

Calculation of water charges for domestic accounts and fresh water flushing accounts affected by suspension of routine meter reading

The Water Supplies Department (WSD) has been gradually resuming routine meter reading, which was suspended earlier in the light of the epidemic situation. To ensure that the consistency of the calculation of water charges payable of all domestic accounts and fresh water flushing accounts, the WSD today (September 7) announced that the water charges payable will all be calculated based on the actual meter readings taken before the suspension of routine meter reading and the latest actual meter readings taken for the accounts.

"In the light of the COVID-19 epidemic situation, routine meter reading was suspended from January 29 to March 1 as well as from March 23 to May 3 this year in order to reduce meter readers going into the community so as to maintain social distancing. Generally speaking, if meter reading cannot be taken, the billing system will calculate the water consumption and water charges in the relevant billing periods based on meter readings estimated according to a set of criteria for the issue of water bills. This arrangement has been adopted for years. If there is no change to the consumer's water consumption habit, there will not be a significant increase in the water charge," a spokesman for WSD said.

"However, the epidemic situation may have changed the water consumption habit of the consumers. The WSD received a considerable number of enquiries about water charges due to estimated meter readings and requests for adjusting water charges. The WSD, apart from handling the enquiries and requests proactively, also studied the feasibility of adjusting the billing system to handle the matter uniformly.

"Upon completion of the study, testing and modification of the billing system, the WSD has decided to combine the billing periods and calculate water charges payable of the domestic accounts and fresh water flushing accounts affected by the suspension of routine meter reading based on actual meter readings. If an excess payment has been made for water bills based on estimated meter readings, the amount will be deducted in the next water bill. The WSD will proactively review all affected accounts and adjust water charges as appropriate, and no application by individual consumers is required."

The routine meter reading was suspended again from July 20 to August 30 this year in the light of the epidemic situation. For domestic accounts and fresh water flushing accounts with the billing periods ending during the suspension, the WSD has modified the billing system to suspend issuing water

bills to the relevant consumers. When the routine meter reading for these accounts is resumed, the WSD will calculate the water consumption and water charges for the combined billing periods according to the preceding and the latest actual meter readings for issuing water bills. Consumers of relevant accounts should note that the water bills issued by then may cover water charges of more than one billing period and the amount payable may be more than the usual water bills covering only one billing period.

Please refer to the [WSD website](#) for details of the above calculation of water charges.