

# Digital meter fact sheet



Digital meter technology can help detect leaks early, not only saving water, but also saving money on your water bill.

## How they work

Digital meters enable water volume to be recorded on an hourly basis at your water meter. The meter transmits daily consumption data through low level radio frequency waves well within Australian safety standard, to a secure website. The data doesn't contain your personal information, it's encrypted and held securely in accordance with national privacy principles.

The specialised meters are battery operated and use a low level of power. The signal sent by the digital meter is lower than that of a text message sent from a mobile phone.

We have successfully used this technology in our region over the last decade with large water using businesses and agricultural customers, as well as a small residential trial in Colac. Digital meters have also been used successfully by other water corporations in Australia and overseas.

## Detecting water leaks

Leaks can be a significant source of water loss in homes and businesses and can occur in new and older properties. If not detected early, leaks can waste large volumes of water and increase customer water bills.

Typically, customers remain unaware of leaks until they receive a higher than usual quarterly water bill. Digital meter technology allows customers and Barwon Water to identify leaks as soon as they happen.

If you think you have a water leak, don't worry as we have support programs in place that can help you find it and fix it straight away.

## Get to know your water use

Monitoring your own water consumption can provide a range of benefits. You become more aware of your water usage patterns (when and how much you use) which can help you make informed choices about your consumption.

From our perspective, detailed consumption data provides a better foundation to improve the management of a water supply system. This includes identifying network efficiencies, improving peak water use management and it helps us to make informed decisions on repairs and capital works.

## Changing your water meter over

All customers who have a connection to drinking water that is supplied by Barwon Water, have a water meter. Periodically these meters are replaced as part of our meter replacement program. Your existing water meter will be replaced with a new digital meter. If you would like to discuss your new meter or have any concerns, please contact us.

## Installation process

Your water meter will be replaced with a digital meter over a 3-week period, commencing in November. It will take our contractor approximately 45 minutes to change the meter over at your property. You do not need to do anything, there is no cost to replace your meter and there won't be any changes to your water bill.

## Fast Facts – steps to changing your meter over

1. Make sure access to your water meter is clear
2. Your old water meter will be read and a photo taken
3. The new meter will be installed and checked to make sure it is working.

## Further information

Further information about digital meters and Birregurra Sustainable Communities – Water can be found at:

[www.yoursay.barwonwater.vic.gov.au/birregurra](http://www.yoursay.barwonwater.vic.gov.au/birregurra)

You can also contact us on 1300 656 007 or [info@barwonwater.vic.gov.au](mailto:info@barwonwater.vic.gov.au).



# Commonly asked questions

## Q. Do I need to do anything to prepare for a digital meter?

No. Our contractor will visit your property and change over your meter. You don't need to be home when your digital meter is installed but you must ensure there is safe and clear access to your water meter.

## Q. Will I be without water when my digital meter is installed?

We will need to interrupt your water supply for 10–15 minutes. If a continual water supply is vital, due to a medical condition or operation of a business, please contact us as soon as possible so we can work with you on a suitable arrangement.

## Q. Are digital water meters reliable?

Yes. The digital meter will be verified after our contractor installs it. We will periodically verify that the meter is operating accurately. Manual water meter reads will still continue for billing purposes.

## Q. What if I have concerns about contractors accessing my water meter?

Please call us on 1300 656 007 if you have any concerns about access to your water meter or property. If required, we can work with you on an agreed time and date for the digital meter to be installed due to a locked gate, when you are not home, or dogs on the property, for example.

## Q. Who is responsible for the maintenance of the digital meter?

Just like your old water meter, the digital meter is the property of Barwon Water. You are not required to perform any maintenance on the meter and should be mindful not to damage it when mowing or landscaping. It is important that Barwon Water staff and contractors have safe and clear access to your water meter and that it is not covered by any rubbish, landscaping or debris.

## Q. Are digital meters safe?

Yes. Digital meters do not pose a health risk. Data is transmitted through low level radio frequency waves, which are well within Australian safety standards. The digital meters are battery operated and use a low level of power. The signal sent by the digital meter is lower than that of a text message sent from a mobile phone.

The data transmitter spends the majority of its time in 'sleep' mode and is typically on for less than half a second each hour.

## Q. What happens to my usage data?

All data collected is held on a secure server in accordance with national privacy policies. A customer portal is available for customers to access and monitor or view their water consumption.

## Q. What about my privacy and data security, can data be tampered with?

We take your data privacy seriously. Data will be stored securely and subject to our normal privacy procedures, it will not be passed on to any third parties or used for any other purpose.

The data that the digital meter collects is encrypted and does not contain any personal information. All data is collected and is held on secure servers in accordance with national privacy policies and our collection statement.

## Q. Are digital meters being installed if coronavirus (COVID-19) restrictions are in place?

Yes. Our contractors are permitted to work and will comply with current government restrictions to help contain the spread of coronavirus and keep our communities safe.



### For further information

☎ 1300 656 007 | ✉ [info@barwonwater.vic.gov.au](mailto:info@barwonwater.vic.gov.au)

[www.yoursay.barwonwater.vic.gov.au/birregurra](http://www.yoursay.barwonwater.vic.gov.au/birregurra)

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