



CHARGES ON WATER BILLS

(METROPOLITAN WATER CORPORATIONS)

Information for residential customers

Water charges can be hard to understand. This fact sheet explains the main charges on the bills of residential water customers in Greater Metropolitan Melbourne – and how and when these charges are applied.

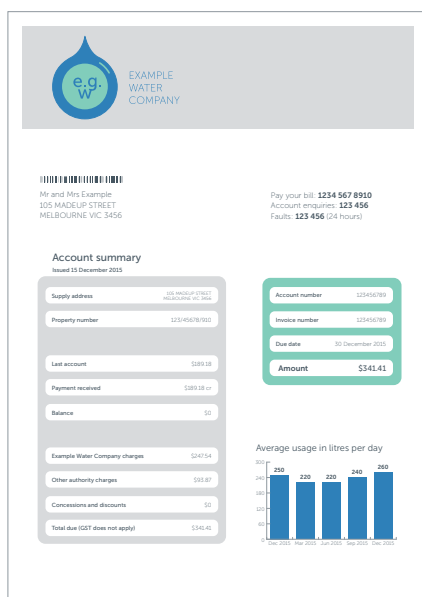
What can my water corporation bill me for?

There is legislation that sets out how the metropolitan water corporations (City West Water, South East Water and Yarra Valley Water) charge.

Your water corporation doesn't set its own prices. It submits proposed prices to the Victorian Essential Services Commission (ESC), the independent industry regulator. The ESC undertakes an inquiry, consults about proposed prices, and issues a final pricing decision.

The metropolitan water corporations don't all charge the same prices because their costs differ. For example, maintenance costs are higher where infrastructure, including pipes and storage and treatment facilities, is older.

Your residential water bill will include usage and service charges for water and sewerage, and charges collected by your water corporation on behalf of other agencies.



Check out EWOV's example water bill at ewov.com.au for more information

Usage charges

These are charges for the water you use and the wastewater and sewage you dispose of.

Who pays usage charges?

Usage charges are usually payable by the person living in the residential property.

What if there's a tenant?

It's the residential property owner's responsibility to tell the water corporation that the property has a tenant. If they don't, they will be liable for the usage charges.

If there's a separate meter, the residential tenant usually pays the usage charges.

Water usage charges

The metropolitan water corporations use a block tariff structure for working out water usage charges.

Each water corporation uses three blocks:

- **Block 1:** 0 – 440 litres/day
- **Block 2:** 441 – 880 litres/day
- **Block 3:** 881 litres/day and more

The price of each block differs among the water corporations. The cost per kilolitre increases with each block. Recycled water is usually charged at a flat rate.

Where two properties share a meter, the water usage is divided between them.

Where there's an owners' corporation and only one meter, the bill for water usage will be sent to the owners' corporation. How the bill is paid will depend on the owners' corporation rules. It's usually divided among the occupiers of the properties. The owners' corporation can also arrange for bills to be sent directly to the owner/s of a property ([section 263A Water Act 1989](#)).



Sewage disposal charges

Sewage disposal charges are more complicated because properties don't have meters to measure the volume released into the sewerage system.

Not all the water used by a property is released to the sewerage system. Some is used for the garden. Sewage disposal charges are therefore calculated as a proportion of the water used. The proportion varies between winter (less watering) and summer (more watering). These charges and proportions are approved by the ESC.

Service charges

These are flat fees on each 'property' for access to the water and sewerage systems.

Service charges may be for water and sewerage, or wastewater.

Service charges can also apply to vacant land not connected to the water system — if the water corporation has made provision for water services to that land (section 144 of the [Water Act 1989](#)). In some cases, these charges are much less than those for developed properties. Some water corporations don't charge if the land isn't connected to services and doesn't have any improvements (buildings) on it.

Do tenants pay service charges?

Residential tenants who have a lease agreement under the [Residential Tenancies Act](#) are not responsible for service charges.

What if there are two or more properties on one title?

The service charges apply to each separate occupancy on a parcel of land, regardless of whether the occupancy has a water meter. For example, a group of four flats on one or more titles attracts four service charges, not one.

What about multi-dwelling developments?

All the units or apartments in a multi-dwelling development must all pay a service charge. If there's only one shared meter, each property that can be separately occupied has to pay its own service charge.

Water concessions

If you hold a Health Care Card or a Gold Card, it's likely that you can get a concession on your water bills.

The name and address on your bill **must be the same** as that on the concession card though. You can also apply to have the concession automatically credited to your bill. Be aware that some concessions must be applied for again each year.

Other charges for residential properties

Water corporations also collect fees on behalf of other agencies.

Waterways charge

For Melbourne Water

Your quarterly water bill will include a waterways charge. This charge was previously called drainage charge. It provides the funding for a wide range of drainage upgrades and waterway management services. It's not for supplying drainage services to individual properties, which is usually a local council or landowner responsibility. For the current waterways charge, contact Melbourne Water on **131 722**.

Parks Charge

For the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning

Once a year, you'll have a Parks Charge on your water bill. This charge funds regional parks, gardens, trails, waterways, bays and other recreation and conservation assets within the greater metropolitan area. For the current Parks Charge, contact Parks Victoria on **131 963**.

Other important things about Waterways and Parks Charges

Waterways and Parks Charges are charged on an occupancy basis, not per title. For example, two houses on the same title are each charged. They are also paid by owners of a residential property, not by tenants.

What if usage, service or other charges aren't paid?

If charges aren't paid, a regulated interest rate may be applied to the debt. Additional actions include restricting the flow of water to the property and/or legal action. Legal action can include the water corporation registering a caveat on the title of the property to which the unpaid charges apply. This means the charges, plus interest, will be paid when the property is sold or transferred.

If you're experiencing difficulty paying, ask your water corporation about a payment plan and hardship assistance. More information about financial difficulty can be found in [Fact Sheet 7: Energy and water payment difficulties](#), and in online videos at [ewov.com.au](#).