

WATER CHARGES FACT SHEET



SGCH calculates our tenants' water charges differently, depending on whether you have an individual or shared water meter.

SGCH works out our tenants' water charges according to the *Residential Tenancies Act 2010* and Guidelines approved by the Minister for Family and Community Services. You can read our Water Charging Policy for more information.

WHAT DO I NEED TO PAY FOR WATER?

This depends on whether you live in a property with its own (individual) water meter, like a house, or a property with a shared water meter, like a block of units.

Some properties have an internal, separate water meter. This is for the resident's information but is not checked by meter readers and doesn't have a separate bill. SGCH will charge tenants of these properties the same way as shared water meter properties.

Properties with a Separate Water Meter

SGCH bills these properties for their actual water use. Sydney Water sends the bill for water rates plus use to SGCH. We pay the bill in full and then invoice the tenant for their water use only. We send a copy of the Sydney Water bill as proof we have charged you the correct amount, but you only need to pay the amount of your invoice from us.

IMPORTANT: A lot of people accidentally pay the full Sydney Water bill by taking their copy to the post office. This can be difficult to fix. You only need to pay SGCH for the amount on the invoice, using the payment methods in the 'How do I pay for water charges?' section.

Properties with a Shared Water Meter

For customers living in a property with a shared water meter, we will charge you 4.5% of your total household rent (which is already based on your income) because the water meter in these properties does not show how much water each individual unit has used. We have capped this at \$8.50 a week for each household.

So, for example:

Mr and Mrs Tenant pay \$250 rent a week. SGCH calculates their water use as 4.5% of \$250, which turns out to be \$11.25 a week. However, SGCH will only charge them \$8.50 a week because of the cap.

SGCH will regularly reconcile the total amount paid by all tenants in a building. If this is more than the actual water charges for the building, SGCH will provide a credit to the tenants.

HOW DO I PAY FOR WATER USE CHARGES?

Every tenant has a rent account and a water account. Tenants must pay rent and water separately. You can pay a lump sum toward your future water charges, but it usually easiest to pay an amount fortnightly like your rent.

You can pay for water:

- **Using a bank deposit book:** We give one to each tenant when you sign your lease. When it runs out, just call us and we will order a replacement.

- **Using Centrepay:** You can arrange for Centrelink to transfer money to us directly from your pension or benefit payment.
- **Using EFT:** You can ask your bank to regularly send a set amount of money to SGCH electronically.
- **Note: DO NOT** try to pay your water use at the post office. They cannot transfer your money to SGCH and may incorrectly send it to Sydney Water instead.

If a tenant has not paid a water charge 21 days after the date it was charged to their account, SGCH may take action through the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal (NCAT) to recover the debt.

ARE THERE ANY EXCEPTIONS?

In some situations, SGCH may consider giving allowances to tenants who need a lot more water than usual, for serious medical reasons (for example, home based dialysis).

Tenants in this situation can fill out a Water Allowance Application form and submit the request together with documents supporting their claim.

WHAT IF I AM HAVING TROUBLE PAYING MY WATER CHARGES?

If you are concerned about your rent or water charges or are struggling to make payments, please call us on 9585 1499. We can talk to you about repayment plans and/or recommend specialist support. We can also help arrange for you to receive appropriate financial assistance and advice.

WHAT IF I AM NOT HAPPY WITH THE POLICY?

Tenants cannot appeal the law allowing SGCH to charge tenants for water use, but if you have any questions or concerns about how SGCH has calculated your water use, please contact your Tenancy Manager. We can explain how the calculations are made, or check whether there has been a mistake.

If you are still not happy after speaking with your Tenancy Manager, you can lodge an official appeal to SGCH, if:

1. You think that SGCH made a mistake when we assessed your water charges, and in accordance with our Water Charges Policy. (This only applies to properties with shared water meters.)
2. You disagree with our decision about your application for a Water Allowance.

MORE INFORMATION

You can get more information by visiting our website www.sgch.com.au or calling our office on 1800 573 370.