

Testing your household water meter 2026/2027



Water for the North West

Before you arrange for your meter to be tested, it's worth considering if you have changed your water habits at home. Is your meter really playing up, or are you simply using more water than you think?

Our meters hardly ever go wrong, and when they do, they are more likely to under-record your water usage than over-record it.

If you've installed a thirsty new household appliance recently, such as a power shower, or have been giving the hosepipe or sprinkler a regular workout, this could easily cause a spike in your water usage – and your bill.

Sprinklers can be especially thirsty, using more water in an hour than a family of four does in a whole day.

Your current bill could also look higher than normal if your previous bill was based on an estimated reading.

Try our online challenge at unitedutilities.com/meters. Our instant online calculator will estimate what you should be paying, based on your typical water usage.

It's also worth checking for hidden pipe leaks, as these can be a common cause of high readings. See the next section for our step-by-step guide to leak spotting. Look out too for dripping taps, faulty toilet cisterns, or dripping showerheads, as all these issues will increase your water bill.

One of the main reasons for a sudden increase in water use is a faulty toilet cistern. Newer push button toilet cisterns tend to overflow into the bowl rather than via an overflow pipe through the outer wall of your home. As these leaks are not easy to spot they can waste an incredible amount of water.

If you have a faulty cistern you may be able to hear a faint hissing sound as the cistern is constantly refilling. Another way to check is to dry the toilet bowl before placing a piece of dry toilet paper on it. You'll soon see the toilet paper get wet if water is trickling down into the toilet from the cistern. Visit unitedutilities.com/leakyloo to watch a video on how to check if you have a faulty toilet cistern.

Our factsheet 'How to check your water usage' gives lots of tips on locating leaks and is available at our website unitedutilities.com/leaflets

Hidden leaks – don't let them cost you

Hidden leaks on the pipes inside your home, or the outside supply pipe beneath the garden or driveway, could mean you are pouring money down the drain.

Unfortunately, your water meter can't tell the difference between things which are wasting water (such as dripping taps and leaking pipes) and your everyday water usage. Both will make the meter dial turn and cost you money.

Before applying for your meter to be tested, it's worth carrying out the following test. You can normally find your meter where the water pipe enters your home (close to your stop tap), or outside in the footpath:

STEP 1:

Make yourself a brew and use the loo. This check will take some time.

STEP 2:

Turn off all taps and appliances which use water.

STEP 3:

Wait 30 minutes to allow any tanks and cisterns to fill up, then take a meter reading (including the red digits).

STEP 4:

Don't use any water for at least two hours before you take another meter reading (longer if possible, ideally overnight if you can).

STEP 5:

Compare the two readings. Have they changed? If so you could have a sneaky leak.

Visit unitedutilities.com/household-leaks for advice on how to check for leaks both inside your home and on your outside water supply pipe.

Getting your meter tested

If, after carrying out these checks, you still believe your meter is faulty, then we can take it away to be tested. Please fill out the attached form and send it back to us.

Your meter will be taken to an independent test centre, and a new one installed in its place. Don't worry, the old meter won't be reinstalled, even if it passes the test.

Your old meter will be tested on a Trading Standards approved test rig, and its performance measured against national guidelines.

If the test proves that the meter isn't faulty, you will have to pay for the cost of the test, which currently stands at **£70.00 plus VAT** and no amendments will be made to your bill.

However, if it fails, we will pay for the test, and amend your bill based on the results of the test. When working out how much we owe you, we will assume that the meter has been faulty since the last but one reading. We'll write to you to explain how we have done the sums, when the time comes.

Independence guaranteed

Your water meter test will be carried out by independent experts, not by our own engineers.

Should you wish, you can contact your local Trading Standards office, and ask them to perform the test instead. You can find your nearest office here: www.gov.uk/find-local-trading-standards-office. Please note they are likely to charge for this work.

For further information



Visit our website and click on 'Live chat' to webchat with a member of our team or go to unitedutilities.com/contactus



0345 672 2999

For opening hours please visit unitedutilities.com/contactus where you can also get in touch with us online.



United Utilities
PO Box 50
Warrington
WA55 1AU

This leaflet is one in a series of publications containing useful information for our customers. Others that may be of interest to you are:

- **A summary of our charges**
- **A guide to paying your water bill**
- **A guide to our Priority Services**
- **A guide to using water wisely**
- **Support with your water bill**
- **Our complaints procedure**
- **Lead pipe replacement scheme**
- **Our standards of service**
- **How to check your water usage**

You can download any of our leaflets from our website: unitedutilities.com/leaflets, or write to: **United Utilities, PO Box 459, Warrington WA55 1WB.**



About us

United Utilities is the North West's water company. We keep the taps flowing and toilets flushing for seven million customers every day. From Crewe to Carlisle, we work hard behind the scenes to help your life flow smoothly.

Household water meter test application form 2026/2027



Please complete and return the application form if you would like us to test your water meter.

Please test my water meter. I agree to pay £70.00 plus VAT if you find my water meter is working correctly.

Please complete all sections using block capitals and black ink.

Personal details	
Title (please tick)	<input type="checkbox"/> Mr <input type="checkbox"/> Mrs <input type="checkbox"/> Miss <input type="checkbox"/> Ms <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please state) <input type="text"/>
Full name	<input type="text"/>
Address (including postcode)	<input type="text"/>
Daytime telephone number	<input type="text"/>
Evening telephone number	<input type="text"/>
Mobile telephone number	<input type="text"/>
Email	<input type="text"/>
Date of birth	<input type="text"/>
Customer account number (shown on your bill)	<input type="text"/>
Water meter serial number (if visible, this can be found on top of the meter)	<input type="text"/>
Meter reading (use black/white digits only)	<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>
Date of reading	<input type="text"/>

Please return this form to:

United Utilities
PO Box 50
Warrington
WA55 1AU

Signature	<input type="text"/>
Print name	<input type="text"/>

For office use only

Work order no	<input type="text"/>
---------------	----------------------



About us

United Utilities is the North West's water company. We keep the taps flowing and toilets flushing for seven million customers every day. From Crewe to Carlisle, we work hard behind the scenes to help your life flow smoothly.