DIGITAL METERING – DATA COLLECTION AND MANAGEMENT POLICY

1. Purpose

This Policy sets out how South East Water manages and uses data collected from digital water meters and data logger devices installed at customers' properties.

Key terms: In this Policy, digital meter includes a digitally enabled water meter and, where applicable, a data logger attached to a mechanical meter that records and transmits meter reading data. This Policy has been written in accordance with clause 5.3 of the Water Industry Standard – Urban Customer Service (July 2024).

2. Scope and Context

This Policy applies to the data South East Water collects from digital water meters and data loggers installed at customer properties connected to South East Water's water network, including both residential and non-residential (commercial/industrial) metering installations where digital metering technology is deployed.

. South East Water installs and maintains water meters at eligible connected properties to measure the volume of water supplied. Meter readings are primarily used to calculate water usage charges for billing and support water supply functions.

. South East Water's current metering fleet includes both mechanical meters (which require manual reading) and digital meters (which can be read remotely). As at January 2026, South East Water had installed 200,000 digital meters across its service area.

South East Water's digital metering rollout commenced in 2018 and is progressively replacing mechanical meters with digital meters, as well as installing digital meters at new properties. The broader program aims to replace around one million traditional water meters by 2029, subject to program delivery and operational requirements.

Digital meters can transmit water usage enabling customers (where available) to view more timely information about consumption patterns. This also supports earlier identification of potential leaks, which may reduce water loss and help customers manage bills. For South East Water, interval and device performance data supports improved network insight, targeted leak response and more informed planning for operations and maintenanceAs the rollout continues, more customers will be upgraded to digital metering. Customers who wish to retain their existing mechanical meter may opt-out of a digital meter installation, subject to South East Water approval and any applicable eligibility criteria. If a customer elects to opt-out, they will not have access to the benefits offered by the new functionalities of digital meters (for example, interval usage views and some leak alert services).

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3. Digital meters

3.1. What is a digital meter?

Digital meters perform the same main function as mechanical meters, which is to measure the amount of water supplied to a property for billing purposes. However, they also incorporate communications technology that allows for this information to be wirelessly transmitted to South East Water rather than needing to be manually read. Additionally, the technology in digital meters records and transmits other flow, network and meter performance data which can be used to provide and improve South East Water's services.

In some cases, such as with many large business customers, rather than installing a digital meter, a data logger is affixed to an existing mechanical meter. Data loggers operate in a very similar way to digital meters. References in this Policy to a digital meter should also be read as including a data logger.

3.2. How do digital meters work?

Digital meters transmit data using a cellular "Internet of Things" service (for example, Narrowband IoT (NB-IoT)) via a telecommunications provider's network similar to a mobile phone. Data is transmitted from the device to the carrier network and onward to South East Water's systems using security controls designed to protect data in transit (including encryption).

Digital meters do not contain information that identifies an individual customer, such as a customer's name or address. Each digital meter is allocated a unique device identifier, similar to a serial number. Meter data is associated with that identifier and once installed, South East Water links the identifier to a service address and the relevant customer account(s) within its systems so that incoming readings can be matched to the correct property for billing and service purposes.Digital meters are battery powered and continue to measure and record water usage if there is an electrical power outage. If there is a telecommunications outage, the meter can store readings for a period of time and forward them once connectivity is restored. Telecommunications providers may also temporarily buffer transmissions in accordance with their network configurations..

4. What data does South East Water collect from digital meters?

South East Water collects the following data from digital meters:

Data	Description
Register Read	Amount of water supplied to a customer each day.
Interval Data	Amount of water supplied to a customer during a particular interval (recorded every 30 minutes, configurable down to 5 minutes).
Alarms and Notifications	Digital meters are programmed to send alerts to South East Water about functionality issues, including things like: • battery status;

Data	Description
	• weak signal strength; and • tampering.
Water Sensor Data	Digital meters include sensors which notify South East Water about water flow in the network, including things like: • water pressure; • water temperature; and • potential leaks in the network.

5. How does South East Water use and disclose data?

South East Water uses and discloses data collected from digital meters to conduct and improve its business activities. South East Water applies validation and exception checks to incoming meter data (for example, completeness, reasonableness and error/fault flags) to support billing accuracy and operational use. Where data is unavailable or appears anomalous, South East Water may investigate and may estimate consumption in accordance with applicable laws, regulations and customer service standards.

Data collected from digital meters is primarily used for the purposes set out below:

Data	Use
Register Read	• A reading taken any time from a water meter of the total volume of water recorded through the meter. A property's water usage for a billing period is the difference between the register read at the end of one billing period and the register read at the end of the next (approximately 90 days). This is the water usage on a customer's bill.
Interval Data	• Remotely detecting water leaks and notifying affected customers. • Monitoring water usage patterns throughout the network. • Supporting customers to reduce their water usage.
Alarms and Notifications	• Remotely monitoring digital device performance and responding to detected faults.
Water Sensor Data	• Remotely monitoring network performance. • Remotely detecting water leaks. • Responding to faults and emergencies.

South East Water also regularly use and disclose data collected from digital meters for the following purposes:

- Assisting customers, e.g. responding to billing and other enquiries;
- Checking the performance of groups of digital meters;
- Analysing water usage patterns to improve water network operations;
- Undertaking research, studies and analytics relating to South East Water's functions (e.g. demand forecasting); and

- Improving how we manage our water systems.

Data collected from digital meters will generally be used and disclosed in an aggregated, or de-identified form. Data will not be aggregated or de-identified where South East Water is using or disclosing it for a purpose relating to a particular customer. An example of this situation is where a customer's water usage is disclosed to a research partner for the purposes of analysing and supporting customers in managing their water usage.

South East Water links data collected from digital meters to a specific location or customer by combining the data with other securely held information. The information combined depends on the specific function or activity that we require the information for.

Disclosure to third parties
South East Water often engages or collaborates with third parties for the purposes described above. Digital meter data may therefore be disclosed to contractors, consultants, universities, industry bodies, research institutions and government bodies in connection with these purposes.

Disclosure to landlords
South East Water understands that occupiers may be concerned that usage information can be accessed by the property owner. Due to the way customers are billed, access to water usage information varies depending on the nature of the tenancy:

- Residential tenancies: If a customer is registered as a residential tenant their landlord won't be able to see their Interval Data.

  If the landlord receives the bill for both service charges and water usage at the property a customer is occupying, the water bills sent to the landlord will include the Register Read recorded to calculate the usage for that bill. They may also be able to see the interval data if they have access to the mySouthEastWater portal.

  South East Water will notify a customer and their landlord if a potential leak is detected at the property and may inform the landlord of the size of the leak, but will not share Interval Data with them. This is done to give them the opportunity to investigate and promptly repair the leak.

  If a tenant is occupying a property but is not registered with South East Water as a residential tenant, their landlord will be able to view all Interval Data and will receive notifications about potential leaks at the property.

- Commercial tenancies: If you are a commercial tenant, your Interval Data may be disclosed to your landlord in connection with water supply functions, such as managing leaks.

  As your Landlord receives the water bill for the property, they will see the Register Read.

  South East Water will notify your landlord if a potential leak is detected at the property. This is done to give them the opportunity to investigate and promptly repair the leak.

6. Data retention

Data transmitted by digital meters is collected and stored in South East Water's databases. It's also stored in cloud-based servers in Melbourne and Sydney, as well as other South East Water data centres located in Victoria.

South East Water retains data collected from digital meters for at least the period required by the *Public Records Act 1973* (Vic).

South East Water stores data in the form it was collected, in a de-identified format indefinitely. This raw data is stored securely and kept as a historical reference for use in connection with the purposes described in this Policy.

7. Access

Customers who receive water usage charges will see their billable Register Reads on each water bill.

Customers with a digital meter and access to South East Water's online portal can see their water usage in hourly intervals. This can help to understand their usage patterns and improve water saving efforts.

Access to usage history
A customer may access their Register Reads for the preceding three years via the mySouthEastWater portal or by contacting South East Water directly. Please note that access to usage data may be refused to preserve customer privacy or safety in accordance with the information handling procedures in South East Water's Domestic and Family Violence Policy.

If usage data is held from more than three years ago and it is not accessible on the mySouthEastWater portal, a customer may request access to that data by contacting South East Water and paying an applicable access fee.

8. Privacy

Digital metering data is often about water usage at a property rather than a person. Depending on the circumstances, however, usage data may be linked to an identified or reasonably identifiable individual (for example, where it is associated with a customer account for a single-occupant residential property). Where the data constitutes personal information, South East Water handles it in accordance with the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014* (Vic).

Information security: South East Water applies security controls proportionate to the sensitivity of the data, including access controls, logging and monitoring, and secure configuration of systems used to receive, store and process metering data. Access is restricted to authorised personnel and service providers with a business need, subject to contractual, governance and assurance requirements.South East Water's Privacy Charter can be accessed at southeastwater.com.au/about-us/corporate-information/our-policies/privacy-charter/

9. Related Policies

BS1055 Privacy Charter
BS2792 Domestic and Family Violence Policy
BS2485 Customer Charter

10. Legislative Compliance

Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic)
Public Records Act 1973 (Vic)
Water Act 1989 (Vic)
Water (General) Regulations 2021 (Vic)
Water Industry Standard – Urban Customer Service (July 2024)

11. Approval

Approved by:	Executive
Approved on:	21/04/2026
Sponsor:	General Manager Enterprise Transformation & Delivery
Implementation:	Group Manager Digital Field Services
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