

Getting the best out of your home – water

Water bills are expensive but you can get help to save water and money. This leaflet is aimed at both socially rented and shared ownership households. Some sections might contain two sets of advice.



How is your home metered?

If your home was built after 1989 you will have a water meter. If you pay standard water bills based on your council tax band you can change to a meter. In 2008-09 if your annual un-metered bill is over £500 and you use less than 100,000 litres of water you will save money by changing to a water meter. If you use 60,000 litres of water or below you could save around £200. See the chart below to work out how much water you use. To do this you need to work out how much water you use per week then multiply it by 52.

| Activity | Litres | Frequency | Total water used in litres |
|--|--------|---|----------------------------|
| Bath | 114 x | Number per week | |
| Shower (ordinary) | 35 x | Number per week | |
| Shower (power) | 90 x | Number per week | |
| Toilet flushes | 9 x | No per day x 7 | |
| Automatic washing machine | 114 x | Number of uses per week | |
| Dishwasher | 40 x | Number of uses per week | |
| Cooking, drinking, hand basin use, washing dishes, clothes by hand | 25 x | Number of people in property x 7 | |
| Plus (if applicable) Hosepipe/sprinkler | 23 x | Number of minutes used a week multiplied by the number of weeks used a year | |
| | | Total weekly amount used | |
| | | Multiply weekly total by 52 for annual use | |

Meters are fitted free and if you decide to go back to unmetered water billing you can within 12 months of the date of installing the meter. To find out more visit South West Water's website www.southwestwater.co.uk or phone **0800 169 1144**, mincom **0800 169 9965**.

Water Charges for those who can't have a meter fitted

If South West Water can't fit a water meter you are eligible for an "assessed charge" based on the number of people that live in the property. Often this is lower than the standard un-metered charge.

Properties where a meter can't be fitted are most likely to be blocks of flats and where access is difficult to fit a meter.

You are only eligible to apply for an assessed charge if you apply for a meter and South West Water can't fit one. Apply for a meter by ringing **0800 169 1133** or complete the application online at www.southwestwater.co.uk



🕒 **Paying a reduced water bill**

South West Water has recently re-launched 'Water Sure' to help people on low incomes with young children and/or special medical conditions get help with paying for their bills.

You must receive one or more of the following: **council tax benefit, housing benefit, income support, job-seekers allowance, new working tax credit, child tax credit or pension credit** and either:

- a. have three or more children under the age of 19 living with you for whom you receive child benefit.
- b. have someone living with you that has one of the following medical conditions: a skin condition, eczema, psoriasis, varicose ulceration, desquamation, or incontinence, abdominal stomas, ulcerative colitis, kidney failure and that as a result of the condition, the person affected is obliged to use significant additional volumes of water.

Telephone South West Water **0800 169 1133** and ask for Water Sure tariff scheme, you will need to give your water account number.

Saving water in the home

Visit www.southwestwater.co.uk/savingwater for tips on saving water in the home.

Here are some of the top tips

- 🕒 Shower instead of having a bath. If you have a bath, only half fill it. Visit www.waterwise.org.uk for details.
- 🕒 Prepare for summer droughts and buy a **water butt**. It makes good sense to save rainwater and use it in the garden or for washing the car. Most water butts come with a rainwater diverter requiring you to drill a hole into a down pipe. If you rent you should notify us as this is classified as a 'material change' to your home. You can order a water butt from South West Water. You can do this online at www.southwestwater.co.uk/products or click on the picture link at the top of the page.
- 🕒 **Repair dripping taps or overflows**. A dripping tap or overflow wastes up to 5,500 litres of water a year. If you rent your home contact your housing office or customer services team to get your tap repaired. Mending one dripping tap or overflow could save as much as £50 a year.
- 🕒 **Put a Hippo or Hog in your toilet cistern**. You can get a free one from South West Water, Conservation Helpline, telephone **0800 378 937**. Alternatively you could fill a plastic bottle with water and put it in your cistern.
- 🕒 **Turn off the tap** while brushing your teeth. A running tap wastes over 6 litres per minute. If the entire population of England and Wales did this, we could save enough to supply nearly 500,000 homes.
- 🕒 If you are replacing your washing machine buy a new water efficient A rated model.
- 🕒 If you have a car, use a bucket and sponge to wash it. Just 30 minutes with a hosepipe will use more water than the average family uses in a day.
- 🕒 Fill a jug with tap water and leave it to cool in your fridge. This way you don't have to run the tap for ages just to get a cold drink.

If you have internet access and are interested in finding out more about water saving visit South West Water's website www.southwestwater.co.uk/savingwater

For more information about water meters visit www.southwestwater.co.uk telephone **0800 169 1133**

For more help and tips and lists of stockists please visit www.waterwise.org.uk

For more information on water saving and living a greener lifestyle contact:

Rose Hunter, Sustainable Living Coordinator, telephone **01392 814471** or email rose.hunter@dcha.co.uk