

Water usage

8 June 2019



Tenants of NSWALC Housing (NHL) need to pay for the water used at their home (water usage). This is stated in the Residential Tenancies Act 2010 and is fully described in NHL's own Water Charging Policy.

How does this affect you?

How you pay depends on whether you are living in a property with a separate water meter (most houses) or a property with a shared water meter (in a block of units)

If you live in a house with a water meter

The Water Authority reads the meter and bills NHL for the actual water used every three months. When we receive the bill, we check your water account to see if you have credit or debt owing. If you do, NHL will carry it over to the next quarter's bill.

If you live in a property with a shared (or unreadable) water meter

When there is a shared meter, we can't know how much water each household has used. In these cases, what you pay will be worked out based on your rent.

Tenants will pay a levy of 3% of their total household rent as a contribution for water usage. Water usage contributions are capped at a maximum of \$6.50 per household per week.

Example:

Mr and Mrs Smith pay \$180.00 for their weekly rent. Their water usage contribution will be calculated at 3% of \$180.00.

$$\$189 \times 3\% = \$5.40$$

This means that Mr and Mrs Smith will pay a total of \$185.40 for their rent and water contribution.

Tenants in Affordable Housing Properties

The water charging policy also applies to tenants in affordable housing properties, but the cap of \$6.50 does not apply in affordable housing properties with a shared water meter.

How do I pay my water meter charges?

Each tenant has a water charging account attached to their tenancy.

For tenants with a shared meter, it is advisable to pay an amount each week or fortnight, along with their regular rent payment.

For tenants with a separate water meter, you will be charged and may pay quarterly, in a lump sum.

If a water charge remains unpaid for more than 21 days from the date at which it is charged, NHL may take action to recover the unpaid amount. (eg through the Housing Appeals Committee (HAC))

Are there any exemptions or allowances?

NHL will consider granting allowances to tenants with separate water meters if:

- The tenant or a household member is on a home based dialysis machine and/or
- The tenant or household member has a medical condition or disability that requires them to use significantly more water than usual.

NHL may give you an allowance if you live in a large household of six or more.

All applications for water charging exemptions/allowances must be submitted in writing, together with documented medical evidence to support your claim.

What if I'm not happy with my water charges?

Tenants cannot appeal NHL's decision to charge for water usage in community housing properties.

However, if tenants in a property with a shared water meter think that their water charges have not been assessed properly and in accordance with the policy, they can appeal.

In the first instance, they should ask their Housing Officer to review the charge. If unsatisfied with NHL's decision, they can lodge an appeal to the Housing Appeals Committee (HAC). The HAC is an independent agency that reviews certain decisions made by staff of community organisations and Housing NSW, including decisions made by NHL in relation to water charges. For more information about the HAC call 1800 629 794 or go to www.hac.nsw.gov.au.

All appeals can be lodged using the Complaints and Appeals Process available on the website.

Tenants with separate water meters cannot appeal their actual water charge.



Visit our website and complete the contact form

Know your rights by getting a copy of the NSW Fair Trading *Ending a Tenancy* – information for tenant's factsheet

Want more information?



Call [number] to speak to one of our Housing Officers



Send an email to [email address] and we'll get back to you

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