

# POLICY REGISTER

## WATER METER POLICY

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## DOCUMENT CONTROL

Issue.	Prepared/Revised by and Date	Action/Amendment Description	Approved By and Date
1.0		First Edition	Council Minute No. 35.2.18 (22nd February 2018)
1.1		Amended	Council Minute No. 214.9.18 (27th September 2018)

**PURPOSE:**

This Policy outlines the responsibilities that Warren 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, and irrigation supply will be metered independently, such that water demand can be measured, managed and be relied upon as a justifiable basis for water supply charges.

**SCOPE:**

This Policy applies to cover all aspects of water meters including the installation, maintenance, measuring of supply, and access to meters, accuracy 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 (1) metre 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 and irrigation water are fitted with a separate water meter for each supply. Council will supply the most appropriate size of meter for each property. Residential properties will be fitted with 20mm meters for drinking water. 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.

**POLICY:**

**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 Council's 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/ NZS 3500.1:2015 and Plumbing Code of Australia. 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 Divisional Manager Engineering 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 only to be installed, maintained and replaced by Council. The water 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 Divisional Manager Engineering 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 Divisional Manager Engineering 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 (1) potable water meter and one (1) river water meter only, with each 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.

**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, jump 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 or to unlawfully remove a water meter.

**Meter Access:**

Meters are read by Council employees every three (3) 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 the connected property.

If the meter cannot be accessed because of locked gates, fences, dogs or other obstructions, Council may estimate the consumption at the connected property based on the same period of the previous year. If the meter remains inaccessible the property owner or resident will need to make arrangements so that actual meter readings can be obtained. The property owner must also make arrangements at the property owner's 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 the previous consumption pattern.

**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 the property, the property owner or resident is required to inform Council immediately. Council will install a new meter and the property owner will be required to pay the relevant fee for the new meter.

**Meter Accuracy/ Meter Testing:**

The property owner can request that the water meter at the property be tested, if the property owner considers that the meter is not accurately recording the amount of water used on the connected property. The payment of a Meter Test Fee will be required prior to the test being conducted. Warren 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. Warren Shire Council will advise the property owner of the test results and make a written report available on request.

Warren 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 the water account has been overcharged, Council will also refund the additional water costs. If the meter is found to be undercharging, the property owner will not be charged for the additional water used.

**Meter Replacement:**

Council has a meter replacement program for 20mm meters where the meter is replaced when they reach their economic life. The economic life a Water Meter is 7 years or on reaching a meter count of 5,500kilolitres. 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.

**Records:**

Water meters that have been replaced by new meters will be identified on a register by serial number and residential address of where it was removed from. These meters will be kept in storage for a period of 12 months after which they will be disposed of. Prior to disposal a Destruction/ Disposal Certificate will be raised with all relevant information of the Water Meter recorded on the Certificate. Certificates will be stored on the Council's Record Management System.

**References:**

- Local Government Act 1993
- Local Government (General) Regulation 2005
- Water Act 2000
- Plumbing Code of Australia
- AS 3500.1:2015 (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