

Property Department

# The Depths of the Water Charge

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Irish Water, the new national water utility, was established under The Water Services Act 2013. Up until now, Ireland was the only OECD country which did not charge for domestic water. Irish Water – a semi-state body and subsidiary of Ervia (formerly Bord Gáis) - is responsible for the installation of water meters for domestic households connected to a public water supply and for the billing and collecting of revenue from these households, tasks formerly handled by Local Authorities and private 'group schemes'.

### Who Is Liable To Pay These Charges?

The new charges apply to domestic users only. The occupiers of the property who use the water services are liable to pay these charges. The first quarterly bills will issue in April 2015 covering the period from the 1 January 2015.

If a property is being sold, solicitors should advise all vendors to contact Irish Water and advise them of the sale. As the charge attaches to the person using the water services, Irish Water will split the bills between purchasers and vendors from the date of sale. Legislation is currently being put in place that will force renters to pay the charge. Landlords will be allowed to deduct the payment out of tenant's deposits and Landlords will not be able to register new tenancies until the charges are paid.

### How Much Do We Have To Pay?

Charges will be capped for a single adult household at €160.00 and for others at €260.00. Households that register will receive a €100.00 Water Conservation Grant each year resulting in net charges of €60.00 for a single adult household and €160.00 for other households. These charges will apply up until January 2019.

The metering programme will run parallel to the capped charges, giving people an incentive to beat the cap and conserve water. Households with children will also receive a free allowance of 21,000 litres per child per service each year.

For metered bills the charge for water in/out is reduced to €3.70 per 1,000 litres. Households with metres whose usage is less than the capped charges will receive a once – off rebate. The household water allowance is for principal private residences only and, if a person has a holiday home, a fixed minimum charge will apply. People in receipt of the household benefit package may also be entitled to certain benefits from their social welfare office.

There will be penalties for those who do not pay after a year or do not enter into a payment plan. A single adult household will face a €30.00 penalty and €60.00 will apply to other households.

### Apartment Blocks

Water meters have not been installed in apartments; this does not mean that the occupants are exempt from the charge. Application packs have been sent to all apartments around the country and bills will issue in April 2015. The amount charged will be based on the amount of people living in each apartment less any free allowances. It is important for landlords to note that if a tenancy ends and an apartment is vacant for a period of time they can organise for the "dwelling charge" to apply. This is a charge of €125 per year (€10.42 per month) and allows for water to be used at the property while it is vacant. This will allow for refurbishments and minimal water usage at the property during this period.

For further information on this topic please contact:  
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