Water Usage Charges

CHL charges customers for water used at NSW homes it owns or manages when CHL pays the water authority bill. Your water charge is separate from rent. This information sheet brings together how the charge works, when you will hear from us, what CHL pays, and how to get help or question a decision.

Why do I pay a water charge

NSW social housing tenancy law allows water usage charges under Ministerial guidelines. CHL charges for water to allocate usage costs fairly across customers. We explain your charging method at the start of your tenancy. The law allows a charge to refer to actual or estimated use, household income or rent payable. CHL uses actual usage for separately metered homes and a rent-based percentage for shared-meter homes.

How your charge is worked out

Your home	How CHL charges you
Separate meter	A meter measures the water used at your home. We charge your actual usage based on the water authority bill. Depending on the authority, bills may come every 3, 6 or 12 months.
Shared meter	A meter serves more than one home. We calculate a weekly water charge of 5.4% of the rent you pay (your net rent), up to $10.50 per household. If your weekly rent is $150, the charge is $8.10. At $250 rent, it is capped at $10.50.

The percentage charge uses the rent you actually pay after any rent rebate. If your household income changes and your rent changes, your water charge may also change, subject to the cap. We show your percentage charge in your initial assessment or rent review letter. Your rent outcome letter tells you the percentage at each six-month rent review.

When will I receive a bill or statement

Separate meter: every 3, 6 or 12 months, depending on the water authority's billing cycle. When CHL processes the water authority bill, we send you a tax invoice and a copy of the relevant billing information showing your usage and the amount charged.

Shared meter: every 3 months, we send you a quarterly statement showing the water payments made to date. Your percentage water charge is calculated weekly and shown separately from rent on your account.

How are charges reviewed

CHL will regularly review its accounts to ensure it does not collect more from tenants than it pays for in the water bills it receives.

A reconciliation will be performed every 6 months, prior to rent reviews, to ensure the percentage charge to tenants accurately reflects the amount paid to the water authorities by CHL.

Tenants will be notified of any changes to the percentage they are required to pay if the charges have been insufficient to meet the cost.

Should any overcharging be identified, CHL will correct with a credit to the tenant.

What does CHL pay

CHL will pay all water charges for common area water usage, water connection and sewerage. In properties with a shared water meter, CHL will ensure that a portion of the water bill (appropriate to the property size and amenities) is allocated for the common area usage.

What if I am away or move out

A temporary absence does not stop your water charge. If you leave or transfer to another home, any outstanding water charges remain payable, adjusted to the date your tenancy ends. Please tell us if you think your account includes charges for a period after your tenancy ended.

Tenant is used as a general term and includes Renter in Victoria, in line with Residential Tenancies Act 1997 (Vic) as amended.

Are allowances available

If you or someone in your household receives kidney dialysis at home, ask your Housing Officer for help applying for any allowance offered by your local water authority. If a health condition or disability means your household uses substantially more water, let us know so we can check whether assistance is available from the authority. CHL's current arrangements do not promise an automatic allowance; eligibility depends on the relevant scheme.

What if I cannot pay

If a payment is overdue, CHL sends a reminder explaining any further action that may follow. Contact us as early as possible if you cannot pay. We can discuss arrangements or assistance under CHL's *Financial Hardship Policy*.

How do I question a charge or decision

First, speak with your Housing Officer. You can ask how the amount was calculated, question a meter reading or water authority bill, report a leak or repair delay, or ask about an allowance or exemption. We will investigate and correct errors, including billing problems caused by a faulty meter, an estimate or a leak.

Providing feedback or making an appeal

You can provide feedback or make an appeal if you believe CHL has applied its charging arrangements incorrectly or has made an incorrect decision about your percentage charge or an allowance.

An appeal concerns how the arrangements were applied to you, rather than the general requirement to pay for water.

CHL will consider your appeal. If you are not satisfied with the outcome, you can appeal to the NSW Housing Appeals Committee. We can assist you to use that process. Disputes about a water authority's bill or meter reading may also need to be raised with the authority.

For help, contact your local CHL office, call 1300 245 468 or visit www.chl.org.au.