

Water Usage Charges

All tenants are encouraged to conserve water wherever possible and to comply with water restrictions that are put in place by the local water authority from time to time.

The Women's Housing Company (WHC) pays the local water authority for all fixed charges and usage charges for the properties we manage.

We then seek reimbursement of the usage amount only, by charging tenants in line with the NSW Ministerial Guidelines for Community Housing Water Charging.

The amount we charge depends on whether your home has a meter that is **shared** with other units in your block or a **separate** water meter.

Homes with a shared water meter

If you live in a property with a common water meter shared with other units in a block, we will charge you for a proportion of the total water usage for your block, as billed by the local water authority.

The WHC pays 25% of the total water usage charge to cover the cost of using water in common areas such as shared gardens.

The remaining 75% of the water usage charge is divided equally between the households in the block that share the water meter, as follows:

| | |
|---------|-----------------------------------|
| Total | Water usage charge for block |
| Less | 25% for common area usage |
| Divided | By number of units sharing meter |
| Equals | Water usage amount charged to you |

The shared meter water usage charge is capped at a maximum of \$5.20 per week for single person households and \$9.30 per week for households of two or more people.



Homes with separate water meters

If you live in a property with an individual water meter linked only to your home, we will charge you for the actual water that you use, as billed by the local water authority.

When is water usage charged?

The local water authority generally invoices the WHC every three months, based on their quarterly billing cycle.

When we receive each invoice for your property, we will raise the relevant charge against your Water Usage Account.

How am I notified of the charge?

We send you a letter and an invoice each quarter.

Included with the letter will be your Water Usage Statement showing the charges processed and payments received from you. The Water Usage Statement account balance will show if your account is in advance or in arrears.

Also included will be a copy of the total invoice from the local water authority.



How do I pay water usage charges?

You can pay for water usage with regular weekly or fortnightly payments when you pay your rent.

Alternatively, you can pay for water usage on a quarterly basis when the charge is processed.

We offer the following ways to pay your water usage charges:

- Centrepay (Centrelink deduction)
- Direct deposit from your bank account
- Deposit at Commonwealth bank branch

Please refer to the ***Paying Your Rent*** factsheet for details about these payment methods.

For direct and bank deposits, please use your tenant number and 'water' as the reference.

Special circumstances

We will consider waiving a portion of the water usage charge for tenants with separate water meters if you or a household member has a medical condition or disability that requires significantly more water than similar sized households.

Please contact your Tenancy Manager to discuss your individual circumstances.

What if I don't agree with my water usage charge?

If you believe we have not applied our water usage charging policy correctly, or an error has been made, you have the right to appeal the way your water usage charge has been calculated.

Please refer to the ***Appeals*** factsheet for instructions on how to lodge an appeal.

What if I can't pay my water usage charge?

If you are concerned about not being able to pay your water usage charges in full and on time, please contact your Tenancy Manager to talk about it.

We can work with you to set up an affordable repayment plan to prevent arrears from growing and clear the debt.

What if I don't pay my water usage charge?

In the first instance, your Tenancy Manager will contact you to discuss the situation, with the aim of understanding any barriers to paying your water usage charges.

If a water usage charge remains unpaid for more than 21 days from the date it is charged, we may take action through the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal (NCAT) to recover the unpaid water usage charges.

More Information

This factsheet provides a general summary only. For full details, please check the policies on our website: www.womenshousingcompany.org.au

