

# Water and Sewerage Customer Service Standards and Charter

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**March 2020**

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## 1. Introduction

The City of Gold Coast (City) provides water and sewerage services to over half a million people and 10,000 businesses in the Gold Coast region. Our purpose is to provide safe and reliable water and sewerage services to the people of the Gold Coast to protect our community's health and wellbeing. Our priorities are to:

- ensure zero harm – we ensure the health and safety of ourselves, our environment and our community
- strive for satisfied customers – we provide value for money, innovative, customer focused services
- manage finances responsibly – we balance life-cycle costs and service prices, to sustain our city
- provide reliable services – we plan, build, operate, maintain and renew assets prudently and efficiently.

The *Water and Sewerage Customer Service Standards and Charter* (Charter) has been developed to clearly state our service commitments to our customers and to inform you of your rights as a City water and sewerage customer. The Charter has been developed in accordance with the *South East Queensland Customer Water and Wastewater Code* and incorporates feedback from customers about what matters the most to them.

The Charter provides:

- an explanation of the services offered for drinking water, non-drinking water, recycled water, sewage collection and treatment; and trade waste services
- information on customer service processes such as connections, metering, billing, responsibility for maintenance work, complaints and dispute resolution
- details of our rights and responsibilities as a water and sewerage service provider
- details of your rights and responsibilities as a water and sewerage service customer
- a list of service standards and targets we aim to deliver.

The service standards set out in this document are not a contract and are not intended to create any contractual obligations or rights.

## 2. Our services

The City's designated water supply and sewerage services cover customer properties within the City's boundary, and includes:

- drinking water supply – developed properties within both the urban areas and the park living domains of the city
- sewerage services – the sewer area covers developed properties within the urban areas and the park living domains of the city and includes trade waste and domestic sewage collection
- recycled water supply – businesses (including schools and some Community Title Schemes and City parks) located within proximity of the pipeline network running from our sewage treatment plants
- non-drinking water – specially plumbed homes and businesses in some areas in the northern suburbs of the city.

Standard service areas for water supply can be viewed in our Water and Sewerage Connections Policy or on our Local Government Infrastructure Plan Maps, which are available at [cityofgoldcoast.com.au/cityplan](http://cityofgoldcoast.com.au/cityplan).

We also provide drinking water or recycled water to approved water carriers from designated water filling stations or temporary connection locations.

For more information on our services, please visit [cityofgoldcoast.com.au/water](http://cityofgoldcoast.com.au/water) for our Water and Sewerage Network Services Plan.

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## 3. Billing and payment

### 3.1 Issuing accounts

We issue residential water and sewerage accounts quarterly to all properties where water and sewerage services are provided. This helps our customers to monitor their water usage and to assist with earlier detection of abnormal usage caused by a possible concealed leak. Commercial or other customers with high water usage, high recycled water usage, high sewerage discharge or trade waste disposal may be billed more frequently.

We may issue a bill to:

- a customer at the address specified by the customer
- a customer's agent specified by the customer if the customer has made a written request to us
- any person authorised to act on behalf of the customer at the physical address specified by the person.

If no address has been specified, we may send the bill to the physical address of the property in respect of which the charges have been incurred, or to the customer's last known address.

We will provide your water notice to you by mail or email. You can also access your water notice on-line at [cityofgoldcoast.com.au/rates](http://cityofgoldcoast.com.au/rates).

If you are a residential customer, your water notice will include the following information as a minimum:

- the date of issue of the notice and the rating period to which the charges apply
- the address of the property to which the charges in the notice relate
- meter reading date and reading
- water and sewerage access charges
- water usage charges (separated into retail water and State bulk water charges)
- non-drinking water usage charges (for eligible customers)
- recycled water usage charges (for eligible customers)
- any outstanding credit or debit from previous notices
- the due date for payment
- the amount you are required to pay
- the ways in which you can pay your notice.

Non-residential customers may also have:

- A charge for the disposal of sewage from their property to the sewerage network, known as a volumetric sewage charge
- Trade waste charges.

Details of individual payments will not be included on your Water and Sewerage Rate Notice however these can be viewed on-line if you are a registered user of My Account ([cityofgoldcoast.com.au/myaccount](http://cityofgoldcoast.com.au/myaccount)).

### 3.2 Charges

We bill on a 'user pays' pricing principle. Our charges include fixed charges for water and sewerage access, as well as usage charges based on the amount of water, and recycled water where applicable, (to the nearest kilolitre) you use each quarter.

An access charge for each available service (water and sewerage) is applied to properties within our service/connection area. This is a fixed daily amount, payable for your property having access, or the ability to connect to the City's water and sewerage systems, regardless of whether or not you use those systems, and is for the ongoing maintenance of the water and sewerage systems.

The water usage amount is a variable amount, dependent upon how much water you use, as measured by your water meter. Usage charges include:

- the State Government Bulk Water charge – this is a State Government charge for the cost of treated water

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- the distribution, retail water and sewerage charges – set by us and reviewed each year.

Non-residential customers may also be charged the following depending on the services received:

- sewage volumetric charge – fee based on the volume of sewage assumed to be discharged from the property into the sewerage network and is calculated by multiplying the water usage by an industry-based discharge factor, less a discharge allowance, and is then charged per kilolitre
- recycled water usage – charged per kilolitre (1000 litres) for water that has been recorded as passing through the water meter over the previous three month period
- fire service – this is a fixed fee charged for customers with a fire service
- metered standpipe hire – this is a fee for short or long term hire of a City metered standpipe and water usage charges.

We will not charge for water taken from a property firefighting system or a fire hydrant used for genuine firefighting purposes which includes training and testing of equipment.

If you are connected to our water or sewerage infrastructure, or located in a connection area, have the ability to connect, but are not yet connected, you are required to pay access charges for those services.

### **3.3 Payment options**

A range of payment options are available, including credit card, direct debit by bank account, BPAY®, cheque, money order, bank draft or cash. See [cityofgoldcoast.com.au/payments](http://cityofgoldcoast.com.au/payments) for the full range of options. We can assist you to set up a payment arrangement where you can pay by making agreed regular instalments.

We will make all reasonable efforts to help you pay your account. We can make weekly or fortnightly payment plans available to you in accordance with your capacity to pay. A payment plan will:

- state the period over which you will pay the agreed amounts
- specify an amount to be paid in each period
- be able to be renegotiated at your request if there is a demonstrable change in your circumstances.

### **3.4 Adjustment of water notices**

If we determine that you have been overcharged, within the previous 12 months, we will deduct the amount overcharged from the next account or refund the amount within 20 business days if requested.

If we determine that you have been undercharged within the previous 12 months, we will endeavour to advise you within 10 business days of becoming aware of the error. We will not charge any interest on any amount of which you have been undercharged unless the amount becomes overdue under a payment plan arrangement.

Where we have identified an amount undercharged as a result of a customer's illegal use of water, we may:

- estimate the usage for which the customer has not paid
- commence debt recovery for the unpaid amount
- commence legal action or restrict your water services.

### **3.5 Non-payment of account**

If you have not paid your water notice or entered into a payment arrangement by the due date on your water notice, we will contact you by mail, email or telephone to remind you that your payment is overdue. We will remind you twice to make payment before commencing debt recovery.

Failure to pay your Water and Sewerage Rate Notice may result in legal action being taken, restriction of your water supply, or in extreme circumstances, sale of your property. We will not commence legal action or take steps to restrict your service due to non-payment if the amount in dispute is subject to an unresolved complaint in accordance with our complaints policy, or you have contacted us and an arrangement is in place in relation to hardship.

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Unpaid accounts will incur interest on the outstanding balance that is unpaid after the due date on your Water and Sewerage Rate Notice. The interest starts accruing on the day the amount is due and ends on the date all unrecovered amounts of the charge are paid in full, both days inclusive.

If you dispute your account or enter into a payment arrangement, you will not be charged interest on the overdue balances.

If you make no attempt to pay your account or you have failed more than two times in a 12 month period to comply with an agreed payment plan, we may restrict your water supply or take legal action to recover costs. We will provide you with at least two reminders that your account is overdue before undertaking any restriction or recovery actions.

If we restrict your water supply, we won't completely shut the water off but will allow a minimum level for the health and sanitation of the occupants. We will not restrict your water supply if you are registered with us as a special needs customer.

We will restore the property's water supply within two business days after the account has been paid in full or a payment plan or suitable arrangement has been agreed to.

We may also disconnect your water supply if the pipes on the property are not properly constructed or maintained, or you have an illegal connection to the City's water infrastructure. Reconnection will be within two business days once the reason for disconnection no longer persists, or when you have complied with the City's [Connection Policy](#).

### **3.6 Hardship**

Where you have the intention but not the ability to make a payment within the timeframe required, we will consider assistance via our Debt Recovery Policy (see [cityofgoldcoast.com.au/policies](http://cityofgoldcoast.com.au/policies)). Hardship arrangements will generally be based on weekly or fortnightly instalments but irregular arrangements will be considered based on your individual circumstances. If you have failed to comply with two or more payment plans in the previous 12 months, you may not be eligible for further assistance.

### **3.7 Concessions and rebates**

We offer a number of concessions and rebates to assist our customers.

If you have had a concealed water leak on your property and you meet the eligibility criteria outlined in the Water and Sewage Leakage Relief Policy (see [cityofgoldcoast.com.au/policies](http://cityofgoldcoast.com.au/policies)), you can lodge an application to claim relief from the water usage charges and the sewerage volumetric charges (for non-residential customers only). Pensioners and not-for-profit organisations may be eligible for a larger proportion of leakage relief.

In the event that water is used at a property to protect your home or business from a fire, you can lodge an application for a rebate under our Water Usage for Genuine Fire Emergencies Policy (see [cityofgoldcoast.com.au/policies](http://cityofgoldcoast.com.au/policies)).

We will provide relief from water usage charges under the Concession for Water Consumption Charges due to Renal Dialysis Patients Dialysing at Home Policy (see [cityofgoldcoast.com.au/policies](http://cityofgoldcoast.com.au/policies)), inclusive of the State bulk water price and sewerage volumetric charges, if you are a renal dialysis patient with facilities for dialysing at home. We will grant an allowable consumption of 150 kilolitres per annum in cases where extended treatment is not required and 400 kilolitres per annum in cases where extended treatment is required. The relief is applied to the metered property at which you reside.

The Gold Coast District Health Service must advise us of the property address of patients currently dialysing at home, and the applicable level of water usage for this purpose. Customers who wish to discuss their needs can contact our Customer Contact Centre on 1300 000 928. If the situation becomes life threatening, emergency services should be called immediately on 000.

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## 4. Our rights and responsibilities

### 4.1 Accessing our services

We are committed to providing water and sewerage connections to your property in a timely and cost-effective way. We will:

- assess your application to connect or disconnect your property to/from our water and sewerage network within 15 business days of receiving your application and payment
- assess your application to discharge trade waste into the sewerage network within 10 business days of receiving your application
- provide you with a metered standpipe(s), by way of hire, subject to availability
- upon application to connect to the recycled water network we will provide you with a recycled water service, if the service is available. You must abide by the, the requirements in the terms of use and associated documents and pay the applicable recycled water usage charge.

### 4.2 Water supply

#### 4.2.1 Water quality

We deliver drinking water of a very high standard to our customers. We are committed to delivering drinking water which meets the water quality health criteria described in the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines and complies with the statutory requirements under the *Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008*, regulatory health requirements established by the Queensland Health and environmental standards established by the Department of Environment and Science.

We will:

- supply you with drinking water that is safe to drink
- regularly monitor and assess the quality of the water supplied to our customers
- publish annual water quality data on our website.

#### 4.2.2 Water pressure

We have programs in place to manage water pressure and flow across our water distribution network. Water pressure varies across the Gold Coast depending on the topography and the proximity of properties to water storage reservoirs.

We will:

- ensure the drinking water pressure meets a minimum pressure of 220 kilopascals (kPa) at the property connection point under normal supply conditions
- ensure the non-drinking water pressure meets a minimum pressure of 170 kPa at the property connection point under normal supply conditions
- assist Queensland Fire and Emergency Services in the role of community safety by installing and maintaining a fire fighting capability in our network
- implement effective pressure and leakage management to control leaks in the distribution network, conserve water and assist in minimising pipe failures to ensure customer water supply security.

#### 4.2.3 Interruption to water supply

We will provide you with water twenty four hours a day, seven days a week under normal operating conditions.

While we work hard to ensure your water supply is not interrupted, we occasionally need to carry out planned maintenance on our assets. In these situations your water service may be interrupted for a short time.

We will:

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- attempt to undertake works at a time that minimises disruption to residents and businesses
  - provide you with written notice at least two business days' prior to the interruption, unless you are a special needs customer, in which case we will provide you with four business days written notice.

Where there is an unplanned interruption to your water supply (including non-drinking water and recycled water supply) caused by a problem or fault in our system, we will:

- attend the site as quickly as possible and undertake necessary repairs
- consider your needs, including those of special needs customers
- take every reasonable effort to notify you of the interruption once we are aware of the issue
- provide access to drinking water for customers in the case of extreme circumstances
- aim to restore the water service within five hours
- keep you updated on the progress of the interruption on our Alerts website at [news.goldcoast.qld.gov.au/alerts](https://news.goldcoast.qld.gov.au/alerts)

### **4.3 Sewerage services**

We are committed to meeting regulatory obligations and protecting your health and the environment by operating and maintaining infrastructure for the effective collection, transport and treatment of sewage. We will:

- remove the sewage from your property and treat it to a high quality, to protect public health and the environment
- monitor the quality of our treated sewage before it passes back to the environment.

#### **4.3.1 Interruption to sewerage services**

In the event of a sewerage emergency in our infrastructure, we will:

- aim to attend the site within two hours
- ensure damage and inconvenience to customers is minimised
- ensure any sewage spill is promptly cleaned up and the affected area disinfected.

If a service interruption is planned, we will:

- attempt to undertake works at a time that minimises disruption to residents and businesses
- provide you with two business days' written notice including when the interruption will occur and the duration of the interruption, unless you are a special needs customer, in which case we will provide you with four business days' written notice. A business day is defined as Monday to Friday and does not include public holidays.

### **4.4 Infrastructure maintenance**

The effective maintenance and management of our assets is critical to ensure safe and reliable water services are provided to our customers.

#### **4.4.1 Water**

We will maintain:

- the water service up to and including the property water meter
- the water service up to the stop tap if there is no meter on your property
- the water service to the property boundary if the water meter is more than two metres inside the property boundary.

We are not responsible for the maintenance or replacement of:

- private plumbing that is damaged from pressure fluctuations in the water distribution network
- backflow prevention devices installed on your side of the water meter
- pressure reduction devices installed on your side of the water meter

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- private infrastructure, including but not limited to water (drinking, non- drinking and recycled water) meters and pump stations
  - private fire services
  - common services inside a property
  - extensions on private property water service lines.

Where non-conforming infrastructure exists, we will continue to maintain, operate, and replace the water infrastructure to ensure reliable operation, however the level of service in terms of flow and pressure that is provided to these customers may be maintained at the historical level of service or an operationally achievable level and may not be upgraded to current service or infrastructure standards.

#### **4.4.2 Sewerage**

As a general rule, we are responsible for maintaining and operating the sewerage service from the connection point at your property, which may be located either on or off your property. The connection point will usually be marked by the presence of a joint or fitting that has been connected to by a privately engaged plumber.

If the sewer main is located inside the property boundary, we will maintain the sewer connection drain from our sewer main up to:

- the connection point; or
- one metre from the sewer main if the connection point is located more than one metre from the sewer main; or
- one metre from the sewer main if there is no obvious connection point.

If the sewer main is located outside the property boundary, we will maintain the sewer connection drain from our sewer main up to:

- the connection point; or
- one metre inside the property boundary if the connection point is located more than one metre inside the property boundary; or
- one metre inside the property boundary if there is no obvious connection point.

We are not responsible for the maintenance or replacement of:

- private infrastructure, including but not limited to sewerage pump stations and rising mains
- common services inside a property
- extensions on private property sanitary drains.

If our infrastructure is damaged or blocked by works on your property, your tree roots or inappropriate disposal of materials down the sewer, you may be charged for the repair works.

### **4.5 Access to your property**

Under the *Local Government Act 2009* and *Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008*, we have the right to enter your property for a number of purposes such as:

- inspecting, reading, testing or replacing a water meter
- restricting water supply if required
- inspecting new plumbing connections
- inspecting and maintaining sewer maintenance holes
- carrying out planned or emergency maintenance or replacement works on our infrastructure.

In most circumstances, we will provide you with at least two business days' notice of our requirement to enter your property to carry out works. There are circumstances where we are not required to provide notice of intention to enter your property, such as reading a water meter and in the case of an emergency.

If we enter your property for emergency works and you are not home, we will leave a notification to let you know the date, time and reason for our visit.

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Regardless of the purpose for entry to your property, our employees or contractors are required to ensure they:

- carry appropriate identification
- cause as little inconvenience as possible
- only stay on the property for as long as is reasonably necessary
- remove equipment brought onto the property
- remove any debris created by our work and leave the property as close as possible to its original condition.

## 4.6 Reinstatement of damages

Where we undertake any works, we make every effort to minimise the impact to your property, the street or the environment. If we have to undertake maintenance works outside your property on the nature strip or vehicle crossover area, we will:

- replace driveways in vehicle cross-over areas with brushed finished plain concrete or asphalt
- water any new turf periodically for two weeks, after which time you will be responsible for maintenance
- reinstate damaged areas to as near as possible to the condition that it was in prior to the work (e.g. where turf was in place, it will be replaced with turf such as couch or buffalo).

If we have to undertake maintenance works on your property we will:

- attempt to find an alternative solution to cutting driveways wherever possible
- discuss and agree on the reinstatement solution wherever possible with you prior to works commencing
- reinstate any damaged areas of your driveway to as near as reasonably possible to the condition prior to the works
- photograph and record the pre and post-work condition of your property
- advise you if we have to return to your property to complete any works
- leave a 'Notice of Entry' form in your letterbox notifying you of the date and time we were on your property and what works were conducted if you are not home at the time of the works
- reinstate any damaged areas of your landscaping caused by our works, unless the damage was caused as a result of our infrastructure being buried or covered over (e.g. paving, shed).

During any restoration works, we may relocate meters and/or water or sewerage connection points to more accessible or convenient locations at our discretion. We may engage a contractor to undertake specific restoration works, in which case, we may undertake a temporary repair and leave the work site in a safe condition until our contractor can attend and undertake the required works.

Sometimes newly turfed or excavated areas can sink over time due to the soil settling. If this becomes a safety issue, let us know and we will attend and rectify the issue.

## 4.7 Metering

### 4.7.1 Meter readings

Meter readings are used to calculate usage charges that appear on the Water and Sewerage Rate Notice. We take all reasonable steps to ensure that we record your meter reads accurately. Water meters are above, at, or below ground level with a plastic or metal lid usually marked 'Water Meter'. Water meters are usually located towards the front of your property, near either the left or right boundary. They are sometimes located inside a property and the meter reader may need to enter a property to take a reading.

We will:

- take all reasonable steps to read your meter every three months
- estimate a reading, based on previous usage levels, when a water meter is not accessible, or cannot be located
- advise you if the meter is not accessible

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- undertake a special water meter reading if the property is for sale and a water rate adjustment is required as part of the final settlement (to work out the amount of water used at the property since the last meter reading was carried out).

To request a special meter reading, property owners and/or their agent should contact our Customer Contact Centre on 1300 000 928. A standard fee is payable upon application.

#### **4.7.2 Aged water meter replacement program**

The City runs a meter replacement program to replace ageing water meters. We will contact you in writing before we replace your water meter. If the existing pipework is in good condition, the meter replacement will only take 15 minutes. If the pipework is in poor condition, it may take longer. While your meter is being replaced, your water supply will be turned off.

When your new water meter is installed, the contractor will run a tap on your property in order to record a starting reading. When the contractor records this reading, we will round the actual reading up to the next whole kilolitre. This allows the contractor to flush the house water without affecting your usage charges. You may even receive several hundreds of litres of water at no charge.

#### **4.7.3 Damaged or faulty meters**

If a water meter is damaged or has stopped, we will replace the meter with a new one. Whilst you are waiting for a new water meter, an estimate of the property's water usage will be applied based on historical usage. Information for how to read a water meter can be found on our website, [About Your Water Meter](#).

If you suspect there is a fault with your water meter, we will:

- provide you with information on [how to self-check for water leaks](#)
- arrange for the meter to be tested for a pre-paid fee
- refund the test fee and review the water usage charges for the property if your water meter is found to be faulty by an independent tester.

## **5. Your rights and responsibilities**

To ensure that we can maintain your water and sewerage services, protect the environment, and bill you correctly, you have some responsibilities and obligations.

### **5.1 General**

You are responsible for:

- promptly report faults, emergencies and any other issues or concerns regarding our areas of operation
- contacting us in the first instance for any water or sewerage related matter relating to your Water and Sewerage Rate Notice or our water or sewerage infrastructure
- using water responsibly – we live in a climate of extremes, ensuring water efficient behaviour now may make a big difference later and will help to conserve this precious resource
- allowing authorised officers or contractors from the City convenient and unhindered access to your property to:
  - install, read, test, maintain, replace or alter meters
  - connect, restrict or restore supply
  - inspect, make safe, operate, maintain, remove, repair or replace any infrastructure or maintenance holes
  - disconnect unauthorised connections to the network.

### **5.2 Special needs**

If you or a member of your household relies on some form of life-support device (e.g. haemodialysis machine) or have other special needs dependent on the continuous supply of water, you need to advise us of this and we

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can register you as a special needs customer and put in place some measures to assist you. In most circumstances your health service provider will advise us of your circumstances.

We contact registered special needs customers:

- as soon as possible in the event of an unplanned interruption to a service
- at least four business days before a planned interruption to a service – if you would like a longer period of notice, we can arrange for this as long as it is reasonably necessary and we are able to accommodate it.

### 5.3 Monitoring water use and water leaks

Property owners are responsible for all water use and leaks on the property side of the water meter. Internal leaks are common, especially in ageing infrastructure and may not be obvious until you receive a higher than normal Water and Sewerage Rate Notice.

You are responsible for:

- monitoring your water use by reading your water meter on a regular basis
- undertaking [water meter leak tests](#) if you are concerned about your water usage to determine if you need to call a plumber or other contractor to find or repair an internal leak
- paying plumbers or other contractors for the costs associated with any leak detection activities you engage them to undertake as we will not reimburse you for these costs
- arranging and paying for a licensed plumber to repair your pipework.

### 5.4 Interfering with our infrastructure

You have a responsibility to not undertake any activities that may cause damage or restrict access to our infrastructure. You are responsible for:

- ensuring you have the correct stormwater and sewer connections
- obtaining approval from us and complying with any required conditions if you wish to connect, disconnect or build over or near our water or sewerage infrastructure
- providing clear and safe access to your water meter for our meter readers to read your meter
- ensuring that landscaping does not result in assets, such as water meters, valve boxes or maintenance holes, being damaged by tree roots or covered over, raised or lowered
- ensuring prohibited substances are not disposed of through the sewerage network.

### 5.5 Maintenance of your internal plumbing

Our responsibility for water and sewerage connections stops at your meter and sewerage connection points.

You are responsible for:

- maintaining your water pipe work from the water meter into your property
- maintaining your plumbing and pipework from the sewer connection point into your property
- ensuring the clearing of tree root intrusion on sewer pipes and fixing leaking fixtures and fittings on your side of the sewer connection point
- the cost of sewer blockages caused by defective fittings on the property or the disposal of inappropriate items to the sewer (e.g. wipes, nappies etc.)
- the protection of your water supply pipework, fittings and appliances from high pressure by the installation of a pressure reducing valve
- ensuring your overflow relief gullies are installed properly and are not covered by pots, garden beds or other landscaping works (overflow relief gullies should be installed at the correct level, at least 150mm lower than the lowest fitting in the house (e.g. bath, shower etc.) and at least 75mm above the surrounding ground to prevent stormwater entering the sewerage network)
- ensuring you have an inspection opening on you property's sanitary house drain as this provides an access point for maintenance to your plumbing in the event you have a blockage that needs clearing

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- ensuring any inspection openings in your sanitary house drain are not covered and are accessible at ground level in case you have a sewer blockage
  - reporting any sewerage blockages or damage to our sewerage network as soon as you or your plumber become aware of it.

## **5.6 Paying your account**

We ask that you pay your Water and Sewerage Rate Notice by the due date shown on the notice, to avoid being charged interest and imposing unnecessary costs associated with unpaid bills on other customers. Payments of Water and Sewerage Rate Notice(s) are required within 30 days of the date on the notice.

## **5.7 Using non-drinking water**

For customers that are located in areas that are supplied with non-drinking water, it is your responsibility to:

- use a registered plumber for any or all plumbing works to ensure the non-drinking water is only connected to toilets and outside taps
- inform and educate anyone living, working at or visiting the property, particularly children, about the significance of the purple taps and the permitted uses of non-drinking water, most importantly that non-drinking water is not suitable for drinking or food preparation
- detach the removable tap handles when external taps are not being used to prevent anyone drinking water from these taps
- ensure that the purple taps are not replaced with a tap of another colour
- ensure that warning signs remain in place above all non-drinking water taps.

## **5.8 Using recycled water**

If you are a non-residential customer (including a Body Corporate) and are using or transporting recycled water, you will be supplied with the terms of use and associated recycled water documentation which specifies your responsibilities. Accepting the supply of recycled water confirms your acceptance of the terms of use and applicable charges.

We may discontinue a recycled water service if you breach the permitted use rules.

All recycled water carriers must also undertake training in order to be able to access our recycled water carrier filling stations.

## **5.9 Hiring metered standpipes**

Any metered standpipe used to draw water from our reticulation system must be hired through the City on a long-term or short-term basis. Access to the City's reticulation system using a metered standpipe is subject to an approved agreement with us and can only be carried out from one of the City's designated hydrants or filling stations. For further metered standpipe information, refer to our [website](#).

## 6. Customer service

### 6.1 Enquiries, feedback and complaints

We are committed to delivering proactive and accessible customer service. We encourage you to let us know what we are doing well and where we can improve.

You can contact us using any of these methods:

	1300 000 928 (Customer Contact Centre) For general enquiries – Weekdays, 7am-5pm, excluding public holidays For service faults and emergencies – 24 hours a day, seven days a week
	<a href="mailto:mail@goldcoast.qld.gov.au">mail@goldcoast.qld.gov.au</a>
	Council of City of Gold Coast PO Box 5042 Gold Coast Mail Centre QLD 9729
	Visit your nearest City of Gold Coast customer service centre. The details of our Administration Centres and Branch Offices can be found <a href="#">online</a>
	<a href="http://www.goldcoast.qld.gov.au">http://www.goldcoast.qld.gov.au</a>

For faults and emergencies, we are on-call 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year.

#### 6.1.1 Complaints

We are committed to putting our customers first and providing the best services possible. If you have feedback, questions or complaints, we would like to hear from you so we can continue to improve.

We recognise a complaint as an expression of dissatisfaction related to our products or services, or the complaints process itself, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected.

Examples of matters we would not classify as complaints include:

- a request for service or assistance requiring clarification on a matter
- an inquiry into the progress of a water meter connection
- a request to take action on a leaking water pipe or any other service fault, unless previously reported.

However, if no action or inadequate action is taken on a request for service or information, or enquiry seeking clarification, the subsequent contact would be classified as a complaint and we would manage the issue in accordance with the complaint handling process outlined in our Complaints (Administrative Actions) Policy, a copy of which may be accessed from our website [cityofgoldcoast.com.au/complaints](http://cityofgoldcoast.com.au/complaints).

If you have a complaint you can let us know by calling 1300 000 928, emailing [mail@goldcoast.qld.gov.au](mailto:mail@goldcoast.qld.gov.au) or mailing PO Box 5042, Gold Coast MC, QLD 9726.

We attempt to resolve all complaints straight away. Regardless, we will contact you within 10 business days to acknowledge receipt of the complaint and advise you of the progress of the investigation. If you are not satisfied

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with our response, the issue can be escalated to a senior officer at your request. Should we be unable to agree on a suitable resolution to a complaint, you also have the right to seek external resolution of the matter. You may choose to contact the Energy and Water Ombudsman Queensland (EWOQ) as follows:

Energy and Water Ombudsman Queensland  
PO Box 3640  
South Brisbane BC Qld 4101

**Phone:** 1800 662 837 (free call)

**Fax:** (07) 3087 9477

**Email:** [complaints@ewoq.com.au](mailto:complaints@ewoq.com.au) or [info@ewoq.com.au](mailto:info@ewoq.com.au)

### **6.1.2 Water usage disputes**

Water usage is calculated by the readings taken at your water meter. Water meters are reliable and accurate so if there is a discrepancy, you must have the proof to challenge us over your usage.

If you believe your water meter has been incorrectly read, we will ensure that the meter is re-read by an authorised person to verify the reading before the account is adjusted.

If you believe your water meter may be reading inaccurately you can make a request for it to be tested. A fee is payable for the test and will be refunded if the test shows the meter is inaccurate. All meter testing is carried out by an independent company to a nationally approved standard.

If the test shows that the meter is not meeting the required accuracy standards (defined by the National Measurement Institute's National Framework for Urban Water Measurement), we will credit your account with any amount you were overcharged up to one year prior to the last issued account before the meter inaccuracy was discovered.

Interest is not payable by the customer or the City on any amount overcharged or undercharged (unless the amount becomes overdue under a payment plan). For information on fees and to download the application form please refer to our website [cityofgoldcoast.com.au/meters](http://cityofgoldcoast.com.au/meters).

### **6.1.3 Disputes over money**

If you have a complaint or a dispute associated with money you owe, we will not seek payment for the portion of the money that is in dispute whilst the dispute is being investigated. We may require you to pay the portion of the Water and Sewerage Rate Notice that is not in dispute or the average amount of the Water and Sewerage Rate Notice for the related property in the last 12 months, pending resolution of the dispute.

Once the dispute is resolved, you must pay any balance owing to us, or we will refund or credit your account with any overpaid amount within 20 business days after the date on which the dispute is resolved. If we cannot agree on the amount owing, our complaint handling process will apply.

### **6.1.4 Damages claims**

If an issue occurs and you wish to make a claim against Council, you should contact our City Insurance Unit by emailing [Insurance@goldcoast.qld.gov.au](mailto:Insurance@goldcoast.qld.gov.au) or phoning 1300 000 928.

## **6.2 Privacy**

We are committed to protecting your personal information. We will treat your information with strict confidence, in accordance with our Information Management and Information Privacy Policy and the *Information Privacy Act 2009*. We collect personal information for the purpose of providing water and sewerage related services and products, which includes promotion of these services and products. We may disclose your personal information to our delivery partners, but only for operational purposes.

You can access and/or amend any inaccurate, incomplete, out of date or misleading personal information in accordance with your rights under the *Information Privacy Act 2009*. To find out more about making an access application, amending your personal information, or if you have a privacy concern or complaint; please contact us on 1300 000 928.

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## 7. Consultation and engagement

### 7.1 Engaging with customers

We value the contribution that customers make to the running of our business. We need to know if we are doing a good job, therefore we survey a sample of our customers about our performance, and provide an opportunity for city-wide consultation every two years.

We value your opinion and welcome your feedback, email us at [customerservicegcw@goldcoast.qld.gov.au](mailto:customerservicegcw@goldcoast.qld.gov.au) or call 1300 000 928.

### 7.2 Website information

Our website [cityofgoldcoast.com.au/water](http://cityofgoldcoast.com.au/water) offers extensive information on water and sewerage services. Your account and billing information is available on the web at our new customer portal, My Account ([cityofgoldcoast.com.au/rates](http://cityofgoldcoast.com.au/rates)). With My Account you can:

- check your account balance
- change your contact details and address
- view copies of your rates and water notices
- set up or change a direct debit
- request a payment arrangement
- change a payment arrangement for rates.

We also provide information on unplanned and planned water interruptions on our Alerts page ([news.goldcoast.qld.gov.au/alerts](http://news.goldcoast.qld.gov.au/alerts)).

### 7.3 Scientific Services

Our Scientific Services section consists of a laboratory situated at the Smart Water Research Centre in Southport. The section is accredited by the National Association of Testing Authorities (NATA) for sample collection and chemical and microbiological tests. The section is equipped for testing water from a range of sites, such as swimming pools, rainwater tanks, bores, waterways, cooling towers, houseboats and sewage treatment systems.

If you require any information about sample collection, testing services, fees, water quality monitoring, training or consulting services, contact Scientific Services on (07) 5581 1960 or email [scientificservices@goldcoast.qld.gov.au](mailto:scientificservices@goldcoast.qld.gov.au).

### 7.4 School education programs

The 'Make your water mark!' Watersaver Education Program is a comprehensive water curriculum with a regional focus specifically tailored for schools in the Gold Coast region. It is aligned with the National Curriculum and a full suite of lesson plans are available for early childhood, primary school, middle and secondary school.

The Schools Water Conservation Program utilises smart logging technology to conserve water, enable cost savings for schools and increase water literacy. This technology is now available to all Gold Coast schools as a water management resource, free of charge.

For further information please visit our website [cityofgoldcoast.com.au/schoolwatersaver](http://cityofgoldcoast.com.au/schoolwatersaver) or email [mail@goldcoast.qld.gov.au](mailto:mail@goldcoast.qld.gov.au).

## 8. Definitions

Term	Definition
Australian Drinking Water Guidelines	Australian Drinking Water Guidelines (2018) published by the National Health and Medical Research Council
Backflow	A reverse flow condition created by a difference in water pressure that causes water to flow back into the distribution pipes of a drinking water supply from any source other than the intended one
Complaint	Means a written or verbal expression of dissatisfaction about an action, a proposed action, or a failure to act by the City of Gold Coast, its employees or contractors
Customer	You are a customer if you have property in the Gold Coast region, and <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• are connected to the City of Gold Coast’s water or sewerage service, and</li> <li>• you receive a Water and Sewerage Rate Notice in your name for the property that includes charges for water and sewerage services</li> </ul> or <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• not connected to the City of Gold Coast’s water or sewerage service but the City is obliged to connect your property under the water legislation, and</li> <li>• you receive a Water and Sewerage Rate Notice in your name for the property that includes fixed access charges for water and sewerage services</li> </ul>
Drinking water	Drinkable water. It is usually treated freshwater that meets Australian Drinking Water Guidelines (ADWG)
E.coli (Escherichia coli)	A common bacterium found in the gut of warm-blooded animals and used as an indicator of faecal pollution. E.coli should not be detected in a drinking water sample to comply with Australian Drinking Water Guidelines
Inspection Outlet (IO)	An inspection opening within the property that allows for the inspection of the sewer pipes in the event of a blockage
Non-drinking water	Water that has been produced for specific non-drinking purposes which is not for human consumption
Overflow Relief Gully (ORG)	An overflow relief gully (ORG) is a drain-like fitting located outside the home, designed to release any sewage overflow outside of the home in the event of a blockage in the sewer main. The ORG is owned and maintained by the property owner
Recycled water	Sewage that has been highly treated to appropriate standards for the required use in accordance with the <i>Public Health Regulation 2005</i> Schedules 3C and 3D. Recycled water is classified as Class A, B or C
Seqwater	It is the Queensland State Governments statutory authority responsible for ensuring a safe, secure and reliable water supply across South East Queensland. Seqwater is the bulk water supplier to the City of Gold Coast
Sewage treatment plant (STP)	A facility for the treatment of sewage to remove pollutants (solid matter and pathogens) producing treated recycled water and bio-solids
Sewerage network	The system of pipes and pump stations for collecting and transporting sewage from each property to the sewage treatment plant
South East Queensland Customer Water and Wastewater Code	The Code outlines the rights and responsibilities of small customers and service providers in South East Queensland under the <i>South East Queensland Water (Distribution and Retail Restructuring) Act 2009</i>

Term	Definition
Standard connection area	Existing areas with properties connected to water and/or sewerage infrastructure
Standard service area	Same as standard connection area
Trade waste	Broadly means any industrial and commercial liquid waste apart from normal domestic sewage. It may contain chemicals, fats or detergents. It is typically wastewater as a result of a washing, cleaning or rinsing process. It may also be liquid food waste
Water Acts	Queensland Government Legislation specific to the water industry, particularly in SEQ, for example: <i>Water Act 2000</i> , <i>Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008</i> , <i>SEQ Water (Restructuring) Act 2007</i> , <i>SEQ Water (Distribution and Retail Restructuring) Act 2000</i> , <i>SEQ Water (Distribution and Retail Restructuring) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2010</i>
Water grid	The water supply and transport infrastructure that supplies water to South East Queensland

## 9. Appendix A – Customer service standards

<b>Water quality</b>	<b>Standard</b>	<b>Target</b>
We will provide you with safe and clean drinking water	Compliance with safe drinking water microbiological standards (Australian Drinking Water Guidelines)	> 98% of all samples collected within a 12 month period pass E.coli test
	Compliance with safe drinking water chemical standards (Australian Drinking Water Guidelines)	100%
	Water quality complaints	< 3 complaints per 1000 properties
<b>Water service reliability</b>	<b>Standard</b>	<b>Target</b>
We will provide you with a reliable water supply that meets your needs	Total number of properties affected by unplanned drinking water interruptions	< 100 per 1000 properties
	Total number of properties affected by unplanned non-drinking water interruptions	< 80 per 1000 properties
	Number of water main breaks	< 12 breaks/100km water main
<b>Water pressure</b>	<b>Standard</b>	<b>Target</b>
We will provide you with water pressure that meets our minimum standards	The minimum drinking water pressure customers can expect to receive at their water meter under normal service conditions	22 metres or 220 kPa
	The minimum non-drinking water pressure customers can expect to receive at their water meter	17 metres or 170 kPa
<b>Response to unplanned water and sewerage interruptions</b>	<b>Standard</b>	<b>Target</b>
We will respond to unplanned water and sewerage interruptions as soon as possible	Average time taken to attend emergency water interruptions	< 120 minutes
	Average time taken to attend sewerage spills and blockages	< 120 minutes
<b>Restoration of supply after water and sewerage interruptions</b>	<b>Standard</b>	<b>Target</b>
If there is an interruption to your water supply or sewerage service, we will work to restore service as soon as we can	Average duration of an unplanned water service interruption	< 120 minutes
	Average duration of an unplanned sewerage service interruption	< 120 minutes



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For more information

**P** 1300 WATER (1300 000 928)

**W** [cityofgoldcoast.com.au/water](http://cityofgoldcoast.com.au/water)

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