

# Water and wastewater charges

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## Landlords are responsible for water supply

Landlords are responsible for making sure enough water is available at their rental properties. If the property doesn't have a reticulated water supply, the landlord must make sure water can be adequately collected and stored.

If the property is part of a unit title development, the body corporate rules form part of the tenancy agreement. If the body corporate rules regulate the supply of water among the units, landlords should point this out to potential or current tenants. They must also attach a copy of the relevant rules to the tenancy agreement.

If the water supply is from a tank, the landlord should provide a full tank at the start of a tenancy. The tenancy agreement should record that the tenant will arrange and pay for any refills they need.

Water tanks should be an appropriate size. An average-sized house should have a tank of about 5000 gallons (22,500 litres). The tank needs to be properly connected by a guttering system to a roof of reasonable size so the tank will be topped up by rainwater. There should be no leaks or contamination.

The pump is an essential part of a tank water system. Provided the pump is subjected only to normal wear and tear, its maintenance is the responsibility of the landlord. If tenants cause damage to the pump, for example by letting the pump run when the tank is empty, they may be held responsible for the cost of repairs. It would be useful for the landlord to provide written instructions and explain how the tank water system works.

## Who pays for water and wastewater charges

The tenant pays for water charges if:

- the property has a separate water meter
- the water supplier provides water to the property on a metered basis
- the charges can be exclusively attributed to the tenants occupation of the premises.

A metered water supply allows a water supplier to charge for the amount of water used.

The landlord is responsible for paying the whole water account. They can then seek reimbursement from the tenant.

The water account cannot be put in the tenants name, but some water companies allow a copy of the account to be sent to the tenant with the landlords permission.

Where the tenant reimburses the landlord for water charges, the tenant pays water charges only for the property they're renting.

Water suppliers may charge for wastewater in different ways, including fixed charges or charges for the amount of wastewater produced. This varies around the country.

Landlords are usually responsible for fixed wastewater charges. These are charged whether or not the property is occupied.

Tenants may be charged for the wastewater they produce. Some water suppliers calculate wastewater based on how much water they supply.

## What happens if water charges aren't paid

If the tenant pays the landlord, but the landlord doesn't pay the supplier and the water is disconnected, the landlord may be responsible for reconnection.

If the tenant doesn't pay, the tenant is in breach of their tenancy agreement. The landlord can issue a 14-day notice to remedy to give the tenant 14 days to pay. If the tenant still doesn't pay, the landlord can apply to the Tenancy Tribunal to get it sorted.