



**The Standards We Aim to Beat**

**Our Promises to You**

## Useful Phone Numbers

Questions or enquiries about your bill or the charges you pay

0800 980 1391 Monday to Friday 8am to 8pm and Saturday 8am to 2pm

If you are deaf or hard of hearing and have a textline, please contact us on 0800 622 839.

Enquiries about water quality, leaks or anything else about our pipes

0800 316 2190 365 days a year, 24 hours a day

Careline – for customers with special needs

0800 980 1387 Monday to Friday 8am to 8pm and Saturday 8am to 2pm

Information in this leaflet is available in alternative formats such as large print text. Please contact our Careline on **0800 980 1387** to discuss your requirements.

## Introduction

All water companies are required by law to maintain certain minimum guaranteed standards. These standards are designed to ensure that you receive the service that you expect, and that if we fail to comply with any of our standards at any time we will compensate you financially.

As part of our commitment to customers, and our confidence in the services we provide, the levels of compensation payments we offer are among the highest in the industry.

The following pages list circumstances where we will make compensation payments to you depending on whether we provide water supply services, sewerage services or both to your premises. This document is intended to serve as a general guide to the guarantees we offer, but doesn't attempt to set out in full all our legal obligations to you. It summarises the level of payments domestic customers are entitled to in the event of a service failure. Commercial customers are also entitled to payments and these are set out in SWALEC's full Guaranteed Standards Scheme (GSS) document discussed below. Hopefully problems will never arise, but if they do you can be sure that we'll be working as hard as possible to satisfy your concerns, and put right any events that do inconvenience you.

To obtain a copy of our full GSS document, which provides full terms and conditions for payments to domestic and commercial customers under that scheme, please visit our website at [www.swalec.co.uk](http://www.swalec.co.uk) or call our customer service team on **0800 980 1391**.

In circumstances where we are due to make a payment to you under these standards, we will normally make the payment by crediting your account. However, you can request a direct payment which we will make provided certain conditions are met.

## Making and Keeping Appointments

If we need to make an appointment to visit your premises, we will try to agree a suitable day for the visit and we will confirm the address, date and approximate time of the visit. You can choose whether a representative will arrive in the morning (9am-1pm) or afternoon (1pm-5pm) or, if you prefer, you can choose a 2-hour time slot for the visit.

We will automatically make a payment of £50 to you within 10 working days if we fail to do so. If we fail to arrive in the agreed time period or fail to give you 24 hours notice of cancellation, we will automatically make a payment of £50 to you within 10 working days.

## Water Pressure

We have a commitment to maintain your water pressure at 7 metres static head at a company stop tap at the boundary of the property. If the pressure drops below this level in any period of

28 days on two occasions, for more than 1 hour, we will automatically make a payment of £50 to you.

## **Notice of Supply Interruption**

If we need to interrupt or cut off your water to carry out necessary works, we will give you reasonable notice in writing. This notice will include details of the earliest time after which your supply will be interrupted or cut off and also the time by which your supply will be restored.

If we need to interrupt or cut off your water for a period of more than 4 hours to carry out necessary planned works, we will give you the above written notice at least 48 hours in advance. If we fail to do this we will automatically make a £35 payment to you within 20 working days of the payment becoming due.

If we need to cut off your water to carry out emergency works, we will act as soon as possible to notify you that the supply has been interrupted or cut off, where an alternative supply can be obtained and let you know the time by which the supply will be restored. We will also provide you with the telephone number of an office from which you can obtain more information.

## **Restoration of Supply**

We will also let you know when your supply will be restored. If we fail to restore your supply in accordance with our written notice, we will automatically make a payment of £35 to you within 20 working days of the payment becoming due. We will also include a further payment of £35 for every subsequent period of 24 hours that the interruption continues beyond the time we gave you in our original notice.

In the event of an unplanned interruption, for instance if there is a burst pipe, if we don't restore your supply within 48 hours if the burst is on a strategic main or within 12 hours for all other mains, we will make an automatic payment of £35 to you within 20 working days of the payment becoming due. We will also automatically make a payment of £35 to you for every further 24 hours that the interruption continues.

## **Flooding from Sewers**

In the highly unlikely event of effluent entering your building, we will automatically make a payment equivalent to your annual sewerage charge subject to a maximum of £1000 and a minimum of £150 for each incident.

If the effluent does not enter your building but does enter your land or property and you are materially affected by the incident, then we will make a payment equivalent to 50% of your annual sewerage charge subject to a maximum of £500 and a minimum of £75 for each incident, where you claim the payment within 3 months of the effluent entering your land or property.

These payments will be made within 20 working days of the payment becoming due.

## **Complaints**

If you make a complaint in writing or by email about either your water supply or sewerage service, we will reply within 10 working days with a substantive response.

If we fail to do this, we will automatically make a £50 payment to you within 10 working days of the payment becoming due. We will also make a £50 payment if we do not provide a substantive response within 10 working days to a complaint that we have not resolved when you telephoned us about the matter. However, you will need to let us know so that we can arrange to make the payment.

## **Account queries and requests about payment arrangements**

If you write to or email us about the accuracy of your account, we will reply to you within 10 working days. You will receive an automatic £50 payment within 10 working days if we fail to do so. We will also make a £50 payment if we do not reply to you within 10 working days if you telephone us about the accuracy of your account and we cannot deal with the matter on your initial call. However, you will need to let us know so that we can arrange to make the payment.

You can request a change of payment arrangement in writing to us. If we cannot agree to your request and we do not respond to you within 5 working days, we will automatically make a £50 payment to you within 10 working days of the payment becoming due. If we can make the change to payment arrangements, we also aim to do this within 5 working days.

## **Payments and Claims**

If we do not make a payment you are due under the standards for appointments, written complaints or account queries within 10 working days of it becoming due, a further payment of £35 will be made automatically, except where the initial payment needs to be claimed. In all other areas, payment will be made within 20 working days of it becoming due or a further payment of £35 will be made automatically. If you feel you have suffered a service failure and

we have not made an automatic payment (for example, we may not have been aware you were affected), please contact us.

We will normally make the payment by crediting your account - however you can request a direct payment which we will make provided certain conditions are met.

We hope you will never need to make a claim. However, if you do need to make a claim under our Guaranteed Standards Scheme you can do so by writing to: SWALEC, PO Box 360, Portsmouth PO6 2YJ or by calling us on 0800 980 1391.

If you feel we have acted unfairly by denying a payment under the Guaranteed Standards Scheme, you can ask the Consumer Council for Water to review the facts relating to your case and deal with the matter on your behalf. Their contact details are: The Consumer Council for Water, Victoria Square House, Victoria Square, Birmingham B24 4AJ. Telephone 0121 345 1017 or 0845 702 3953 or visit [www.ccwater.org.uk](http://www.ccwater.org.uk).

If we still fail to reach an agreement, you can ask Ofwat, the independent economic Regulator for the water industry, to consider your claim and make a determination. If you want to do this write to:

Ofwat  
Centre City Tower  
7 Hill Street  
Birmingham  
B5 4UA

## Meters

We will come and read your meter at least once a year to make sure you're not over or underpaying on your water bill. If we do not do this, then provided access to the meter has not been denied, we will make a payment of £30.

If you move house you can request that we take a final meter reading, though you must give at least 5 working days notice.

If you have trouble reading your meter, or would like it moved for other reasons we will carry out a free survey within 10 working days of receiving your request. We will carry out the work required for relocation within 15 working days, if we agree to move it. If we fail to adhere to these conditions you'll receive £35 compensation. There will normally be a charge for this work. However, if you find reading the meter difficult due to its location and you are on our Careline register and in receipt of certain benefits, we may be able to relocate the meter free of charge.

## Access Requirements

Where we require access to your property to carry out works, we will agree the timing and any specific access requirements with you in advance of the work commencing. If we do not consult with you about this, we will make a payment of £25 per property.

If planned, non-emergency work blocks pedestrian or vehicle access to your home, we will always try to let you know about this before it happens. If we do not do this, you can claim £20.

## Multiple Interruptions of Supply

If you experience three or more unplanned interruptions lasting more than 12 hours in total over all the incidents within a 12 month period, you can claim £35.

## Water Quality

Occasionally you may find that your water is slightly discoloured. Although it poses no health risk there are circumstances where you can claim compensation. If your supply is regularly and heavily discoloured, you can claim compensation of £35. There is a chance that heavy discolouration could stain your laundry. We will pay you appropriate compensation for any damage that may be caused by this.

We may ask you to run the tap as a result of discolouration caused by our work. You can claim an automatic £5 credit on your account if this happens. If we fail to visit, or send water quality test results within 10 working days following a water quality complaint you will receive £35. This payment will also be due if there is something unusual in the results and we fail to telephone you to let you know within 48 hours, provided you have given us a contact number.

We may ask you to boil your water or not to drink it due to a problem with your supply. Action will be taken to rectify the problem immediately, and if it was due to our mains supply, we will compensate you £30 except in circumstances beyond our control.

## Flooding due to burst mains

Where a property suffers from internal flooding due to our main bursting, we will make a payment of £100.

## Overpayments

Should you overpay for your water as a result of our error, we will refund you, with interest, within 10 working days of discovering the error. Automatic compensation of £35 will be paid if you are not refunded within this time frame.

If as a result of our error you have been overpaying for more than 12 months, we will refund all money overpaid in the 10 years before the discovery of the mistake.

## Provision of Special Services

We will respond to written enquiries about the additional services we can provide for customers with special needs within 5 working days of receipt. We will also process applications for these services within 5 working days. If we do not do this we will automatically pay you £20.

## Debt Collection

If we refer a debt to a collection agency, which proves to be unfairly pursued, you will receive a £35 automatic payment. The debt collection agencies we use are registered with the Office of Fair Trading and members of the Credit Services Association and are bound by its codes of practice. If they are found to have acted improperly you will receive £35 compensation.

## County Court Claims

If a county court claim is made against you for a debt that you are not liable for or we obtain a county court judgement in these circumstances, and you had previously notified us of such, you will receive £150. We will also correct the situation, withdrawing all fees and costs associated with the proceedings.

We will not apply for a county court claim if the Job Centre Plus, Social Services, a debt advice agency or the Consumer Council for Water ask us not to. If we do not keep to this standard, we will pay £50 for any distress and inconvenience we may have caused. We will also withdraw the claim.

## Replacement Bills

You can request a replacement bill at any time – for example, if you would like us to use your own meter reading where we have estimated how much you have used. We will send you one

within 10 working days of receiving your request and meter reading where applicable. If we do not do this, you can claim a £20 payment.

## Compensation in the event of drought

In the event of emergency drought orders interrupting your essential household water supply, we will compensate you accordingly. This includes supplies for:

- Cooking
- Washing
- Drinking
- Flushing the toilet

If your supply is interrupted in this way due to drought orders we will pay you £35 per day or part of day. You will also be compensated £35 for each day that your supply continues to be interrupted or cut off. The maximum compensation will be the average annual household bill.

## Moving House

If you are moving house you can request that we take a final meter reading, though you must give at least 5 working days notice. If we then fail to read it we'll pay you £35.

You will also be provided with a final bill, or a refund for any excess charges, within 10 working days of the house move date - or of your notification, if this is later. Should we fail to do so you will automatically receive £20.

## Legal Rights

The Guaranteed Standards Scheme does not affect the legal rights to compensation that you may have.

## Further Information

You can find out more about our compensation scheme, and your entitlements, including the full codes of practice we operate to by getting in touch with us.

There are certain exclusions included in the Guaranteed Standards Scheme where payments do not have to be made and accordingly the payments referred to above for any failure by us are subject to these. Different exclusions apply to different guarantees, but they include such things as industrial action, severe weather conditions and drought. In the event of any conflict between this summary and the Guaranteed Standards Scheme document the Guaranteed Standards Scheme document will take precedence.