drinking water are fitted with a water meter. Council will supply the most appropriate size of meter for each property. Residential properties will be fitted with 20mm meters. Council owns the water meter but it is the responsibility of the property owner to ensure that the meter is not damaged and is accessible for reading.

3. Policy:

a. Meter Installation;

Council is responsible to supply and fit a water meter assembly when installing a connection to Council's water supply, the cost of the meter assembly and installation is borne by the property owner as outlined in Councils Fees and Charges.

The size of the connection (and thus the size of the meter) is determined by Council, with reference to guidelines in AS 3500 and New South Wales Code of Practice - Plumbing and Drainage. Generally, the water service is to be located in a position determined by Council in accordance with existing cross road conduits, mains tapings, and the like.

All meters are to be installed above ground. In cases where the Director of Infrastructure Services determines that an above ground meter will adversely impact on the adequate function of a driveway, formed walkway, gate, fence line or other such immovable structure the meter may be placed in a pit.

Water meters are to be installed, maintained and replaced by Council. The water

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supply may be disconnected for a few minutes whilst carrying out this work. Meters will be replaced as soon as possible after having registered 5,500 kilolitres, or as deemed warranted by the Director Infrastructure Services. Only water meters conforming to AS3565 or having achieved patented approval under the relevant code are to be used in Council's water service connections.

Where Council's Director of Infrastructure Services determines that it is not financially practical to install a water meter, the property owner will be subject to a non-metered charge in accordance with Council's fees and charges.

Domestic dwellings are to be serviced by one water meter only, with that connection being a 20mm water connection. Council's maintenance responsibility of a water service ceases at the outlet of a water meter or the outlet of a backflow prevention device that has been fitted to a water meter by Council staff.

b. Alteration;

Any alteration to the water service connection from, and including, the water meter back to the water main, is the responsibility of Council. The water service connection and its components (water meter, ball valve, and fittings) always remain the property of Council. Council may consider a written request to alter the location or size of a water service connection and if approved the cost of the works will be met by the property owner in advance. Any alteration to the water service on the property owner's side of the water meter is the responsibility of the owner of the connected property.

It is an offence under *Section 636 of Local Government Act, 1993* to tamper or interfere with the normal operation of water meters.

c. Meter Access;

Meters are read by Council employees every four months, with accounts being issued shortly after the meter reading is taken. The reading taken from the meter forms the basis for determining the water usage charges at your property.

If your meter cannot be accessed because of locked gates, fences, dogs or other obstructions, Council may estimate the consumption at your property based on the same period of the previous year. If your meter remains inaccessible you will need to make arrangements so that actual meter readings can be obtained. You must also make arrangements at your costs to have the meter made accessible.

If a meter reading cannot be obtained because the meter has stopped registering or is damaged, your account (usage) will be based on an estimated consumption which will be calculated on a basis that is representative of your previous consumption pattern.

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d. Meter Damage;

The property owner will be responsible for the cost to repair or replace a damaged water meter, unless the damage is the direct result of Council workmanship.

If a water meter has been stolen from your property, you are required to inform Council immediately. Council will install a new meter and you will be required to pay the relevant fee for the new meter.

e. Meter Accuracy/ Meter Testing

The property owner can request that the water meter at your property be tested, if you consider that it is not accurately recording the amount of water used on your property. The payment of a Meter Test Fee will be required prior to the test being conducted. Lachlan Shire Council will remove the meter and install a replacement meter. The testing is conducted by an independent company using a National Association of Testing Authorities (NATA) accredited procedure. Lachlan Shire Council will advise you of the test results and make a written report available on request.

Lachlan Shire Council will refund the Meter test Fee if the meter is found to be faulty by + or – 4%. If the meter is faulty and you have been overcharged, Council will also refund the additional water costs. If the meter is found to be undercharging, you will not be charged for the additional water used.

f. Meter Replacement

Council has a meter replacement program for 20mm meters where they are removed when they reach their economic life. Council will also arrange to replace a meter if it is found to be defective (may have stopped registering), if it is damaged or if it can no longer be reasonably maintained. Meters can only be replaced by a Council Water staff member.

g. References:

- *Local Government Act 1993*
- *Local Government (General) Regulation 2005*
- *Water Act 2000*
- *Plumbing and Drainage regulation 2003*
- *AS 3500.1.2.1998 (Water Supply) Section 5.3 (reference to proximity to other services (i.e. electrical cables, gas pipelines)*
- *AS 3656 Meters for Water Supply – Cold water meters*

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