



Your water and sewerage services 2020-21

Important information, please read and keep



albionwater.co.uk





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Here to help

Our customer services team can assist with any query about your account or service, call us on **03300 242020**. You can also find lots of useful information on our website, **albionwater.co.uk**, in the **Customer** section.

For payment methods please refer to your bill, our website or contact our customer services team.

If you have a problem with your water or sewerage services our customer services team can arrange for a member of our site teams to visit you. Our employees always carry an identity card which they will show you before asking to enter your home. You can check if a card is valid by calling us on **0800 917 5819**. We also operate a password scheme for your security, if you would like to set this up please speak to our customer services team.

If you would like to make a complaint you can contact our customer services team or log it on our website. If you have contacted us about an issue and are unhappy with the resolution you can contact the **Consumer Council for Water (CCW)** on **0300 034 2222**. If you are still unhappy after **CCW** has investigated your issue you can contact the **Water Redress Scheme (WATRS)** on **020 7520 3801**.



Your water and sewerage services

The services we provide to your property will vary from site to site. If you are unsure you can check your bill for our three letter service code (shown on the top left as part of your customer account code).

Service codes:

WON	Water only
SON	Sewerage only
WAS	Water and sewerage
WRS	Water, green water and sewerage
SAR	Sewerage and green water



If you have a green water supply to your property, remember that this is intended for toilet flushing and garden watering only. Therefore if you need to install a garden tap at a property which has a green water supply please ensure it is connected to this system. You should ensure that any plumbing work that takes place in your property is done by an approved plumber (find a qualified plumber at watersafe.org.uk or phone **0333 207 9030**). Your green water supply pipes are clearly labelled but if you need more information please contact us.



Help with your bill

Did you know that we offer single occupier tariffs for unmetered properties? We can reduce your sewerage charges if you can demonstrate that the surface water from your property doesn't go into our system. We can also offer you advice if you are considering having a meter installed.

You can find further information on our tariffs in the **Customer** section of our website or alternatively please contact our customer services team and we can arrange for the information to be sent to you by post or email.



If you are experiencing financial difficulties

We're here to help and it's best to contact us straight away. Our customer services team will review your account to ensure that you are on the correct tariff and that you are using the most convenient payment method for your situation. We can give you advice on the tariffs and schemes that we offer, including WaterSure, Special Assistance Fund (SAF) and WaterDirect.

- **WaterSure** is a special tariff for customers on a meter who use high amounts of water. To qualify you must be in receipt of certain benefits and have either three or more children or a medical condition that means you use a lot of water.
- Our **Special Assistance Fund (SAF)** is a restricted fund, to qualify you must be in receipt of certain benefits and have a bill for the full year.
- **WaterDirect** is run in partnership with the Department for Work and Pensions and is designed to help you pay your arrears in affordable amounts when you receive a qualifying benefit.

You can contact Citizens Advice, for free independent advice. To find your local centre visit citizensadvice.org.uk or phone **03444 111 444**.

For more information please visit our website or contact our customer services team.

How to read your meter

We recommend that you read your meter(s) regularly, as it can help you to keep an eye on your water use and detect any leaks.

As an Albion Water customer, you may have two meters, one for drinking water and one for green water which is used for toilet flushing and garden watering.

Finding your meter

The meter is placed either in the pavement or property forecourt. It's usually inside an underground chamber which is covered with a lid marked 'water'. If you can't find your meter, please call us on **03300 242020**.

If you live in a flat, you might find your water meter in a cabinet inside the building or on the property forecourt. Your meter should be marked with your flat number.

Reading your meter

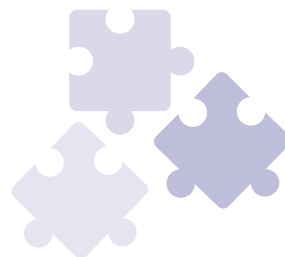
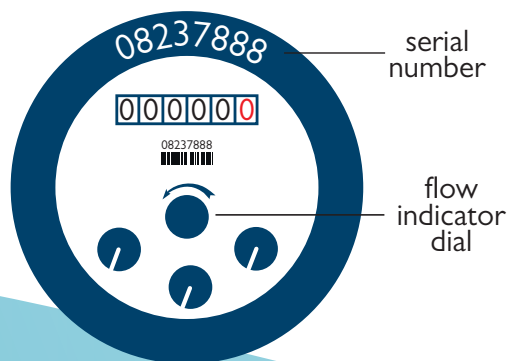
Step 1 Lift the outer lid using a flat-headed screwdriver. If your meter is indoors it won't have a lid.

Step 2 Remove the polystyrene cover if there is one. If there's another lid, pull it up to see the meter face. Remember to put this back when you've taken the reading, as it is there to protect the meter from frost damage.

Step 3 Check that the serial number on your bill matches the one on the meter. If you haven't yet had a bill, please call us on **03300 242020** to confirm your serial number.

Step 4 When taking the reading, you only need to look at the numbers in **black**. Please ignore any numbers in **red**, you will only need to note these if you suspect you have a leak. You will notice a flow indicator dial in the centre of the meter which spins when water is being used. If you notice the dial is spinning and you know you're not using any water or appliances, it may indicate that you have a leak.

We aim to read your meter every six months. If we send you an estimated bill, you can give us an actual meter reading online at albionwater.co.uk/meter-reading



Meter obstruction

We require access to our meters at all times in order to carry out checks and maintenance. Although we prefer to install our meters in the public footpath they may be located in your front garden or driveway; where this is the case please ensure that they are kept free from permanent obstructions (e.g. walls, flower beds) and are accessible to our staff. The external stop tap for your property is usually located in the meter box and you may also require occasional access to carry out work or in the event of a water leak. If you have any concerns regarding the location of your meter(s) please call our customer service team. The meter belongs to Albion Water irrespective of its location; to detach, interfere or otherwise tamper with it is a criminal offence.

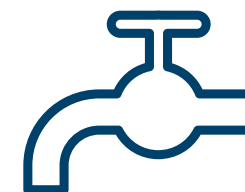


Leakage advice

If your home suffers a burst pipe, which can happen during periods of cold weather, you could be left with no water and a hefty bill to repair the damage to your home. Safeguard your water supply by following these simple steps to protect your home.

Locate your stop tap

It is a good idea to know where your internal stop tap is and to check that it works. Try closing and opening it. The stop tap can usually be found on the pipework under the kitchen sink or in a downstairs bathroom or cloakroom, or the cellar if your property has one. If you get a leak or burst pipe inside the property you will need to turn the internal stop tap off to prevent any flooding or damage. External stop taps are located at the front of a property, normally within the public footpath. If you have any trouble locating it, please contact us and we'll arrange for a member of our team to visit.



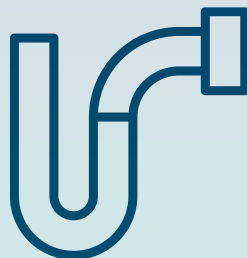
Insulate pipes

Ensure any outdoor taps or pipework in exposed areas are properly insulated to prevent them from bursting in cold temperatures. You can buy pipe lagging from most DIY stores.

Further advice can be found on the WaterSafe website at watersafe.org.uk/advice

Your pipework

If we supply your property with water services, we are normally responsible for the drinking water main and green water main in the road and leading to the boundary of your property. If a meter(s) is present, we own and maintain this but you may be responsible for damage to these devices.



You are responsible for the following drinking water and green water pipes:

- The water supply pipe which runs from the boundary of your property into your property.
- Any water supply pipes within the boundary of your property.
- Any pipes within your property.

If we supply your property with sewerage services then we are responsible for the public sewers and drains and you are responsible for any private sewers and drains.

Further information can be found in our Code of Practice which is available on our website, or alternatively please contact our customer services team who can send a copy by post or email.

Before cold weather arrives make sure that any small plumbing issues are dealt with and that all your outdoor taps and pipework are properly insulated. To find an approved plumber please visit watersafe.org.uk

You can find additional information in the leaflet 'Looking after water in your home' which is available on the Water Regulations Advisory Scheme (WRAS) website wras.co.uk

Our Guaranteed Service Standards

The Guaranteed Standards Scheme is a statutory scheme, which applies minimum performance standards to the regulated services of all water and sewerage companies. In many cases we provide levels of payment in excess of those required by this scheme. We guarantee to provide the following standards of service in our day to day dealings with you, subject to the exceptions specified.



If we fail to achieve any of the standards set out in section 1 below we will pay you £50, and for those in section 2 we will pay you £30 automatically within 10 working days, or credit the relevant amount to your account if it is in arrears. If payment is not made within 10 working days you can claim a further £30 by calling or writing to our customer service team.

1 Keeping appointments

When we make an appointment with you in writing or by telephone, we will as a minimum tell you whether we will visit before or after 1pm or you can ask for an appointment within a two hour time frame. We will keep the appointment within the correct time frame. Wherever possible we will make an actual time appointment for which we will not be late by more than 30 minutes.

If we have to change any appointment we will give you at least 24 hours' notice.

We are not required to make a payment if you cancel the appointment, nor if it is impracticable to keep the appointment due to:

- (a) severe weather, or
- (b) industrial action by our employees, or
- (c) an act or default of a person other than our representative.

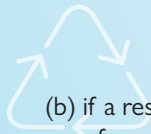
2 Replying to correspondence

We will send you a reply within 10 working days of receiving a written query about the correctness of your account. Similarly, we will send you a reply within 10 working days of receiving a written complaint.

We will notify you within five working days of receiving a written request to change the method by which you pay your account if we cannot meet the request.

We are not required to make a payment:

- (a) if you inform us that you do not wish to pursue the query or request, or



- (b) if a response is not made within the required period because of industrial action of our employees, or the act or default of a third party, or
- (c) if the query or request was incorrectly addressed, or
- (d) from the point at which a correspondence becomes frivolous or vexatious.

3 Flooding from sewers – internal flooding

If we know that effluent has escaped from our sewers and entered the buildings of your property, or passed beneath a suspended floor, we will automatically make a payment equal to your annual sewerage charges for each incident of sewer flooding. We will make a minimum payment of £150 up to a maximum of £1,000. We will make this payment within 20 working days or we will automatically make a further payment of £30 if you are a domestic customer or £50 if you are a business customer.

We are not required to make a payment if:

- (a) sewer flooding was caused by:
 - exceptional weather conditions
 - industrial action by our employees
 - your actions
 - a defect, inadequacy or blockage in your drains or sewers, or
- (b) it is impractical for us to have identified you as being affected, and you did not make a claim within three months following the date of the internal sewer flooding incident.

4 External flooding

Where you are materially affected by effluent escaping from our sewers and entering your land or property, and you make a written claim (to the customer services address) within three months of the incident, we will make a payment to you. We will pay a sum equal to 50% of the annual sewerage charge, subject to a minimum payment of £75 and a maximum payment of £500 in respect of each incident. We will make this payment within 20 working days of your claim or we will automatically make a further payment of £30 if you are a domestic customer or £50 if you are a business customer.

We are not required to make a payment if:

- (a) sewer flooding was caused by:
 - exceptional weather conditions
 - industrial action by our employees
 - your actions
 - a defect, inadequacy or blockage in your drains or sewers, or

- (b) we have made a payment to you in respect of the same incident for internal flooding, or
- (c) you were not materially affected by the incident (see below), or
- (d) you have not claimed payment within three months following the date of external sewer flooding incident.

In deciding whether you have been materially affected by the incident, we will take into account:

- (a) what parts of your land or property the effluent entered
- (b) the duration of the flooding
- (c) whether the flooding restricted the access to your land or property
- (d) whether the flooding restricted the use of your land or property
- (e) any other relevant considerations of which we are aware.

For both internal and external flooding we will endeavour to provide assistance with removing sewage debris and disinfecting the area affected.

5 Notice of interruption to supply

Where the supply of water to you is to be cut off to carry out necessary works we shall, before the supply is cut off, notify you in writing of the time by which the supply will be restored. Where the supply of water to you has been interrupted or has been shut off to carry out necessary works in an emergency (and notice is not given in accordance with section 60(3) of the Water Industry Act), we shall take all reasonable steps to notify affected customers as soon as is reasonably practicable:

- (a) of the fact that the supply has been interrupted or cut off;
- (b) where an alternative supply may be obtained; and
- (c) of the time by which it is proposed the supply should be restored.

Other than in emergency situations and necessary but unplanned works, if the water supply is cut off for more than four hours and we have failed to give notice to you we will, except in the circumstances below, pay you £30, or £50 for non-domestic customers. If we fail to pay this within 10 working days you can claim an additional £30 if you are a domestic customer or £50 if you are a business customer.

The circumstances described above are:

- (a) that industrial action by our employees or the act or default of a person other than an officer, employee or agent of Albion Water or a person acting on behalf of its agent made it impracticable to give the notice at least 48 hours before the water supply was cut off; or
- (b) that it was impractical for us to have identified you as being affected and that you did not make a claim for payment, whether orally or in writing, under this guarantee within three months following the date on which your supply was cut off.

6 Supply not duly restored

This guarantee applies where the supply of water to your premises is interrupted or cut off by us as described in section 5. Where this guarantee applies we shall, except in the circumstances described in section 5, pay to you (or credit your account) the sum of £30 in the case of domestic premises and £50 for non-domestic customers if:

- (a) the supply of water to the premises is not restored by the time specified in a notice given in accordance with section 5.
- (b) where the supply is interrupted or cut off in such circumstances as are mentioned in section 5 because of a leak or burst in a strategic main, if the supply is not restored within 48 hours from the time when we first became aware of the interruption or the supply was cut off.
- (c) where the supply is interrupted or cut off as mentioned in subsection (b) and there is no leak or burst as is so mentioned, if the supply is not restored within 12 hours from the time when we first became aware of the interruption or the supply was cut off. Where a payment is due to be made or credited to you by virtue of this section we shall, except in the circumstances described below, pay to you (or credit your account), a further sum, in respect of each further complete period of 24 hours during which the supply remains unrestored, of £10 in the case of domestic customers and £25 for non-domestic customers.

The circumstances mentioned above are:

- (a) that severe weather conditions or industrial action by our employees or the act or default of a person other than an officer, employee or agent of Albion Water or a person acting on behalf of its agent precluded the restoration of the supply within the relevant period; or
- (b) in a case described in the circumstances of (b) or (c) above which were so exceptional that it would be unreasonable to have expected the supply to be restored within the relevant period; or
- (c) that it was impractical for us to have identified you as being affected and that you have not made a claim for payment, either orally or in writing, under this guarantee within three months following the date on which the supply was cut off.

If we fail to pay this within 10 working days you can claim an additional £30 if you are a domestic customer or £50 if you are a business customer.

This guarantee does not apply where a supply is interrupted or cut off because of drought.

7 Low potable water pressure

We will maintain a minimum pressure in a communication pipe serving your premises with water at 10 metres static head. At this pressure it should not take longer than 18 seconds to fill a two litre container. Where in any period of 28 days the pressure in a communication pipe falls below this level of pressure on two occasions lasting more

than one hour we will, except in the circumstances described below, pay you (or credit your account) the sum of £30.

The exceptions described in this paragraph are:

- (a) that a payment under this regulation has already been made to you in respect of the same financial year; or
- (b) that it was impractical for us to have identified you as affected and that you have not made a claim for payment, either orally or in writing, under this guarantee within three months from the later date of the two occasions on which the pressure fell below 10 metres static head; or
- (c) that industrial action by our employees or the act or default of a person other than an officer, employee or agent of Albion Water or a person acting on behalf of its agents made it impracticable to maintain the minimum pressure referred to in the first paragraph; or
- (d) for non-potable water where an alternative site specific minimum pressure has been communicated to our customers (e.g. on bills).

This regulation does not apply where the pressure falls below the minimum pressure referred to in this section, in connection with the carrying out of necessary maintenance works or because of drought.

8 Restrictions on use

This guarantee applies where we issue you with a 'Restriction of Use Notice' after we have become aware of an actual water quality problem. Where this guarantee applies we shall, except in the circumstances described below, pay to you (or credit your account) the sum of £30, each time it happens.

The circumstances in this paragraph are:

- (a) that it was impractical for us to have identified you as affected and that you have not made a claim for payment, either orally or in writing, under this guarantee within three months from the date of the Restriction of Use Notice; or
- (b) that it was necessary to issue the Restriction of Use Notice as a result of severe weather conditions, industrial action by our employees or the act or default of a person other than an officer, employee or agent of Albion or a person acting on behalf of its agents.

9 Working in the street

Except in emergencies we will always try to carry out work in the street so that access to individual properties is not blocked. Where this cannot be avoided, we will agree with you in advance times when work will be carried out. If we do not keep to these times, we will pay you £10. We are not required to make a payment if we fail to meet this standard because of circumstances outside our reasonable control, e.g. exceptional weather conditions, strikes or actions of third parties.

10 Money paid in error

If we discover that over a period of time a customer has wrongly paid money for a service not provided (e.g. for sewerage services when a property is not connected to our sewers), we will refund all money paid in the six years before the mistake is discovered or the period during which we were appointed as undertaker, whichever the shorter, together with interest if the period in question is longer than 12 months.

11 Direct Debits

If we make an error in the handling of a Direct Debit payment, we will refund on proof of any bank charges incurred or financial loss.

12 Receipts

Where you request a receipt for cheques paid to us, we will pay you £10 if we do not dispatch one within five working days of receipt. We are not required to make a payment if we fail to meet this standard because of circumstances outside our reasonable control, e.g. exceptional weather conditions, strikes or actions of third parties.

13 Court claims

If we make an error or omission which causes a Court Claim to be issued against you erroneously for non-payment of charges, we will pay you £100.

14 Access to private property

If we fail to consult over access to your private property where rights of access do not already exist, we will pay you £25.

15 Failure to take an annual meter reading

If we installed a meter or meters at your property and fail to base at least one water supply bill a year on an actual reading, we will pay you £10.

16 Exceptions

If you owe us money and the debt has been outstanding for more than six weeks at the time when a payment is due to you under this scheme, any payment will normally be credited to your account. We will notify you in writing that we have done this.

Your legal rights to take action for any loss or damage suffered are not affected by payments under this Scheme. Payments do not constitute an admission of liability on our part.

Any dispute regarding your right to a payment may be referred to Ofwat for a binding determination.

Useful information

Drinking water regulator

Drinking Water Inspectorate (England & Wales)
dwi.gov.uk

Advice on plumbers and The Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations and Byelaws

Water Regulations Advisory Scheme (WRAS)
wras.co.uk

Practical advice videos can be found at
wras.co.uk/consumers/resources/videos

To find approved products

Water Regulations Advisory Scheme (WRAS)
wras.co.uk/directory

Information on the causes of copper corrosion

Foundation for Water Research – **fwr.org/copper.pdf**

Advice on water filters and softeners can be found at

British Water – **britishwater.co.uk**
UK Water Treatment Association (UKWTA) – **ukwta.org**

Finding a qualified plumber through WaterSafe

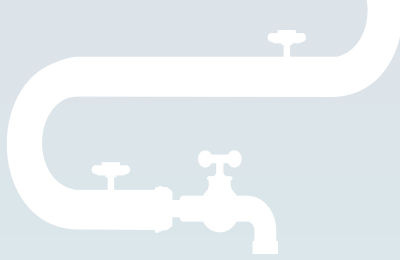
WaterSafe – **watersafe.org.uk**

Information for landlords

Landlord and Tenant Address Portal (Landlord TAP):
landlordtap.com

Landlord TAP is an easy to use website that allows landlords and managing agents of properties in England & Wales, to provide water companies with details of those responsible for the payment of water and/or sewerage charges for their tenanted properties.





Contact us

Visit albionwater.co.uk

Email customerservices@albionwater.co.uk

Customer services: 03300 242020

(Monday to Friday, 8.30am-5.30pm)

Emergencies: 0800 917 5819 (24 hours)

Write to us:

**Customer Services
Albion Water Ltd
Harpenden Hall
Southdown Road
Harpenden
Herts, AL5 1TE**

We can provide this information in large print or different formats, just call our customer services team for more information.

