

# Waterworks (Amendment) Ordinance 2024 comes into force

The Waterworks (Amendment) Ordinance 2024 (the Ordinance) was gazetted and came into force today (April 19).

A spokesman for the Development Bureau said, "The Ordinance aims to enhance enforcement efficiency and provide a deterrent effect against the illegal act of overcharging for water. It empowers the Water Supplies Department (WSD) and the Rating and Valuation Department to exchange information. A mechanism for exchanging information when handling cases of overcharging for water has been finalised, enabling a more effective process of inspection and handling of cases that could not be followed up in the past."

The Ordinance, which was passed by the Legislative Council on April 10, stipulates that reimbursement for water can only be collected from tenants after the water bill from the WSD has been issued and paid, and that there is an increased penalty level for overcharging of water. An offender is liable on a first conviction to a level 3 fine (\$10,000), and on a subsequent conviction to a level 4 fine (\$25,000). Apart from the fine, those convicted must repay the overcharged amount to the tenant.

The Ordinance also empowers the WSD to request the relevant person to provide information or documents, including receipts for water charges or payment records. Any person who, without reasonable excuse, fails to comply with the request commits an offence and is liable to a fine at level 3 (\$10,000) and a further fine (\$1,000) for each subsequent day that the required information is not submitted. Furthermore, a person who provides false or misleading information to the WSD is liable to a fine at level 4 (\$25,000) and to imprisonment for six months.

Furthermore, persons who collect a reimbursement for water must issue a receipt containing the specified content within seven days from the payment of the relevant amount, and keep a copy of the receipt for two years. An offender is liable on conviction to a fine at level 3 (\$10,000). This requirement will come into operation on July 19, 2024.

The spokesman said, "We recommend owners of subdivided units to install separate water meters from the WSD for their tenants. The tenants can pay the water charges by themselves according to the separate water bills issued by the WSD for each subdivided unit, and the owners can save the trouble of apportioning the water charge."

The WSD will step up publicity through social media, TV and radio Announcements in the Public Interest, inserts to water bills, circular leaflets and posters, guidelines, simple and straightforward infographics and more to enable the public to learn about the details of the Ordinance. The public can also visit the [dedicated page](#) on the WSD website for relevant

information.