

**CHARGES SCHEME  
FOR  
NORTHERN IRELAND WATER 2007/08**



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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Northern Ireland Water (the company) is to be established on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2007. It will serve around 1.7 million people throughout Northern Ireland. The company will supply drinking water which meets the standards set in the EU Drinking Water Directive – some 625 million litres every day. It will take away the used water and treats it at one of 1,060 wastewater treatment works before putting it safely back into the environment.
- 1.2 This booklet contains details of Northern Ireland Water's Scheme of Charges for 2007/08. The Scheme is 'an initial scheme' made by the Department for Regional Development (the Department) under the provisions of Article 201(11) – (13) of the Water and Sewerage Services (Northern Ireland) Order 2006.
- 1.3 In accordance with the company's duty under the Order and its Licence (the Instrument of Appointment) as the water and sewerage undertaker for Northern Ireland, the company has taken steps to ensure that the charges do not unduly discriminate against, or show undue preference, to any group of customers.
- 1.4 Many non-domestic customers in Northern Ireland already pay water charges. Charging for water and sewerage services will be introduced for all other customers and changes will be made to the existing basis of charging for existing customers. The new charges will be introduced on a phased basis. The changes to the existing arrangements will also be phased in. The phasing will be applied as follows:
- For new charges, one third (1/3) of the full charge will be billed in 2007/08 (or one third of any change to the basis of charging);

- In 2008/09, two thirds (2/3) of the full charge will be billed (or two thirds of any change to the basis of charging); and
- From 2009/10 onwards, the changes will be fully implemented and 100% of the full charge will be billed.

1.5 During the period 2007/08 – 2009/10 charges to domestic customers will also be set in line with average domestic charges in England and Wales. This means that the average water and sewerage charges to domestic customers in NI will be no higher than the average water and sewerage charges to domestic customers in England and Wales.

1.6 The charges in this Scheme are shown for the period 1st April 2007 until 31st March 2008 (including the phasing arrangements). For comparison purposes the full charges (excluding phasing and pegging (where applicable)) are also shown in the summary table in section 3.

## 2. Customer contact

2.1 Customers can contact Northern Ireland Water by telephone, letter, e-mail, SMS, fax and web or visits may be arranged by prior appointment.

2.2 Useful contact numbers and addresses:

<b>Operational and General Enquiries (e.g. on water quality, pressure, supply, sewerage or leaks)</b>	
Telephone number	Water Line 0845 744 0088 (24 hours) Leakline 0800 028 2011 (24 hours)
Text phone	0845 702 3206
Email	waterline@cs.niwater.com
Address	PO Box 1026, Belfast BT1 9DJ
Lines Open	8am to 8pm
<b>Billing Enquiries</b>	
Telephone number	Billing Line 0845 877 0030 Debt Line 0845 877 0050
Email	customer.billing@cs.niwater.com
<b>Address</b>	Payments: PO Box 1025, Belfast BT1 9DH Direct debit requests: PO Box 1023, Belfast BT1 9DG
<b>Lines Open</b>	8am to 8pm Monday – Friday 8am to 6pm Saturday 12 noon to 6pm Sunday

Meter option applications	
Telephone number	0800 051 5445 8am to 8pm Monday – Friday 8am to 6pm Saturday 12 noon to 6pm Sunday
Email	waterline@cs.niwater.com
Address	PO Box 1021, Belfast BT1 9DF

2.3 Any complaints about charges or charging policies we receive will be handled in accordance with the company's Complaints Procedure as agreed with the Northern Ireland Authority for Utility Regulation (NIAUR). Details of the Complaints Procedure will be sent to anyone making a complaint and are available on request, free of charge.

2.4 The Consumer Council is an independent body that promotes and protects the interests of all consumers in Northern Ireland. The Consumer Council for Northern Ireland will also investigate a complaint to provide an independent assessment of whether the company has handled matters fairly and correctly. However, generally it will not begin investigations unless it is satisfied that you have fully used the company's own Complaints Procedure.

2.5 The address for the Consumer Council is given below:

Consumer Council for Northern Ireland  
Elizabeth House  
116 Hollywood Road  
BELFAST  
BT4 1NY  
Telephone 0845 601 6022

### 3. Summary table of main charges

#### Domestic

Description of Charge	Full Charge	2007/08 Charge
<u>Unmeasured water tariff</u>		
Standing charge (£)	51.00	17.00
Variable charge (£/£000 capital value)	0.8748	0.2916
Charge cap (standing charge + variable charge) (£)	385.00	128.33
Charge for lock-up garages (£)	54.00	18.00
<u>Affordability Tariff (water):</u>		
Capital value up to and including £70,000 (£)	44.48	14.83
Capital value over £70,000 up to and including £100,000 (£)	66.72	22.24
Capital value over £100,000 (£)	88.96	29.65
<u>Unmeasured sewerage tariff</u>		
Standing charge (£)	54.00	18.00
Variable charge (£/£000 capital value)	0.9324	0.3108
Charge cap (standing charge + variable charge) (£)	385.00	128.33
Charge for lock-up garages (£)	57.00	19.00
<u>Affordability Tariff (sewerage):</u>		
Capital value up to and including £70,000 (£)	44.48	14.83
Capital value over £70,000 up to and including £100,000 (£)	66.72	22.24
Capital value over £100,000 (£)	88.96	29.65
<u>Measured water tariff</u>		
Standing charge (£)	60.00	20.00
Volumetric charge (£/m <sup>3</sup> )	0.8894	0.2965
<u>Measured sewerage tariff</u>		
Standing charge (£)	60.00	20.00
Volumetric charge (£/m <sup>3</sup> )	1.1706	0.3902
<u>Assessed water tariff</u>		
Standing charge (£)	60.00	20.00
One person assessed charge (£)	81.00	27.00
Two person assessed charge (£)	120.00	40.00
Multi-occupancy assessed charge (£)	195.00	65.00

<u>Assessed sewerage tariff</u>		
Standing charge (£)	60.00	20.00
One person assessed charge (£)	105.00	35.00
Two person assessed charge (£)	156.00	52.00
Multi-occupancy assessed charge (£)	252.00	84.00

## Non-domestic

Description of Charge	Full Charge	2007/08 Charge
<u>Unmeasured water tariff</u>		
Standing charge (£)	51.00	17.00
Variable charge (£/£000 nett annual value)	17.556	5.852
Charge cap (standing charge + variable charge) (£)	770.00	256.67
Unmeasured animal drinking trough system (£)	194.40	64.80
<u>Unmeasured sewerage tariff</u>		
Standing charge (£)	54.00	18.00
Variable charge (£/£000 nett annual value)	23.121	7.707
Charge cap (standing charge + variable charge) (£)	770.00	256.67
<u>Measured water tariff</u>		
Standing charge (£):		
Water supply pipe size up to 20mm	60.00	60.00
Over 20mm up to 25mm	98.00	98.00
Over 25mm up to 40mm	185.00	185.00
Over 40mm up to 50mm	305.00	305.00
Over 50mm up to 75mm	610.00	610.00
Over 75mm up to 100mm	1,100.00	1,100.00
Over 100mm	1,580.00	1,580.00
Volumetric charge (£/m <sup>3</sup> )	0.8894	0.8894
NB: The tariff for new customers who fall into the category set out in paragraph 8.4 will be one third of the above amounts		
Large user volumetric charge (100,000 – 250,000m <sup>3</sup> )	0.7115	0.7115
Large user volumetric charge (250,000 – 500,000m <sup>3</sup> )	0.6670	0.6670
Large user volumetric charge (Over 500,000m <sup>3</sup> )	0.6226	0.6226
Building water volumetric charge (£/m <sup>3</sup> )	0.8894	0.8894
Domestic allowance (m <sup>3</sup> per annum)		134

## Non-domestic (cont'd)

Description of Charge	Full Charge	2007/08 Charge
<u>Measured sewerage tariff</u>		
Standing charge (£):		
Water supply pipe size up to 20mm	60.00	20.00
Over 20mm up to 25mm	98.00	33.00
Over 25mm up to 40mm	185.00	62.00
Over 40mm up to 50mm	305.00	102.00
Over 50mm up to 75mm	610.00	203.50
Over 75mm up to 100mm	1,100.00	367.00
Over 100mm	1,580.00	527.00
Volumetric charge (£/m <sup>3</sup> )	1.1706	0.3902
<u>Assessed water tariff</u>		
Standing Charge (£)	60.00	20.00
Assessed charge – based on loading units (section 13.20)	Loading units	Loading units
<u>Assessed sewerage tariff</u>		
Standing charge (£)	60.00	20.00
Assessed charge – based on loading units (section 13.20)	Loading units	Loading units
<u>Trade effluent tariff (see section 12.)</u>		
(R) Reception charge (£/m <sup>3</sup> )	0.1499	0.1499
(V) Volumetric charge (£/m <sup>3</sup> )	0.1680	0.1680
(B) Biological charge (£/m <sup>3</sup> )	0.1109	0.1109
(S) Sludge charge (£/m <sup>3</sup> )	0.1315	0.1315
Standard strength combined charge (£/m <sup>3</sup> )	0.5603	0.5603
Standard strength COD (mg/l)	422	422
Standard strength suspended solids (mg/l)	332	332

## Infrastructure charges

Description of Charge	Full Charge	2007/08 Charge
Water infrastructure charge (£)	250.00	83.33
Sewerage infrastructure charge (£)	250.00	83.33

## Service connection charges

Description of Charge	Full Charge	2007/08 Charge
Water connection charges <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- up to 25mm diameter (£)</li> <li>- greater than 25 mm diameter</li> </ul>	190.00 Based on cost of the work	190.00 Based on cost of the work
Sewerage inspection charge (£) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- up to 100mm diameter (£)</li> <li>- greater than 100 mm diameter</li> </ul>	100.00 Based on cost of the work	100.00 Based on cost of the work

#### **4. Value Added Tax**

- 4.1 All charges in this Scheme are shown exclusive of VAT. VAT will be added to water supply charges (including water for construction unless related to new construction of dwellings, residential buildings (such as a care home) and certain buildings used by charities) raised to industrial customers who are defined within divisions 1 – 5 of the Standard Industrial Classification List 1980 (SIC). Water supply charges to all domestic and other non-industrial customers are zero-rated for VAT purposes.
- 4.2 Charges for the reception, disposal and treatment of foul water, sewerage and trade effluent are zero-rated. Charges for the emptying of cesspools and septic tanks are standard rated when supplied to industrial users as defined above.
- 4.3 Charges for the cleaning, maintenance and unblocking of sewers and drains are standard-rated.
- 4.4 Other than those services listed above, charges for the removal, treatment and disposal of industrial, farm, hospital, domestic or other waste are standard-rated.
- 4.5 Water and sewerage infrastructure charges are zero-rated for VAT purposes.

## 5. Main types of charges and special tariffs

### Unmeasured charges

- 5.1 Unmeasured charges for water and sewerage services are paid by customers occupying properties which do not have water meters installed or who are not paying assessed charges.
- 5.2 There are two elements to both the water and sewerage charges: a standing charge and a variable charge based on the property valuation (a rate in the pound charge). For domestic properties, the property valuation is the capital valuation assigned to the property by the Valuation and Lands Agency (VLA) in the Capital Value Schedule 2006. For non-domestic properties the property valuation is the nett annual valuation (NAV) assigned to the premises in the VLA Fifth Revaluation List – 1<sup>st</sup> April 2003. Customers who wish to enquire about their property valuation may contact VLA on 0800 197 0611.
- 5.3 Consumers who are 60 years of age or older can have a meter installed free of charge and pay charges based on usage (see section 14). This is set out in the Metering (Prescribed Consumer) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2007.
- 5.4 An ongoing programme of metering in the non-domestic sector will see increasing numbers of these customers metered.
- 5.5 The standing charge will be an annual charge applied to all chargeable properties. There will be separate charges for domestic and non-domestic properties.

- 5.6 There will be a cap on unmeasured charges which will be set by the company for each service (water and sewerage). There will be separate caps for domestic and non-domestic properties.
- 5.7 Second homes will be charged in exactly the same way as main homes.
- 5.8 Where a lock-up garage has an unmeasured supply a flat charge will be applied with the company reserving the right to meter such properties.
- 5.9 Where an animal drinking trough system is unmeasured, or where it is not possible to install a meter, an unmeasured charge will be applied. The unmeasured charge will be set at the level of the average charge for a metered trough. Where a trough system is used for only part of the year, the whole year charge will apply.

#### Measured charges

- 5.10 Measured charges are paid by occupiers of properties where a water meter provided by the company has been installed.
- 5.11 There are two elements to both the water and sewerage charges: a standing charge and a volumetric charge based on the consumption recorded on the water meter.
- 5.12 The standing charges for both water and sewerage are determined by reference to the diameter of the water supply pipe. Where no supply pipe size is indicated on the meter a notional pipe size will be assessed by the company and charged accordingly.

- 5.13 Volumetric sewerage charges are based on the amount of water measured by the water meter. A 5% allowance is given as standard (the 'non return to sewer allowance') in recognition of the fact that some water will be used but not returned to the sewer.
- 5.14 All new connections to the water mains (domestic and non-domestic) from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2007 will be metered.
- 5.15 Multiple meters – where a customer is charged on a measured basis for water supplied to a single private residence and either:
- i. more than one meter has been installed to measure all water use at the property; or
  - ii. there is installed an additional meter of an approved type on the same service pipe so as to measure water being supplied to an external tap, or for the purposes of measuring use of water and sewerage services where water is recycled or rainwater is used,
- an additional annual standing charge per meter will be payable to cover additional maintenance, reading and billing costs.
- 5.16 The domestic allowance for water supplied to existing non-domestic customers is being phased out from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2007. For 2007/08 it will be set at 134m<sup>3</sup> per annum (67m<sup>3</sup> per six months), 2/3 of the previous years allowance.
- 5.17 Where no meter reading has taken place an estimated bill will be sent (see paragraphs 10.4 and 10.5).

## Assessed charges for domestic customers

5.18 Assessed charges for water and sewerage services will be offered in the following circumstances where an eligible domestic customer has applied for a meter:

- Where no agreement has been made for a single meter to serve more than one property; and
  - The cost of installing a meter would be unreasonable; or
  - It would not be feasible or practical to install a meter.

5.19 The assessed charges will be:

- Single Person assessed charge
- Two Person assessed charge
- Multi-occupancy assessed charge

5.20 For the single person and two person assessed charges, the level of the charge will be based on the estimated average consumption of households of the relevant size as determined by the company plus a standing charge.

5.21 The multi-occupancy assessed charge will be based on the estimated average consumption of larger domestic households plus a standing charge.

5.22 Customers may elect to continue to pay the unmeasured charges due for the property they are occupying rather than the assessed charge.

5.23 Additionally, the company may apply the appropriate assessed charge to each of the residents where a single property is sub-divided

or let as residential accommodation units which are not discrete self contained dwelling units but have shared or communal facilities and where the Landlord or some other person has not accepted responsibility for the payment of metered charges for all services provided, or made available to the whole of the property.

#### Assessed charges for non-domestic customers

- 5.24 A shop or office which has no water supply to the premises but has access to a supply (for example a communal toilet facility) will be liable to pay water and sewerage charges. Where the supply is not metered, charges will be based on the NAV of the premises.
- 5.25 In this situation a meter may be installed on the communal supply. If others also have access to the facilities to be metered, all parties have to agree that a meter is installed and a single person must take responsibility to pay the bill to the company. If there is a landlord for the property, then their permission to install the meter is also required.
- 5.26 If it is not possible to install a meter an assessed charge can be requested. The assessed charge will be calculated by the company and will be based on the loading units referred to in paragraph 13.22.

#### The Affordability Tariff

- 5.27 The Department has drawn up a low income protection scheme which is reflected in the Water and Sewerage Charges Scheme Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2007. Under these Regulations, occupiers who are in receipt of one of a range of specified benefits will automatically qualify for an Affordability Tariff. The details of this scheme are set out in section 9.

### The large user tariff

5.28 Customers using in excess of 100,000 cubic metres of water per annum and who have implemented a range of water efficient practices can apply for the large user tariff (see section 11).

### Trade effluent charges

5.29 Where a discharge to the company's sewers comprises both domestic sewage and 'any liquid, either with or without particles of matter in suspension in the liquid, which is wholly or partly produced in the course of any trade or industry carried on at trade premises', trade effluent charges are payable in addition to sewerage charges. Where there is no domestic sewage discharged, trade effluent charges alone will be payable.

5.30 Trade effluent charges are calculated in accordance with a nationally agreed formula (the Mogden formula). The amount payable will depend on the strength of the effluent. Pre-treatment of effluent by a customer may reduce trade effluent charges.

5.31 More details about trade effluent charges are set out in section 12.

### Infrastructure charges

5.32 When a property is connected to the company's mains for the first time a water infrastructure charge will be payable. A separate sewerage infrastructure charge will be payable for properties connecting to sewers for the first time.

5.33 The levels of the charges are set in the company's Licence. The charges have been set to recover certain off-site costs of servicing new development from those making the demand on the water and sewerage system rather than from existing customers.

5.34 More details about the charges are contained in section 13.

#### Other charges and tariffs

5.35 Details of other charges and tariffs are contained in sections 16 – 18.

## 6. Liability to pay charges

### Liability for paying the water and sewerage charges

- 6.1 Water charges are payable for a property if a supply of water is available for use in connection with that property. Sewerage charges are payable for a property where the property benefits from the fact that it drains either directly or indirectly to a public sewer for which the company is responsible.
- 6.2 Unless there is an agreement between the company and somebody else to pay charges for a property, the occupier of the property is liable to pay the charges. In the case of a tenanted property it is not sufficient for there to be a clause in the tenancy agreement that the landlord will pay the charges: the landlord must have confirmed in writing to the company that she or he will pay the due charges.
- 6.3 The company has no legal right to recover charges from anybody other than the occupier of a property except where provision is made by any agreement to which the company is a party. It is still possible for a person to make a new agreement to pay water and sewerage charges for a dwelling which she or he does not occupy.

### Who is the "occupier of a property"?

- 6.4 The term "occupier of a property" means in addition to any person in actual occupation of a property or to whom the company provides services to in relation to a property, any person who:
- i. maintains an existing or newly constructed property in a condition such that it can be more readily put to use for its intended purpose;

- ii. maintains for residential accommodation a property which does not include exclusive occupation of one or more facilities for cooking, washing or sanitation (such as bedsits, holiday or student hostels, or other accommodation for short term accommodation or letting);
- iii. has sufficient control over the property to owe a duty of care towards those who come lawfully onto any part of that property; or
- iv. is the occupier for the purpose of holding a licence to sell alcoholic drinks.

#### Liability for charges for unoccupied properties

- 6.5 Where a customer is liable to pay unmeasured water and sewerage charges, the charges are payable where a furnished property is connected to water and sewerage services regardless of whether or not services are actually used.
- 6.6 Where a property for which unmeasured charges are payable is both unoccupied and unfurnished and no refurbishment work is being undertaken on the property, the company will not charge water and sewerage charges on the property from date of notification subject to agreement by the company. A small amount of furnishings may be left in the property for security purposes but furnishings which make the property habitable will lead to the property being deemed to be furnished and full charges will be payable.
- 6.7 Properties which are declared to be unoccupied and unfurnished and no refurbishment work is being undertaken, will be checked at least twice a year.
- 6.8 A customer wishing to leave an unoccupied property furnished for which unmeasured charges are payable, or the owner of such a

property under-going refurbishment, may opt to have the water supply temporarily disconnected. Following disconnection there will be no charges for the provision of water but there may be a charge for reconnection.

- 6.9 Where a metered property is unoccupied and unfurnished or furnished and no water is being recorded by the meter, only the measured water and sewerage standing charges will be payable. The customer may opt to have the water supply temporarily disconnected to reduce the charges to which she or he will be liable.
- 6.10 Where the sole occupier of a property paying water charges on the unmeasured basis is hospitalised or enters a nursing or residential home for a continuous period between 1 and 12 months, the company may charge only water and sewerage standing charges for the period the occupier is in hospital (a customer paying metered charges will only pay metered standing charges when water is not being used).
- 6.11 The sole occupier or their representative must apply to the company for a reduction in charges for unoccupied properties; the occupier or their representative will not be deemed to have applied unless a relevant application form has been completed. Application forms for a 'hospital allowance', 'deceased allowance' or unoccupied premises can be obtained by contacting the company. The 'hospital allowance' form will require a signature from someone in authority at the relevant hospital, nursing or residential home.
- 6.12 After 12 months full capital value based charges will be payable unless the water supply is temporarily disconnected.

## Liability for charges on change of occupancy

- 6.13 The occupier is responsible for notifying the company of any change in occupation status.
- 6.14 If a customer fails to provide at least **two** working days notice that she or he is vacating the property, that customer will continue to be liable for charges until the date of whichever of the following occurs first:
- i. where the customer informs the company of her or his vacating the property less than two working days before, or at any time after she or he ceases to occupy it, the 28<sup>th</sup> day after the company is informed;
  - ii. the day on which the meter would normally have been read in order for the amount of the charges to be determined; or
  - iii. the day on which any other person informs the company that she or he has become the new occupier of the property.
- 6.15 Where a measured customer telephones the company to notify it on the day of their vacating, the company will close a meter account on the basis of a meter reading provided by the customer. If the customer is unable to provide a reading and is agreeable to closing and settling their account on the basis of an estimated closing bill provided by the company, the account will be closed using that estimate.
- 6.16 Where an occupier of a property who is liable to pay measured charges vacates the property without notifying the company and a new occupier takes up residence also without notifying the company, once the company becomes aware of the new occupier it will take meter readings to establish average daily use. This average daily use will then be used to calculate charges due from the new occupier

between the date they occupied the property and date of the first meter reading taken by the company.

Liability for charges when the person responsible for payment applies for bankruptcy

6.17 Where an Order for Bankruptcy has been made in respect of a person liable to pay water and sewerage charges and that person remains resident in the property for which a debt for water and sewerage charges was subject to the Order for Bankruptcy, that debt will be limited to charges outstanding up to the date of the Order for Bankruptcy. Any charges outstanding in respect of the current financial year (2007/08) will be apportioned on a daily basis up to, and including, the date of the Order for Bankruptcy. Any charges for services provided after the Order for Bankruptcy shall become due on the next day of occupation after the Order for Bankruptcy and will be payable by the person responsible for the payment of water and sewerage charges in respect of the property in question on the same terms as to payment as would apply had the property been newly occupied on that day.

## **7. How charges are applied**

- 7.1 Section 6 set out the legal liability to pay charges. This section sets out how the company will apply the charges contained in this scheme of charges.
- 7.2 The company will have a legal right to charge commercial customers by agreement rather than in accordance with the scheme – subject to a legal requirement that charges do not discriminate unduly in favour of or against any class of customer.

### The measured charges

- 7.3 Where the occupier of a property at which a meter has been installed is liable to pay water and / or sewerage charges the basic measured charges will apply unless there is an agreement between the company and a customer to pay a different tariff; or the company has confirmed to a customer that unmeasured charges will apply.
- 7.4 The standard measured charges will also apply where a customer moves into a property at which a meter has been installed previously even if the out-going occupier of the property was not paying measured charges (unless the customer is a qualifying consumer for the Affordability Tariff).
- 7.5 Measured non-domestic water and trade effluent customers whose bills are issued after 31<sup>st</sup> March 2007 which include consumption prior to this date will be charged proportionally according to the 2006/7 and 2007/8 tariffs.

- 7.6 Charges will be calculated by: firstly, applying the 2006/7 tariff to the consumption estimated for the period up to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2007; and, secondly, by applying the 2007/8 tariffs to the remainder of the consumption. Standing charges will be applied on a pro rata basis. Sewerage charges from the start of the charging year (where appropriate) will be calculated with reference to the estimated consumption from that date.

### The unmeasured charges

- 7.7 Where the occupier of a property is liable to pay water and / or sewerage charges and a meter has not been installed at the property, the standard unmeasured charges, or the relevant assessed charge, or any special unmeasured tariff set out in these policies will apply.
- 7.8 Where a property is wholly or partly its occupier's home, unmeasured charges will continue to apply until such time as either:
- i. an eligible occupier requests that a meter is installed and the company installs a meter; or
  - ii. the company determines that water is being used, or is to be used, for one or more of the non-domestic purposes which require the water supply to be metered. Unmeasured charges will continue to apply and be payable up to the date the meter is installed subject to the six month time period (paragraph 14.19).
- 7.9 Where the occupier of a property for which unmeasured charges are being paid because a meter has not been installed vacates the property, the new occupier will be charged unmeasured charges also. However, if a meter has been installed at the property, regardless of whether the out-going occupier paid unmeasured or measured

charges, the new occupier will be charged measured charges (unless the occupier is a qualifying consumer for the Affordability Tariff).

- 7.10 If a person occupies more than one separately rated building or part of a building and has access between them other than by a highway, the company will agree to add the relevant capital values together and bill the property on a single value basis (so that the occupier pays only one set of standing charges) but NOT if there are two separate supplies.

### Water charges

- 7.11 For both measured and unmeasured water charges, the fact that a property might receive its water through a shared private service pipe does not affect liability to pay the standing charge in full and no reduction will be made to the standing charge.

### Sewerage charges

- 7.12 Private sewers – for both unmeasured and measured sewerage charges, the fact that a property might drain to a public sewer via an intermediary private sewer for which the occupier is wholly or jointly responsible does not entitle the occupier to any reduction in the standard sewerage charges.
- 7.13 Measured sewerage charges and water used externally which may not be returned to a sewer – when calculating measured sewerage charges, a 5% allowance will be given against the volume of water recorded by the meter in recognition of the fact that not all water used will be returned to a sewer.

7.14 If metered customers intend to use large amounts of water externally for garden watering; swimming pool and garden pond replenishment; or any other external use where water is not returned to a sewer and do not wish to pay sewerage charges on this water, they must pay to have a sub-meter installed on the pipe-work immediately before the tap which will be used for external use.

7.15 Their charges will then be calculated as follows:

Water and sewerage charges will be raised on the volume of water derived by deducting the reading on the sub-meter from the reading on the main meter. A further charge for water will be raised on the volume of water measured by the sub-meter. The relevant standing charges for the main meter will be payable in addition to the volume charges as well as an additional standing charge for each sub-meter installed to cover additional meter reading and billing costs.

#### Assessed charges for domestic customers

7.16 Assessed charges will only be granted as of right for properties which are a person's primary place of residence. A single or double person assessed charge will be based on information provided by the customer but will only be granted where a customer provides satisfactory evidence as to their level of occupancy.

7.17 The multi-occupancy assessed charge will be used where a property is a person's second home and is occupied only by that person and immediate family.

## 8. Charges and tariffs 2007/08

### Water charges

#### The measured charges

- 8.1 The measured charges set out in this section are the basic measured charges. These will be paid by all customers taking water through a meter except for those who have registered with the company to pay the Large User Tariff (see section 11) or who are eligible for the Affordability Tariff (see section 9).
- 8.2 Measured charges consist of a standing charge plus a volume charge.
- 8.3 *The standing charge* – for each main charging meter there will be an annual standing charge based on its pipe size as set out in the following table. The standing charge for a wholly domestic supply will be £20.00 in every case and will not be based on pipe size.

Supply pipe size	Annual standing charges	
	Existing customers (i.e. meter installed before 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2007)	New customers (i.e. meter installed after 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2007)
Up to and including 20mm	£60.00	£20.00
Over 20mm up to and including 25mm	£98.00	£33.00
Over 25mm up to and including 40mm	£185.00	£62.00
Over 40mm up to and including 50mm	£305.00	£102.00
Over 50mm up to and including 75mm	£610.00	£203.50
Over 75mm up to and including 100mm	£1,100.00	£367.00
Over 100mm	£1,580.00	£527.00

- 8.4 Where an existing unmeasured non-domestic customer is moved to a metered charge as a result of the company's non-domestic metering programme, they will be charged the phased charge as shown in the 'new customer' column in the table above.
- 8.5 Where no supply pipe size is indicated on the meter a notional pipe size will be assessed by the company and charged accordingly.
- 8.6 *The volume charge* – the volume charge will be calculated on the volume as recorded by the meter. For domestic customers the volume will be charged at a rate of £0.2965 per cubic metre in addition to the standing charge. For non-domestic customers the volume will be charged at a rate of £0.8894 per cubic metre in addition to the standing charge. Those non-domestic customers who fall into the category outlined in paragraph 8.4 will be charged at a rate of £0.2965 per cubic metre in addition to the standing charge.
- 8.7 *Multiple meters* – where a customer is charged on a measured basis for water supplied to a single private residence and either:
- a) more than one meter has been installed to measure all water use at the property; or
  - b) there is installed an additional meter of an approved type on the same service pipe so as to measure water being supplied to an external tap,

and for any property where there is installed an additional meter or meters of an approved type on the same service pipe for the purposes of measuring use of water and sewerage services where water is recycled or rainwater is used, there will be an additional annual standing charge per meter to cover additional reading and billing

costs. The additional annual standing charge will be based on the supply pipe size as set out in paragraph 8.3.

### The unmeasured charges

8.8 The unmeasured charge consists of a standing charge plus a variable charge.

8.9 *The standing charge* will be an annual charge of £17.00 per chargeable property (except for lock-up garages – see paragraph 8.17) for domestic properties and £17.00 per chargeable property for non-domestic properties.

8.10 *The variable charge* will be £0.2916 per £1,000 of the chargeable capital value of a domestic property and £5.852 per £1,000 of the chargeable nett annual valuation of a non-domestic property.

8.11 The chargeable capital value of a domestic property is the capital value assigned to the property in the VLA Capital Value Schedule 2006.

8.12 The chargeable nett annual valuation of a non-domestic property is the nett annual valuation appearing in the VLA Fifth Revaluation List – 1<sup>st</sup> April 2003.

8.13 There will be a cap on unmeasured charges as follows (i.e. the total charge payable – standing charge plus variable charge – will be limited by the cap):

<b>Unmeasured properties</b>	<b>Capped charge</b>
Domestic	£128.33
Non-domestic	£256.67

### Assessed charges for domestic customers

8.14 Where the company has not been able to install a meter at reasonable cost, or where it has not been practical to install one and it has not been agreed that a single meter can supply more than one property, a standing charge of £20 will be payable plus an annual assessed charge for water as follows:

Type of assessed charge	Assessed Charge (excluding standing charge)
Single person assessed charge	£27.00
Two person assessed charge	£40.00
Multi-occupancy assessed charge	£65.00

### Assessed charges for shops and offices without a supply of water to the premises

8.15 Where it has been agreed with a customer that it is not possible to install a meter on a supply to which the occupier of a shop or office which does not have its own supply has access, the company will offer an alternative assessed charge. The assessed charge will be calculated by the company and will be based on the loading units referred to in paragraph 13.22.

### Additional charges for the supply of water

8.16 *Animal drinking troughs* – the annual charge for an existing outside unmeasured animal drinking trough system will be £64.80 (irrespective of consumption and the number of troughs served). The charge will be

payable by each customer benefiting from a connection, subject to the company retaining the right to charge on a measured basis.

8.17 *Lock-up Garages* – where a lock up garage has available an unmeasured supply, and has a separately assessed capital value, the occupier will be charged a flat fee of £18.00.

8.18 *Other Supplies* – for supplies made under the supervision of the company's staff (or its agents) and not made through a permanently sited meter, the charge shall be based on paragraphs 8.20 and 8.21.

8.19 Other supplies including those required outside normal working hours or where delivery is made, other than through the water mains, shall, at the discretion of the company be based on paragraphs 8.20 and 8.21.

8.20 *Hydrant Standpipes* – portable hydrant standpipes for use on specified hydrants are available for hire at the discretion of the company – this is the only means whereby water can be used from a specified hydrant. The standard size will be 20mm and the hire will be subject to a refundable deposit based upon cost subject to a minimum deposit of £200.

8.21 Water used through a portable standpipe will be charged on a rental or a measured basis. Charges will be payable in advance.

(a) Rental charges

Short term hire – for a minimum period of four weeks and a maximum period of 12 weeks the charge will £30 per week or part week.

Longer term hire – for periods of hire of between 12 and 52 weeks, the weekly charge will be based on intended frequency of use of the standpipe, projected volumes of water to be taken and whether water is returned to sewers after use subject to a minimum charge of £30 per week or part week. Hire periods of longer than 52 weeks will be by special agreement only.

(b) Measured charges

Where appropriate the company reserves the right to apply a measured charge, whether to be based upon recorded or estimated usage, of £0.8894 per cubic metre.

8.22 *Building Water* – all water for such purposes will be supplied through a meter and charged at the rate of £0.8894 per cubic metre.

### **Sewerage and sewage disposal charges**

#### The measured charges

8.23 The measured charges set out in this section are the basic measured charges. These will be paid by all customers paying measured sewerage charges.

8.24 Measured charges consist of a standing charge plus a volume charge.

8.25 *The standing charge* – for each charging water meter there will be an annual sewerage standing charge based on the water meter size as set out in the following table. The standing charge for a wholly domestic supply will be £20.00 in every case and will not be based on pipe size.

<b>Water meter size</b>	<b>Annual standing charge</b>
Up to and including 20mm	£20.00
Over 20mm up to and including 25mm	£33.00
Over 25mm up to and including 40mm	£62.00
Over 40mm up to and including 50mm	£102.00
Over 50mm up to and including 75mm	£203.50
Over 75mm up to and including 100mm	£367.00
Over 100mm	£527.00

8.26 Where no meter size is indicated on the meter a notional pipe size will be assessed by the company and charged accordingly.

8.27 *The volume charge* – the volume charge will be calculated on the volume of water recorded by the water meter subject to an allowance for any volume not discharged to the sewer which will be 5% for domestic properties.

8.28 In the case of non domestic properties the allowance will be 5% unless it has been agreed with the company that a different allowance will be applied in respect of either:

- (a) any further proportion of water used but not discharged to a sewer; or
- (b) any volume subject to the trade effluent charge; or
- (c) any discharge to the sewer from any source not recorded on the water meter (except surface water drainage).

8.29 The company may require customers to have additional meters installed to record water used for certain activities where the water is not returned to a sewer after use. Additional allowances will not be

granted for garden watering; replenishing of external swimming pools; or any other external use where it is feasible to sub-meter such use.

- 8.30 The volume charge per cubic metre will be £0.3902 per cubic meter and will be charged in addition to the standing charge.

#### The unmeasured charges for sewerage and sewage disposal charges

- 8.31 The unmeasured charge consists of a standing charge plus a variable charge.

- 8.32 *The standing charge* will be an annual charge of £18.00 per chargeable property for domestic properties and £18.00 per chargeable property for non-domestic properties.

- 8.33 *The variable charge* will be £0.3108 per £1,000 of the chargeable capital value of a domestic property and £7.707 per £1,000 of the chargeable nett annual valuation of a non-domestic property.

- 8.34 The chargeable capital value of a domestic property is the capital value assigned to the property in the VLA Capital Value Schedule 2006.

- 8.35 The chargeable nett annual valuation of a non-domestic property is the nett annual valuation appearing in the VLA Fifth Revaluation List – 1<sup>st</sup> April 2003.

- 8.36 There will be a cap on unmeasured charges as follows (i.e. the total charge payable – standing charge plus variable charge – will be limited by the cap):

Unmeasured properties	Capped charge
Domestic	£128.33
Non-domestic	£256.67

#### Assessed sewerage charges for domestic customers

8.37 Where the company has not been able to install a meter at reasonable cost, or where it has not been practical to install one and it has not been agreed that a single meter can supply more than one property, a standing charge of £20 will be payable plus an annual assessed charge for sewerage will be made as follows:

Type of assessed charge	Assessed Charge (excluding standing charge)
Single person assessed charge	£35.00
Two person assessed charge	£52.00
Multi-occupancy assessed charge	£84.00

#### Assessed sewerage charges for shops and offices without a supply of water to the premises

8.38 Where it has been agreed with a customer that it is not possible to install a meter on a water supply to which the occupier of a non-domestic premises which does not have its own supply has access, the company will offer an alternative sewerage assessed charge.

#### Additional charges for sewerage services

8.39 *Lock-up Garages* – where a lock-up garage is not connected to the public sewer there is no charge. Where it is connected to the public

sewer, and has a separately assessed capital value, the occupier will be charged a flat fee of £19.00.

## 9. The Affordability Tariff

9.1 The Affordability Tariff is a reduced tariff for low income households. The tariff takes the form of a three tier flat rate charge for water and sewerage – there is no standing charge and no variable charge element. The tariff is designed to ensure that no low income household will have to spend more than 3% of their total household income on water and sewerage services.

9.2 Full details of those customers who qualify for the Affordability Tariff are set out in the Water and Sewerage Charges Scheme Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2007. In summary, occupiers who are on Housing Benefit / Rate Relief and those who will qualify for the new NI Special Rate Relief will be eligible. Householders under the age of 18; in full-time education or training; or, a young person leaving care (up to age 21) may also qualify.

9.3 The charge payable depends on the chargeable capital value of the property occupied (for definition of ‘chargeable capital value’ see section 8.10 and 8.34). The three tiers are as follows:

9.4 Water

Capital value up to and including £70,000	£14.83
Capital value over £70,000 up to and including £100,000	£22.24
Capital value over £100,000	£29.65

9.5 Sewerage

Capital value up to and including £70,000	£14.83
Capital value over £70,000 up to and including £100,000	£22.24
Capital value over £100,000	£29.65

- 9.6 Those low income households in receipt of one service only will pay the Affordability Tariff appropriate to that service.
- 9.7 Measured customers who are eligible for the Affordability Tariff will pay the Affordability Tariff rather than the metered tariff.
- 9.8 The Affordability Tariff (domestic) will be available where the premises for which water and sewerage charges are payable is the only or principal home of the customer. The Affordability Tariff is not applicable to any non-domestic use on the supply.
- 9.9 Where a customer is only eligible for the Affordability Tariff for part of the year, the amount payable will be worked out on a pro-rata basis.
- 9.10 Customers who are on full or partial Housing Benefit (also called Rate Rebate) do not have to apply for the Affordability Tariff. Their eligibility will be automatically communicated to the company by NIHE or RCA.
- 9.11 If you do not currently receive Housing Benefit, you should apply if you are on a low income or receive Income Support, Job Seekers' Allowance or Pension Credit. If you apply for Housing Benefit you will automatically be considered for the new low income Rate Relief Scheme when it is introduced.
- 9.12 Any entitlement to Housing Benefit (also known as Rate Rebate) or the Rate Relief Scheme will mean that you automatically qualify for the Affordability Tariff.
- 9.13 If you are a householder who is under 18; or, in full time education or training; or a young person leaving care (up to age 21) and your house

is occupied solely by people from any of these three groups, you will automatically qualify for the Affordability Tariff if you are eligible for full rates relief. Young persons leaving care who receive support from their Health and Social Services Trust may also be eligible for the Affordability Tariff if they are responsible for a water or sewerage bill.

9.14 The company will receive monthly updates regarding change of status of people entitled to Affordability Tariff.

9.15 The Affordability Tariff is set each year with reference to the level of the single person's pension credit guarantee (set out in Regulation 6(1)(b) of the State Pension Credit (NI) Regulations 2003) that is in force on 1<sup>st</sup> December in the year before any charges scheme takes effect. The rates are set so that the sum of the top rate water and sewerage affordability tariffs is equal to 3% of the single person's pension credit guarantee (expressed on an annual basis).

## 10. Other matters for customers paying metered charges

- 10.1 Where a meter is installed externally it will record any leakage from the private underground service pipe between the meter and the property. If this happens a large bill may result. Provided certain criteria are met, the company may grant a leak allowance where a customer has received a large bill because of leakage.
- 10.2 In general, allowances will only be granted for leaks from underground pipe work. No allowances will be granted where water escapes from a leak or faulty plumbing located above ground; where a leak has been caused by a customer's negligence or wilful damage; where the leak has been caused by a third party from whom a customer can recover money to pay for the leakage; or, where a leak has not been repaired within 28 working days of the date on which a customer became aware, or should have become aware, that they had a leak.
- 10.3 Where the company agrees to grant an allowance for water lost through a leak on a private underground service pipe and that water has not been discharged to a sewer owned by the company, if sewerage charges have also been affected by the leak an allowance against sewerage charges will be given for the same period as the allowance against water charges.

### Issuing of bills when it has not been possible to read a meter

- 10.4 Should the company not be able to read a meter when it is due to read it, an estimated bill will be issued. The estimate will be based on past consumption at the property for the period for which the bill is issued.

- 10.5 Customers receiving an estimated bill may read their meters and return the bill with their reading written on it or telephone the company. A replacement bill based on the customer's reading will be issued.

#### Queries over the accuracy of a meter

- 10.6 A customer who believes the meter supplying her or his property is faulty may require the company to test the accuracy of a meter. However, there will be a charge of £67 for this if the test shows that the meter is correctly recording use.
- 10.7 Customers are asked to contact the company if they consider that their meter is incorrectly recording use. The company will investigate the matter and if it considers that the meter is correctly recording use, provide the customer with an application form for the meter to be tested.
- 10.8 If the meter is found to have been over-recording use in accordance with relevant legislation on water meters, it will be deemed to have begun to have registered use incorrectly from the date of the last but one meter reading taken by the company (unless it can be shown that it became faulty at a later date). Charges will be amended back to that date on the basis of meter readings taken by the company from the meter installed when the faulty meter was removed for testing.
- 10.9 If a meter is found to have under-recorded use the company reserves the right to recover any additional charges which may be due for the period from the date the meter is deemed to have become faulty. In so doing it will use readings taken from the meter installed when the faulty meter was removed to calculate what the level of use was in the period in question.

## 11. The large user tariff

### What is the large user tariff?

- 11.1 The large user tariff is similar to the standard metered rate in that it is made up of a standing charge and a volumetric rate.
- 11.2 The standing charges are the same as those that apply to the standard metered tariff (see paragraph 8.3).
- 11.3 The large user tariff takes the form of a reducing block tariff which is available for those customers who use more than 100,000 cubic metres of water per annum. These blocks provide a discounted volumetric rate for various bands of consumption.
- 11.4 The blocks and discounted rates are as follows:

Block	Discount	Volumetric rate
Annual consumption up to 100,000 m <sup>3</sup>	None	£0.8894
Annual consumption between 100,000 and 250,000 m <sup>3</sup>	20%	£0.7115
Annual consumption between 250,000 and 500,000 m <sup>3</sup>	25%	£0.6670
Annual consumption over 500,000 m <sup>3</sup>	30%	£0.6226

- 11.5 A customer on the large user tariff will pay the standard volumetric rate for the first 100,000 m<sup>3</sup> consumption each year. The 20% discount rate will be applied to further consumption up to 250,000 m<sup>3</sup>. The higher rates will apply to further consumption above 250,000 m<sup>3</sup> and 500,000 m<sup>3</sup> respectively.

- 11.6 Customers wishing to avail of the large user tariff should apply in writing to the company. Eligibility will depend, not only upon consumption but also upon the commitment of the customer to water efficiency. This may include, but is not restricted to, the installation of water saving devices, recycling plants and a review of water efficiency by independent industry experts.
- 11.7 The granting of Large User Tariff shall be at the discretion of the company and subject to paragraph 11.6 above.

## 12. The trade effluent tariff

- 12.1 Trade effluent charges are payable in addition to the sewerage and sewage disposal charges. A new discharger of trade effluent will be liable to pay charges from the date of consent of the discharge. Where there is no domestic sewage discharged, trade effluent charges alone will be payable.
- 12.2 Trade effluent is defined as "any liquid, either with or without particles of matter in suspension in the liquid, which is wholly or in part produced in the course of any trade or industry carried on at trade premises" but does not include domestic sewage.
- 12.3 A customer requires the consent of the company to discharge any trade effluent to a company owned sewer. Failure to obtain permission **before** discharging trade effluent is a criminal offence and is punishable on conviction to a fine not exceeding the statutory maximum and on indictment to an unlimited fine.
- 12.4 Any customer who considers that the material which she or he wishes to discharge could be considered to be trade effluent should contact the company on the Billing Line 0845 877 0030 or text phone 0845 702 3206. The company will arrange for one of its trade effluent officers to visit the customer and discuss the nature of the discharge; the charging regime; any other terms and conditions the company will wish to apply to the individual discharge; and whether the discharge falls within the definition of "special category effluent" for which the company would have to refer the application to discharge to the Department of the Environment.

12.5 Where a customer makes an application for a new trade effluent consent and subsequently withdraws the application, the company reserves the right to recover from that customer any costs it has incurred (including analysis, sampling and inspection costs) in connection with the original application.

12.6 The company may issue a consent to discharge trade effluent. This consent may have conditions stipulated such as:

- The sewer or sewers into which the trade effluent may be discharged;
- the nature, temperature or composition of the trade effluent which may be discharged;
- the maximum quantity of trade effluent which may be discharged on any one day, either generally or into a particular sewer; and
- the highest rate at which trade effluent may be discharged, either generally or into a particular sewer.

12.7 Additionally requirements for any of the following conditions may be stipulated in the consent:

- The period or periods of the day during which the trade effluent may be discharged;
- the exclusion from the trade effluent of all condensing water;
- the pH of the trade effluent at the time when it is discharged;
- the payment for the reception and disposal of the trade effluent;
- provision and maintenance of sampling facilities;
- provision, location, testing and maintenance of such meters as may be required to measure the volume and rate of discharge of any trade effluent;

- provision, testing and maintenance of apparatus for determining the nature, temperature and composition of any trade effluent being discharged;
- the keeping of records of the volume, rate of discharge, nature, temperature and composition of any trade effluent being discharged and, in particular, the keeping of records of readings of meters and other recording apparatus;
- the making of returns and giving of other information to the company concerning the volume, rate of discharge, nature, temperature and composition of any trade effluent discharged.

12.8 Conditions will be applied on an individual basis.

12.9 The consent will also include the arrangements for determining the volume of discharge which will be treated as domestic sewage. This determination is based on allowances for domestic discharge depending on such factors as the number of employees and the presence of a canteen on site.

12.10 The company has to give a decision within two months. If it fails to do this or does not consent to the application, then the applicant can appeal as set out in paragraph 12.11.

12.11 Other than in relation to the charges listed in paragraph 12.16, a customer may appeal to the NIAUR against any condition imposed; or against a refusal to give a consent at all; or if the company fails to give a consent within two months of the day after a request for consent was served on it.

12.12 NIAUR has powers to:

- give a consent for a discharge either unconditionally or subject to such conditions as it thinks fit;
- change or annul conditions attached to a consent (including powers to require a stronger condition);
- include provision as to charges which may be made in pursuance of any condition attached to a consent for any period before the determination of the appeal; and
- direct that the trade effluent in question shall not be discharged until a specified date.

12.13 The address for NIAUR is Queen's House, 14 Queen Street, Belfast, BT1 6ER.

#### Calculating trade effluent charges

12.14 Trade effluent charges will be calculated using a formula agreed between the water industry and the Confederation of British Industry (the Mogden formula). Unless otherwise stipulated in the consent, monitoring and sampling costs will be included in the annual trade effluent charges calculated in line with the formula.

The formula is:  $C = R + V + (O_t/O_s)B + (S_t/S_s)S$

**C** is the unit charge in pence per cubic metre for the trade effluent discharge.

**R** is the unit cost in pence per cubic metre of reception and conveyance of sewage.

**V** is the unit cost in pence per cubic metre of the volumetric and primary treatment of sewage treated and disposed of in sewage treatment works.

$O_t$  is the chemical oxygen demand in mg/l of the trade effluent after 1 hour quiescent settlement.

$O_s$  is the chemical oxygen demand in mg/l of the settled sewage – standard strength.

$B$  is the unit cost in pence per cubic metre of the biological oxidation treatment of settled sewage.

$S_t$  is the total suspended solids in mg/l of the trade effluent at pH 7.

$S_s$  is the total suspended solids in mg/l of crude sewage – standard strength.

$S$  is the unit cost in pence per cubic metre of treatment and disposal of primary sludge.

12.15 Except as set out in 12.18 below trade effluent charges will be based upon a standard unit cost per cubic metre of trade effluent discharged to the company's sewer.

12.16 The standard unit costs in the Mogden Formula for the 2007/08 charging year will be as follows (per cubic metre):

	Charge (£/m <sup>3</sup> )
<b>R</b> Reception and conveyance	0.1499
<b>V</b> Volumetric treatment	0.1680
<b>B</b> Biological treatment	0.1109
<b>S</b> Treatment and disposal of primary sludges	0.1315
Standard Unit Cost	0.5603

12.17 For standard strengths in the Mogden Formula, those strengths will be:

$O_s$  Settled Chemical Oxygen Demand 422 mg/l

$S_s$  Suspended solids 332 mg/l

12.18 Where the annual discharge volume is 5,000 m<sup>3</sup> or greater, the effluent will be sampled for billing purposes. Where the annual discharge volume is less than 5,000 m<sup>3</sup>, it may, depending on the nature of the trade process and the variability of the effluent, be assumed to be of standard strength and charged at the standard rate. However, where a discharger can demonstrate that the effluent is below standard sewage strength, it will be sampled and a lower charge applied if appropriate. Conversely, if it is suspected that the discharge is above standard sewage strength and this is confirmed from samples, charges will be based on actual strength.

12.19 The company reserves the right to apply standard strength values for industries in the same sector, in calculating Trade Effluent Charges. The company will determine standard strength through sampling a range of dischargers in a sector.

### **13. Infrastructure charges**

- 13.1 Infrastructure charges are levied to cover costs incurred in enhancing the local network of mains and sewers to provide extra capacity to be able to cope with a general background growth in demand which arises from new development as a whole.
- 13.2 When a property is connected to the company's mains for the first time a water infrastructure charge will be payable. A separate sewerage infrastructure charge will be payable for properties connecting to sewers for the first time. Unless the individual charges are specifically referred to separately in this section, the term "infrastructure charge" will cover both the water infrastructure charge and the sewerage infrastructure charge.

#### Application of the charges

- 13.3 The infrastructure charge will be payable on a property which comprises a unit capable of separate occupation on the first occasion that it is connected to a water main or a public sewer for domestic purposes. This does not mean that it is only payable on houses. It is payable where water will be used for domestic purposes, that is drinking, washing, cooking, central heating, and sanitary purposes.
- 13.4 For the purposes of this charge every building or part of a building will be treated as a unit capable of separate occupation and liable to a separate infrastructure charge if:
- a. In the case of a dwelling:
    - i. it is used or will be used as a separate dwelling; or

ii. it includes separate facilities for sleeping, washing, cooking and a WC.

b. In any other case, it has its own connection to a water supply or sewerage service and is in fact capable of separate occupation.

13.5 Except where detailed below under “non-standard cases” the standard amounts of the charges will be payable for each unit connecting to the company’s mains and/or sewers.

#### Liability to pay the charge

13.6 The charge is payable by the person requesting a connection to the company’s water mains and/or sewers.

13.7 Where no application for a water supply or sewerage service is received or where the company is unable to recover the charge from the person who requested the connection, the charge will be payable by the person who has the benefit of the new supply or service on the charge becoming payable.

#### The charges

Water infrastructure charge	£83.33 per connection
Sewerage infrastructure charge	£83.33 per connection

#### Payment of the charges

13.8 In the case of a new property the infrastructure charge is payable upon connection unless the company has agreed alternative payment arrangements with the customer concerned. A customer wishing to

agree alternative payment arrangements should write to the company on receipt of an invoice for the charges.

13.9 For existing properties which are occupied at the time a connection is required, either payment in full shall be made within six months of the connection or payment may be made in equal annual instalments up to a maximum of twelve including interest at 5.25% per annum.

13.10 In non-standard cases where payment is agreed under a Common Billing Agreement where either: (a) a person who has received a demand or undertaken to pay a water and / or sewerage charge in respect of two or more household premises subject to a Common Billing Agreement fails to pay such a charge within 14 days of the date of connection; or (b) a Common Billing Agreement is terminated otherwise than in accordance with its terms by the person who has undertaken to pay charges under it that person shall pay to the company and the company will recover from that person the standard amount in respect of each such household premises connected.

#### Definition of connection

13.11 In the case of the water infrastructure charge connection is defined as:

- the point in time at which a water meter is installed for measuring use at the property; or
- where a meter has been installed previously for measuring a building supply and building supply charges have been paid, the point at which the supply changes to one for domestic purposes.

13.12 In the case of the sewerage infrastructure charge connection is deemed to be:

- the point at which a water meter is installed for measuring use at the property; or
- where a meter has been installed previously for measuring a building supply and building supply charges have been paid, the point at which the supply changes to one for domestic purposes; or
- where no water supply is taken from a statutory water undertaker, the point at which the property is physically connected to a company owned sewer.

13.13 The company will normally provide an invoice for the due infrastructure charges at the same time as it presents an invoice for connection.

#### Non-standard cases

13.14 There are a number of situations where the infrastructure charges due for a development will not be calculated by simply adding together the relevant number of standard amounts for each unit.

#### *Buildings where there is a Common Billing Agreement*

13.15 Where a building is made up of a number of self-contained units and their future occupiers will not be billed by the company for water and sewerage services but the bill will be paid by a third party (a Common Billing Agreement), the infrastructure charge will be calculated by reference to the water using appliances in the building.

13.16 The table at paragraph 13.22 sets out the nationally agreed "Loading Units" for various water using appliances.

13.17 The infrastructure charge will be calculated by adding together all the loading units for all the appliances in the building; dividing this figure by 24; and then dividing the resulting figure by the total number of self-contained units to which the Common Billing Agreement Applies. This will produce a figure called the "Relevant Multiplier" which will be multiplied by the standard infrastructure charge to determine the total infrastructure charge payable.

*Example*

*A building comprises 10 sheltered retirement flats and the future water and sewerage charges will be paid by a management company for the flats. Totalling the Loading Units for all the water using appliances which are to be installed in the building gives an overall value of 1680.*

<i>Total value of Loading Units</i>	<i>1680</i>
<i>Number of self-contained units in property</i>	<i>10</i>

*Relevant multiplier =  $(1680 \div 24) \div 10 = 7$*

*Infrastructure charges payable = 7 x the standard amounts*

*Using this method of calculation the new development will be liable for 7 sets of infrastructure charges rather than the 10 sets (one for each self-contained unit).*

13.18 In the case of a development with a Common Billing Agreement the relevant multiplier may be more or less than 1.

*Buildings which do not consist of a house and which are supplied by a service pipe with an internal diameter greater than 15mm:*

13.19 In this case the infrastructure charges due will again be calculated by reference to the water using appliances installed in them using the Loading Units in the table at paragraph 13.22.

13.20 The infrastructure charge will be calculated by adding together all the loading units for all the appliances in the building and dividing this figure by 24 to produce the relevant multiplier. If this figure is less than 1, the relevant multiplier will be 1.

13.21 The relevant multiplier figure will then be multiplied by the standard infrastructure amount to determine the charges due.

*Example*

*A factory unit is built, the domestic water using appliances in which produce a total Loading Unit Value of 76.*

$$\text{Relevant multiplier} = 76 \div 24 = 3$$

*Infrastructure charges payable = 3 x the standard amounts*

## 13.22 Table of Loading Units

### **Table of nationally agreed Loading Units for water fittings**

Water Fitting (See Note 1)	Loading Units
WC flushing cistern	2
Wash basin in a house	1.5
Wash basin elsewhere	3
Bath (tap nominal size 20mm)	10
Bath (tap nominal size larger than 20mm)	22
Shower	3
Sink (tap nominal size 15mm)	3
Sink (tap nominal size larger than 15mm)	5
Spray tap	0.5
Bidet	1.5
Domestic appliance (subject to a minimum of 6 LU's per house) (See Note 2)	3
Communal or commercial appliance	10
Any other water fitting or outlet (including a tap – but excluding a urinal or water softener)	3

Notes to be read with the Table:

Note 1. Reference to any fitting includes reference to any plumbing, outlet, dedicated space or planning or other provision for that fitting.

Note 2. In any calculation of the total Loading Units for a property, a minimum of six Loading Units will be included in respect of each house for domestic appliances whether or not the house has any such appliances. The only exception to this will be in the case of any house where neither a washing machine nor a dishwasher can be provided and there is no plumbing, outlet, dedicated space or planning or other provision for either appliance in the house.

*Development or redevelopment of sites formerly connected to water and sewerage services*

13.23 Where a site is developed or redeveloped (including conversions or sub-divisions of buildings) the number of infrastructure charges which will be payable will be the total number of units with connections to water and / or sewerage services after development minus the maximum number of properties which had connections to water and / or sewerage services at any time in the five years before redevelopment began. The credited properties are known as off-sets.

*Example*

*A row of 5 shops and 5 flats all of which had water and sewerage connections is demolished. The site is not re-developed for three years. When it is, a block of 16 self-contained flats is built. The infrastructure charges payable for the redevelopment will be:-*

*16 sets of charges*    Minus    *10 sets of charges (one set for each of the properties connected previously)*    Equals    *6 sets of charges*

13.24 Where a site to be redeveloped consists of a large single non domestic complex – such as a hospital or hotel – and which had a metered connection, the company will take account of demand on services of the original use of the site in the five years before redevelopment began when calculating infrastructure charges (note – where part of a site only has been sold for redevelopment, the continuing water use at that part of the site not being redeveloped will be taken into account when calculating the due infrastructure charges).

13.25 It will do this by dividing the maximum consumption recorded by the meter in any of the five financial years prior to development by the average domestic household consumption in the company's area. This will produce the number of off-sets which the company will set against the infrastructure charges due.

*Example*

*A residential home with a single metered connection is redeveloped and 30 flats built on the site. The maximum annual use of the home in the five year's before redevelopment was 930 m<sup>3</sup>. The infrastructure charges payable for the site will be:*

*930 m<sup>3</sup> divided by average domestic annual consumption (say, 135 m<sup>3</sup>) equals 7 off-sets.*

*30 sets of infrastructure charges – 7 offsets = 23 sets of infrastructure charges.*

13.26 In cases where infrastructure charge liability is calculated using the relevant multiplier principle referred to above, any off-sets due will be set against the total number of infrastructure charges which have been deemed payable using the relevant multiplier principle.

13.27 Note – where a large single non domestic site is redeveloped which did not previously have metered connections the company will be unable to use demand as a basis for calculating infrastructure charges. Charges will be calculated on the basis of the maximum number of properties formerly on the site.

## Disputes

13.28 Any dispute about the application or calculation of the relevant multiplier may be referred to NIAUR at Queen's House, 14 Queen Street, Belfast, BT1 6ER.

## 14. Having a water meter installed

### General principles

- 14.1 A domestic customer paying unmeasured charges may choose to have a meter installed subject to the eligibility criteria set out in the Metering (Prescribed Consumers) Regulations 2007. In summary, the requirement is that the customer must be 60 years of age or older.
- 14.2 The company will install meters in line with its non-domestic metering programme. It will not install meters on non-domestic supplies on demand.
- 14.3 All first time connections will be required to have a meter installed.
- 14.4 The company may reject an application for a meter to be installed on the following bases:
- Practicality
  - Cost
- 14.5 An application for a meter to be installed does not remove liability for payment of unmeasured charges until the meter is fitted, subject to paragraph 14.20.
- 14.6 Only meters provided by the company will be accepted for charging purposes and regardless of where they are installed, meters remain the property and responsibility of the company.

### *Cost of installing a meter*

14.7 The definition of reasonable cost for installing a meter includes the cost of:

- The provision of a meter
- The cost of installation of the meter in the company's preferred location
- The cost of minor alterations to a customer's plumbing to allow installation
- The cost of reinstatement in the case of a meter situated outside a property
- The provision of an outreader for a meter located inside a property

14.8 In the case of a property where a single meter will not record all water used, the company will consider providing and installing multiple meters where the cost of so doing is not unreasonable.

14.9 In terms of practicality, the company may usually consider it impractical to install a meter where:

- a. a single meter will not record all water used in a property; or
- b. a meter will also record water used in another property.

14.10 Any dispute about a company decision will be handled in accordance with the company's complaints procedures and may be referred to NIAUR.

### *Meter location*

- 14.11 A meter must be installed at a position where it records all use within the property for which it has been installed. It must also be accessible for meter reading.
- 14.12 Where the company has used its right to decide a meter location but a customer requires the meter to be located in a different place, the customer may have the meter located in her or his preferred location provided that she or he pays any additional costs of installing the meter in the location requested rather than the location identified by the company.
- 14.13 Similarly if the company decides to fit an out-reader for an internal meter and a customer requires it to be fitted in a different location, the company may require the customer to pay any additional costs of it complying with the customer's requirements.
- 14.14 Requests to alter the position of a meter or out-reader must be made in writing to the company, who will provide a quote to the customer for the additional work requested and payment will be required in advance of installing the meter.

### Domestic customers

#### *Right to a meter and how to apply*

- 14.15 For the primary residence of an eligible customer, the company will install a meter free of installation charge (as long as it is practical so to do and the cost of installation is not unreasonable) if a customer serves a Measured Charges Notice on the company.

14.16 A Measured Charges Notice is a form provided by the company. The form will be sent to customers on request along with a Meter Option Leaflet which will enable customers to estimate the difference between a measured and an unmeasured charge. The form and leaflet can be obtained by contacting the company.

14.17 The company will only consider that it has received a Measured Charges Notice when it receives the signed and completed form from an eligible domestic customer (refer to paragraph 5.3).

14.18 Any tenant wishing to have a water meter installed, should contact their landlord to inform them of their intentions before they apply. Customers with a tenancy of less than 6 months, must ensure their landlord signs their application form and must also submit a copy of the tenancy agreement.

*Timescale to install a meter*

14.19 The company aims to install a meter within six months of receipt of a Measured Charges Notice (with effect from 1st April 2007). The company will take all reasonable efforts to meet this timescale.

14.20 If it does not, the company will use meter readings taken after the meter has been installed as a basis for back-dating metered charges to the date by which the meter should have been installed in accordance with the previous paragraph.

14.21 In the event that a meter cannot be installed the customer will have the option to request either an assessed charge or an unmeasured charge.

### *Reverting to unmeasured charges*

14.22 Where a meter has been installed following the serving of a Measured Charges Notice on the company, the only circumstance in which the property can revert to unmeasured billing is if the customer who served the Measured Charges Notice requests the change within 12 months of the meter being installed.

14.23 Where a new occupier moves into a property with a meter, the customer will pay the measured charge, except in circumstances where the customer is eligible for the Affordability Tariff.

### Non-domestic customers

14.24 The company has powers under the Water and Sewerage Services (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 to require certain categories of property to be metered.

### *Reverting to unmeasured charges*

14.25 Once a meter has been installed in a non-domestic property, measured charges will be payable for the property. There is no right to revert to unmeasured charges.

## 15. Payment of water and sewerage charges

### General provisions

15.1 The company offers a range of payment plans for unmeasured and measured customers which are set out in this section. In summary customers can make payment through the following channels:

- By Direct Debit
- At any bank or building society or via their bank or building society internet or telebanking facilities. Charges may be applied by the bank or building society
- At Post Offices – charges may be applied by the Post Office
- Postal payments
- PayPoint
- Credit / debit card payments (including swipe cards)
- Web self service

### Unmeasured water and sewerage charges

15.2 Unless a customer has agreed a different payment arrangement with the company, unmeasured charges are payable in full 28 days from the date of the bill.

15.3 The company offers a range of payment plans for unmeasured customers:

- Payment by two instalments on 1<sup>st</sup> May and 1<sup>st</sup> October.
- Payment by a maximum of 10 instalments between April and January. (If a customer asks to use this option after April, the charges due will be apportioned on a monthly basis so that they are

settled by the end of the annual billing period). Payment is due on the first of the month.

- Payment by 12 instalments is available on request.

15.4 Where customers require more frequent payment plans, fortnightly or weekly plans are available using Paypoint (paragraph 15.1).

15.5 Where a customer has asked to pay more frequently than half-yearly, the company will provide a payment smart card except where Direct Debit is being used for payment.

15.6 For frequent payment plans customers should call the Accounts Helpline on the Billing Line 0845 8770030 to discuss their requirements and to agree suitable plans. We will always require a payment plan to be set at a level which clears the current year's charges by the end of the annual billing period but if there are arrears on the account we may be able to agree a longer period of time to clear these to make instalments more manageable.

15.7 Frequent payment plans can be requested in writing to PO Box 1026, Belfast, BT1 9DJ.

15.8 Where a customer has agreed a plan to pay a full year's unmeasured charges by a number of instalments and subsequently fails to pay one or more instalments, the balance of annual charges will become payable immediately and the company reserves the right to take recovery action in respect of all unpaid charges unless an alternative payment plan is agreed with the company.

## Measured water and sewerage charges

- 15.9 Measured charges are payable in arrears and unless a customer has agreed a different payment arrangement with the company, they are payable within 14 days of a bill being issued.
- 15.10 Metered bills are usually issued every six months. The company aims to base each bill on a meter reading but may issue a bill based on an estimate. Details of when an individual meter is due to be read are issued to customers when they have a meter installed or move to a metered property.
- 15.11 The company reserves the right to read meters and issue bills on a monthly basis. In such circumstances appropriate notice will be given.
- 15.12 The company operates a special Meter Payment Plan for metered customers. Under the plan customers agree to pay a fixed amount each month. At the end of each year the company will review the account and make any adjustments to the required monthly payment if water use has changed and the amount being paid is too high or too low.
- 15.13 If the account is in credit, customers can choose to have the over-payment refunded or carried forward to reduce next year's payments. If not enough has been paid, the debt will be added to the following year's bill and monthly payments re-set to repay the outstanding balance over the next 12 months.
- 15.14 Fortnightly or weekly plans for paying metered charges are available on request. Monthly, fortnightly and weekly plans are also available for

re-paying any arrears of metered charges and for the assessed volume charge.

15.15 Where a customer wishes to pay more frequently than every three months, the company will provide a payment smart card except where Direct Debit is being used for payment.

15.16 For frequent payment plans customers should call the Accounts Helpline on the Billing Line 0845 8770030 to discuss their requirements and to agree suitable plans. We will always require a payment plan to be set at a level which clears the current year's charges by the end of the annual billing period but if there are arrears on the account we may be able to agree a longer period of time to clear these to make instalments more manageable.

15.17 Frequent payment plans can be requested in writing PO Box 1026, Belfast, BT1 9DJ.

#### Payment by debit or credit cards

15.18 Customers can pay bills by debit card on the internet by accessing our website at [www.niwater.com](http://www.niwater.com). Customers should have their account reference and debit card handy.

15.19 Debit card payments can also be made by phoning the Billing Line on 0845 8770030. Credit card payments will be taken over the telephone where the customer requests the company to do so. The company will not pro-actively seek credit card payments.

### Direct payments from benefit

15.20 This facility is not yet available but may become available during 2007/08. If it does, for customers who are in receipt of benefits, the customer or the company will be able to arrange for the relevant agency to pay their water and sewerage charges directly to the company.

### Currency

15.21 The standard will be for bills to be issued and paid in £ Sterling. Those non-domestic customers who trade based in the Republic of Ireland, will be billed in Sterling and be expected to pay in Sterling. If any customer does pay in any other currency, it will be converted into Sterling with any bank charges and currency fluctuation adjustments being made to the customers account.

15.22 The company cannot accept Direct Debits in any currency other than Sterling.

### Failure to pay charges when they are due

15.23 Customers will be allowed time to pay their bill before a reminder is issued. An interval of 28 days will be allowed before the first reminder is sent.

15.24 Each reminder contact will set out what will happen and when action will be taken if the customer fails to respond. The various actions the customer can take will be clearly set out in the reminder.

## *Domestic supplies*

- 15.25 At least one reminder will be sent before notice to issue a Court claim is sent.
- 15.26 A variety of communication methods will be used to establish contact (e.g. telephone, mail or visiting). The timing of attempted repeat visits and telephone calls will be varied where possible. Communication methods and timing will take account of any special requirements for those customers who are on the special needs register.
- 15.27 After sending a reminder, if payment has not been received and there has been no contact to discuss the outstanding debt, a notice of the intention to ask the Court to issue a Court Claim for non-payment will be issued.
- 15.28 A customer who has been paying by instalments and who has not responded to a reminder will receive a combined notice of cancellation of the instalment plan and the company's intention to issue a Court Claim.
- 15.29 If the company does not receive payment or a response to the Court Claim notice, depending on a customer's payment history, it will either:
- ask the Court to issue a Court Claim;
  - contact the customer again itself;
  - visit a customer to try and agree a payment plan; or
  - ask an Outside Collection Agency to recover the outstanding money.

- 15.30 Where a Court Claim is issued for unmeasured charges, it will be issued for all unpaid charges due for the period up to the end of the annual billing period. Claim amounts can be reduced if the person moves from the property and hence isn't liable to the full year billing. Claims amounts agreed in Court cannot be increased.
- 15.31 If a Court Claim is issued it will add to a customer's debt as the customer will have to pay Court costs plus, at the discretion of the company any interest due on the debt.
- 15.32 A customer who receives a Court Claim can ask the Court to decide how she or he should pay off the debt but this may incur additional Court costs. Customers can also dispute the Court Claim if they believe that they do not owe the money claimed.
- 15.33 If a customer does not respond to a Court Claim, the Court will make an Order against that customer for the full debt. Further legal action, such as referral to the Enforcement of Judgements Office (EJO) can then be taken.
- 15.34 Where an Order for payment has been made by the Court and there is still no agreement with a customer to pay a debt, depending on the circumstances the company will either:
- take further legal action e.g. take to bankruptcy for non-domestic or in extreme cases for domestic customers; or
  - ask an Outside Collection agency to recover the outstanding money; or
  - refer the matter to EJO for enforcement action.

### *Non-domestic supplies*

15.35 Where water is supplied solely to a property other than a domestic property, after a first reminder the company will send a notice that it intends to disconnect the water supply if the debt is not paid. If payment is still not made or the customer does not contact the company to agree a payment plan, the supply may be disconnected. A Court Claim may then be issued to recover the outstanding debt if the customer does not contact the company to agree a payment plan to get the supply reconnected. A reconnection fee (see section 18) must be paid to reconnect the supply as well as payment of a significant proportion of the outstanding debt.

## 16. Charges for Connecting a Property to Water and Sewerage Services

### Connections for water

- 16.1 A connection charge is payable in respect of the work involved in connecting a property to the water main. A water meter will be installed on new connections in accordance with legislative requirements. The water meter remains the property of the company. Where a water meter is installed on a new connection the metered tariff will apply except in circumstances where the Affordability Tariff applies.
- 16.2 The company will only undertake the physical connection to the main and installation of the water meter.
- 16.3 The company is an approved contractor for working in the highway and can provide quotes for carrying out work requested by customers at the company's discretion. Connection charges are payable in advance of the company undertaking any work.
- 16.4 The following charges will apply:
- For each connection up to 25mm diameter, the charge is £190
  - For all other connections the charge will be based on the cost of the work.

### *Separation of Existing Joint Supplies*

- 16.5 The company may grant a reduction on its connection charges where the connection results from the separation of existing joint supplies.

## Connection to sewers

16.6 A standard inspection charge of £100 is payable in respect of all connections to the public sewer supervised by the company. The standard charge assumes materials are supplied and excavations made by the applicant and applies only to connections involving a pipe diameter up to 100mm to a single property. Where the standard charge does not apply the charge will be based on the cost of the work. Any subsequent re-inspections will be charged at the same rate.

## Requisitions

16.7 Articles 76 and 154 of the Water and Sewerage Services (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 provide the basis for persons to requisition either a water main or sewer (or both) from the company. Articles 77 and 155 of the Order require the payment of the reasonable costs of providing that main or sewer by the persons making the requisition.

16.8 In responding to a requisition request, the company will provide a costing for the work. The costs of the work will include, among other things, the reasonable cost of design, labour, plant, materials, supervision and administration. They may also include, among other things, the costs of all pipes, tanks, service reservoirs and pumping works as it is necessary to provide in consequence of the new main or sewer, and a proportion of the cost of mains or sewers which have already been laid in the previous 12 years, but were oversized in anticipation of further demand. In calculating the cost to be borne by the person making the requisition the company will deduct a reasonable cost allowance in respect of supplies of water to premises or drainage of premises for domestic purposes. The following table shows the reasonable cost allowance that would apply for each

domestic property. The reasonable cost allowance to be applied to other supplies of water or drainage for domestic purposes will be calculated on an individual basis.

- 16.9 Different allowances are in operation for properties constructed before 1<sup>st</sup> January 2000 (which have not previously been connected to mains water or the public sewer).

<b>Requisition</b>	<b>New properties</b>	<b>Existing properties</b>
Water main	£2,490	£6,500
Sewer	£2,225	£4,000

## 17. Disposal of Tankered Waste

### Tankered waste disposal charges

17.1 The company will provide a discretionary service for the disposal of tankered waste. The charges for collection and treatment of sewage of a domestic nature (e.g. septic tanks, domestic treatment plants and cesspools) will be:

Option	Service Type	Charge
1	Septic tank desludge (includes removal and treatment of up to 4.5m <sup>3</sup> or 550 gallons of sludge)	£21.65
2	Package plant desludge (includes removal and treatment of up to 4.5m <sup>3</sup> or 550 gallons of sludge) – see also note 1 below.	£23.82
3	Difficult to access septic tanks (includes the removal and treatment of up to 4.5m <sup>3</sup> or 550 gallons of sludge) – see also note 2 below	£23.82
4	Fast response desludge for septic tanks and package plants (includes removal and treatment of up to 4.5m <sup>3</sup> or 550 gallons of sludge)	£35.49
5	Full tanker desludge for customers with larger tanks (includes removal and treatment of up to 9m <sup>3</sup> or 1,100 gallons of sludge)	£42.40
	Aborted visit charge as a result of erroneous customer supplied information.	£21.65

The company aims to respond to option 1, 2, 3 and 5 requests within 12 working days from the date of the request. The company aims to respond to option 4 requests within 1 working day from the date of the request.

Note 1: a package plant is a private domestic sewage treatment plant which contains moving parts and is powered by an electrical motor.

Note 2: difficult access is where a tanker (18 tonne) vehicle cannot get to within 30m of the septic tank and park on a hardstand suitable of supporting the weight of the vehicle. Gates to properties need to be at least 3.5m wide to allow the vehicle access to the site. The company will charge £21.65 if a visit has to be aborted (e.g. due to problems with access to a property).

- 17.2 The company is required under the Waste and Contaminated Land (NI) Order 1997, the Waste Management Licensing Regulations (NI) 2003 and the Controlled Waste (Registration of Carriers and Seizure of Vehicles) Regulations (NI) 1999 to verify the nature and source of any tankered waste water and reserves the right to refuse to accept any discharge and / or to charge the appropriate charge, at its discretion, dependent upon the quality of the information provided by the discharger.

## 18. Other Standard Charges

### Search fees

18.1 Records may be inspected free of charge at designated offices by prior appointment.

18.1.1 Written requests for map information will be charged as follows:

Standard Charge – Routine:

- o £28.08 per paper copy for water and sewer details
- o £20.00 per paper copy for water/sewers individually
- o £3.40 each additional paper copy

Standard Charge – Non Routine:

This will require a site visit and a survey of the existing infrastructure.

- o £119.15 per site visit and inspection/survey
- o £21.12 per paper copy of water/sewer records individually
- o £3.40 for each additional paper copy

18.1.2 Where the company agrees to undertake a search of its records for any person in relation to other types of request, there will be a standard charge of £10 for each routine enquiry plus a charge of £5 for each copy document provided. Actual costs will be charged for any non-routine enquiries. Details of routine enquiries can be obtained from the company prior to making a request.

18.2 No charge will be made for sending a customer a copy of the information on the Drinking Water Quality Register for the Water Into Supply Zone in which they live because they are unable to attend a company office to inspect the Register. Charges will be made for providing information from the Register about Zones in which the enquirer does not live.

### Other information

18.3 The company may charge for providing other information:

#### Photocopying

black & white	A4	£0.10/ sheet
	A3	£0.20/ sheet
colour	A3 or A4	£0.50/ sheet

Where more than 40 sheets are provided, time will also be charged at £25 per hour or part hour with a minimum charge of £5. Postage will be charged at cost.

18.4 Payment will be required in advance. In cases where significant amounts of information are being requested, the company will estimate the cost of provision and reserves the right to charge an additional amount should actual cost vary significantly from the estimate.

18.4.1 The company is committed to openness and aims to release as much information as possible both routinely and in response to requests under Freedom of Information (FOI) legislation.

- 18.4.2 The FOI Act states that fees can be charged for requests above the appropriate limit although the Act “does not oblige a public authority to comply with a request for information if the authority estimates that the cost of complying with the request would exceed the appropriate limit”.
- 18.4.3 The appropriate limit for central government is currently £600, with staff costs charged at £25 per hour regardless of the seniority of the staff involved.
- 18.4.4 If the cost of complying with the request exceeds the appropriate limit the company can:
  - 18.4.4.1 comply with the request and waive the fee;
  - 18.4.4.2 issue a fees notice bases on the estimated cost of complying with the request; or
  - 18.4.4.3 decline the request on the basis that it exceeds the appropriate limit.
- 18.4.5 The company will not decline to provide information, or apply a charge for information, unless it exceeds an assessed cost of £600 (the ‘appropriate limit’ under the FOI Act). In the case of disbursements, which may be charged for whether or not we are also charging for the prescribed costs, any charge less than £35 will be waived.
- 18.5 Certain of the company’s records are open for inspection free of charge during normal office hours. Details can be obtained by contacting the company.

### Disconnection and reconnection charges (water)

Reconnection at the company's stopcock (following temporary disconnection or following non-payment and subsequent disconnection) – payable in advance of reconnection	£130
Where the disconnection/reconnection cannot be made at the company's stopcock all the actual cost involved for the physical disconnection/reconnection will be payable subject to a deposit of £50 being payable in advance of disconnection/reconnection	At cost
Permanent disconnection	No charge

### Other Miscellaneous Charges

18.6 The following section gives details about the charges the company will apply for the following:

- Sewers for adoption – new development
- Sewers for adoption – existing
- Building over or near public sewers
- Diversion of water mains, sewers, pipes and assets
- Pre-development enquiries.

18.7 As new charges will be phased in over the first two years, the charges listed in the paragraphs below are the 'phased' charges i.e. 1/3 of the full charge.

18.8 More detailed information on how to apply for these services is contained within the 'Northern Ireland Water – Developers & House-builders Information Pack'.

#### Sewers for Adoption

18.9 Sewers for adoption – new development: an application can be made for an article 161 sewer adoption agreement. Details of a drainage layout to serve a new development should be submitted and an agreement entered into with the company that the sewerage system will be adopted at a future agreed date. Charges will be applied as follows:

- Application Fee (non-returnable): £84  
Required on submission of a preliminary application for approval.
  
- Inspection/Adoption Fee:  
This will be set at 0.85% of the estimated cost of sewer construction (£335 minimum) using a schedule of rates prepared by the company.
  
- Bond Surety (Cash or Guarantee Bond):  
Bonding arrangements are required to the value of
  - 20% of estimated cost of gravity sewer based on the company's schedule of rates (with a minimum of £2,000).
  - 25% of estimated cost of pumping stations and pumping mains (with a minimum of £5,000)
  
- Legal / Administration Fee:
  - Provision of agreement and transfer of lands £110

18.10 Sewers for adoption – existing: an application can be made for an article 159 sewer adoption. Charges will be applied as follows:

Application / Assessment Fee (non-returnable)	£84
Inspection/Adoption Fee (including CCTV Survey)	£335
Legal fee for the provision of agreement and transfer of land	£50 (minimum)

Building over or near sewer

18.11 Agreement to carry out any building work over the top of or within 3 metres of a public sewer must be sought. It is an offence to build over or near a sewer unless permission has been granted by the company. Proposals should be forwarded to the company for assessment. The fee for this application/assessment will be:

Sewers (<300 mm diameter)	£84
Sewers (>300 mm in diameter)	£117

18.12 Depending on the assessment of the application, the company will advise of the initial recommendation.

18.13 Charges in connection with realignment of the sewer by the applicant are as follows:

Inspection and sign-off (Routine)	£150
Inspection and sign-off (Non-routine)	At Cost

#### 18.14 Building over or near to the sewer

Inspection and sign-off (Routine)	£117
Inspection and sign-off (Non-routine)	At Cost

#### Diversion of watermain

18.15 Building over a public watermain on new development or redevelopment sites is NOT permitted. If an existing water main crosses a new development site, it is preferable for the layout to be designed to avoid the asset and provide an agreed clearance. If this is not possible the main must be diverted before any building works start. The applicant can propose a scheme and ask the company to consider whether such a diversion is technically possible.

18.16 Please contact the company as soon as possible to ensure works are not delayed or unforeseen costs incurred. A technical assessment fee of £84 is payable for the proposed realignment scheme.

18.17 When a scheme is agreed, the company will complete the works on a fully rechargeable basis and recover all costs from the applicant. An initial deposit of £2,000 is required with an application form or when a diversion request is received. The company requires all preparation, excavation and restoration work to be carried out by the applicant.

18.17 Pre-development enquiries: applications can be made to the company to provide information about the available capacity in the sewer network at the wastewater treatment works or the availability of adequate water supply and pressure. Where a proposed development is in proximity to a wastewater treatment works, the company can carry out an odour assessment.

Pre-development enquiry

Application fee (includes any service markups provided to the applicant) £75

Network Capacity Check

- Application/Assessment Fee £50
- Hydraulic (Flow and Capacity) assessment charged at full cost less a £500 deposit payable in advance

Developer encroachment/ odour assessment

- Application Fee £67

The applicant will be advised of the full cost. If they wish to proceed they will be asked to pay in advance.