



HIGH WATER BILLS

Information for residential customers

Have you received an unusually high water bill? Maybe your bill has gone up and stayed up? This fact sheet will help you work out why.

All sorts of things can cause your water bills to be high.

Important: If you're going to have trouble paying your bill, ring your water corporation straight away. You can then work out an affordable payment plan to help avoid restriction of your supply.

Common causes of a high water bill

Does your bill include the annual Parks charge?

This fee is charged annually, usually between July and September. The fee is a minimum of \$65.18, depending on your property value set by the council.

Has your bill been estimated (e.g. because your meter wasn't accessible)?

Estimated bills are usually based on the amount of water you've used in the past. This may be more, or less, than the amount you actually used in the period that was estimated. After your meter is read, you'll be charged for any usage above the estimate.



Does your high bill include previous amounts you haven't paid?

Check if the bill includes previously unpaid amounts carried forward.

Did your price increase?

Compare the rates on your current bill with previous bills and check whether your water corporation included a note about an increase in charges.

Have you used more water than you usually do?

Compare the average daily use figure on your high bill with the average daily use figures on your previous bills (including the bill you received for the same time last

year). If it's a lot higher have you been home more or had people staying with you (e.g. more showers, more washing)?

Have you received a new water meter?

An older meter can record less than the actual consumption. This is why water corporations routinely replace meters.

Is there a water leak?

Check for damp or a puddle near the pipe. You can use your water meter to check for a leak (see the section on testing for a water leak below). If you detect a leak, you can ring your water corporation for advice. You may need to have a registered plumber inspect your pipes.

Are you using old-style or big showerheads?

They may use more water than the new water-efficient ones.

Is there a dripping tap, toilet or hot water service in your home?

There are instructions on how to do your own leak test on the next page.

EWOV's high bill investigations

How we investigate high bills

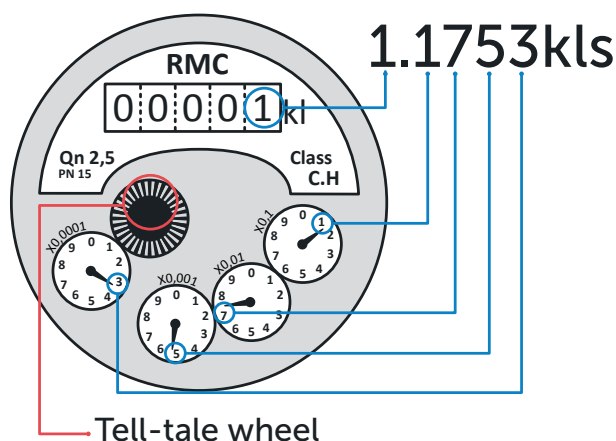
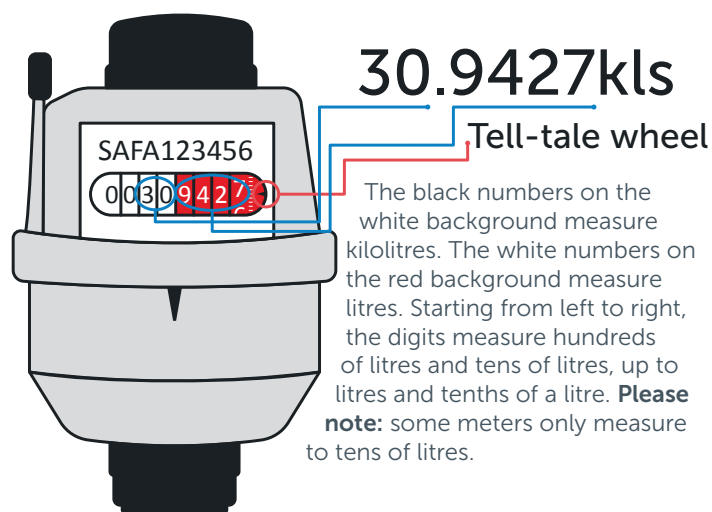
EWOV's investigation into a high bill is a process of determining whether your water corporation has contributed to the causes of the high bill. It's not always possible to pinpoint the exact cause of a higher than expected bill, rather it's often only possible to identify what is not the cause.

The aim of EWOV's investigation is to confirm you have been billed accurately with the meter correctly recording usage. This means that a high bill investigation is a process of eliminating the possible causes of a high bill.





How to read your water meter



The number at the top of the meter measures in kilolitres. The dials from right to left measure hundreds of litres, tens of litres, litres and tenths of a litre. If a hand is between two numbers, note the lower number, except between 0 and 9, then note 9.

What you can do to check

Test for a water leak

A water leak is a common cause of a high bill. You can run the following test to find out whether there's a leak:

1. Turn off all taps and water outlets.
2. Take a reading of your meter dial.
3. Wait for an hour, then take another meter reading. Make sure you don't use any water during this time.
4. There should be no difference in meter readings. If there is, there may be a leak.

Check the accuracy of your meter

Check whether your meter is measuring accurately by taking a volume test:

1. Ensure that there are no water leaks.
2. Turn off all taps and water outlets.
3. Take a reading of your meter dial.
4. Use an **accurate** 10-litre bucket and fill it with water from a tap.
5. Take another meter reading, which should show that 10 litres were used. If the recording is different, then your meter may not measure accurately.

Monitor your consumption

- If you don't have a leak and your meter seems to measure accurately, your usage may cause the high bill.
- Take regular meter readings to measure your daily consumption, especially before and after showers, using the washing machine and watering the garden.
- This will help you understand how and when you use most of the water.

Do you need more help?

This fact sheet will give you a good start, but here are some ways to get more information

- Your water corporation will have information about how much water different appliances use.
- EWOV's website (ewov.com.au) has links to useful information and a video on common water issues.
- A registered plumber can also give you advice.

What if you contact your corporation and you're not satisfied with its response?

Don't be put off

- If the first person you speak with can't help you, ask to speak with someone at a higher level (e.g. a manager or supervisor).
- If you aren't satisfied with the action your company takes to address your concerns, you can contact EWOV for further assistance.