

# Dublin Region Non-Domestic Water Metering Project

## Frequently Asked Questions

**Q Why will some consumers receive a water bill when they never paid for water or wastewater services previously?**

A The Government's National Water Pricing Policy Framework requires the charging of non-domestic customers of water services so as to recover the full costs of providing such services to these customers. In order to implement the national water services pricing policy, local authorities are required to achieve universal metering of the water supplied to the non-domestic sector by 2006. This is in accordance with national and EU policy on the application of the "polluter pays" principle, including the EU Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC). GMC Group will undertake the design and installation of non-domestic water meters and meter reading system across the Dublin Region on behalf of Fingal County Council, Dublin City Council, South Dublin County Council and Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council.

**Q What is the legal basis of the relationship between the four local authorities and GMC Group?**

A Fingal County Council on behalf of itself, Dublin City Council, South Dublin County Council and Dunlaoghaire Rathdown County Council have signed a contract with GMC Group to undertake the design and installation of non-domestic water meters and meter reading system across the four local authorities. The contract will involve the survey, design and installation of water meters for all of the approximately 42,000 non-domestic water connections across the region.

**Q Who is responsible for deciding what each consumer should pay?**

A Each local authority will operate and maintain the metering system in their area once it has been installed and commissioned by the GMC Group. The meter readings obtained initially by GMC Group and subsequently by County Council personnel will be used by the local authorities to prepare and issue bills. The tariffs for water charges will be calculated by each Local Authority, as is the current practise.

**Q How can consumers benefit from installing a meter?**

A While the four local authorities in the Dublin Region have historically charged for Non-Domestic sector water services, the new policy will ensure a fair and equitable system of charging for all. Customers will be charged based on a standing charge for the availability of the service and a volumetric charge based on the amount of water used - the less you use the less you pay. The charge will only relate to the non-domestic sector and is expected to encourage water conservation and so reduce the cost of water provision on the whole. The Drive-By Automatic Meter Reading system being installed under the project will provide much greater water usage information. This can be used to alert customers and the local authorities to possible leaks or

water theft and the information gathered will be used for water network management. Customers will be provided with much greater information about their own water usage.

**Q What does a pre-installation survey involve?**

A Before GMC Group install a meter and meter reading system, they will carry out the Pre-Installation survey to confirm the contact details of all customers as well as technical details such as the location and correct size of meter to be installed. PJ Kearys will be carrying out this specific aspect of the contract. For the majority of customers this will cause only short-term disruption to water supplies on the day while connections are verified. In a limited number of cases, typically with larger customers, a more detailed water usage survey will be required.

**Q What happens after the pre-installation survey?**

A Following the pre-installation survey, GMC Group will again contact non-domestic customers to arrange an appointment for the installation of the meter. The local authorities and GMC Group will work closely to maintain awareness and to keep customers up to date with the progress of the project.

**Q Where will the meter be installed?**

A In the majority of cases, meters and meter reading equipment will be installed externally as close to the property boundary as possible. In a number of cases, due to services congestion, recently resurfaced areas or limited space, meters will be installed internally within the premises. The disruption to water supply will be kept to an absolute minimum.

**Q Who is responsible, if there is a leak in the pipe?**

A All customers have a responsibility to repair leaks that occur on the water supply system within their own property. The local authority is responsible for the repair of leaks that occur on the public side of the supply system i.e. between the boundary and the water main, and on the water main

**Q What happens if the same connection is used for domestic and non-domestic purposes?**

A If the domestic and non-domestic supplies cannot be metered separately, a domestic allowance will be applied and deducted from the metered volume of water supplied to the premises. In all cases where it is practical to do so the domestic and non-domestic elements of usage will be metered separately.

**Q What if there is more than one connection to a Property?**

A Each connection from the main supply will be metered.

**Q How many bills will the customer receive?**

A The majority of Non-Domestic Customers will receive a bill every three months. Some customers, who use a significant amount of water, will receive their bill on a monthly basis. Each local authority determines billing frequency in their own region.

**Q Do non-domestic customers qualify for tax relief on their bill?**

A Tax relief may be available in certain circumstances. The non-domestic customer should contact their local tax office for details.

**Q What if there is a dispute with the bill?**

A If a non-domestic customer thinks they are not liable for the bill or disputes the amount, they should initially contact their local authority.