

December 2005

Circular Number: WSP9/05

To Each Sanitary Authority

RE. WATER SERVICES NON-DOMESTIC METERING PROGRAMME

A Chara,

I refer to the Government's Water Pricing Policy Framework, and the requirement for the universal metering of the non-domestic sector by December 2006.

2006 Deadline

The implementation of non-domestic metering programmes has become increasingly time critical. With only 12 months remaining for full delivery on this Government's requirement, the Minister has asked that we re-emphasise the need for all sanitary authorities to secure full and timely delivery. Authorities are again reminded to conclude their metering installation programmes by end December 2006.

There is no scope for any slippage and any delays that occur will have a detrimental effect on meeting the 2006 target; every effort must therefore be made to meet the Government's deadline.

Response to June 2005 Questionnaire

The June 2005 questionnaire confirms that significant progress that has been made on the programme. Some authorities would appear not to have concluded the identification and subsequent billing of all non-domestic customers. The fact that most authorities are not in a position to conclusively identify all of their non-domestic customers is a worrying feature of the programme which needs to be quickly addressed by all authorities.

Charging All Non-Domestic Customers

The number of non-domestic customers in most local authority areas has risen significantly, while the number not charged remains very high; some 73,700 "potential" customers are not currently charged for their water services provision.

The Department continues to be concerned with the number of non-domestic customers (current or potential) not charged or not directly charged for their water services. This practice conflicts with the principles of water services pricing policy and the requirement that all non-domestic users be directly charged for their water services.

In this regard, the Department would highlight the following concerns:

- The number of non-domestic customers not charged remains extraordinarily high, notwithstanding the explanations provided.
- There is significant potential additional revenue available to sanitary authorities from this source.
- All potential customers should be identified and immediately charged for water services, either at a flat rate or by a metered volumetric charge.
- There should not be a time lag between identification and confirmation of a new customer and the billing of that customer even on a fixed charge basis.

Information Update Request at 31st December 2005

The enclosed questionnaire is designed for easy completion and return. The format has been altered in order to avoid inconsistencies in the returns, particularly in relation to the number of non-domestic customers. Authorities are invited, where you consider it necessary or helpful, to provide a commentary with the completed questionnaire to provide further relevant information and/or clarifications regarding your non-domestic metering programme. The questionnaire should be returned to the Department by Monday 16th January 2006. An electronic version of the return may be forwarded to Ms. Paula Hanrahan, e-mail: paula_hanrahan@environ.ie (☎ 01 8882165)

A summary of the mid-2005 return is attached.

Is mise le meas,

Liam Gleeson
Water Services Policy Section,
Water and Natural Heritage Division.

To - Each City and County Manager and Director of Services (Water Services),
Copy to – CCMA GCCC, AMAI, Ombudsman's Office and Regional Authorities.

Summary June 2005 Metering Questionnaire returns

1. General

- Most authorities considered the status of the information they submitted as being of a high standard of accuracy.

2. Meter Installation

- All authorities are engaged in reviewing their non-domestic customer base, while meter installation has commenced in 11 authorities at end June. The vast majority of authorities have indicated that full metering will be in place by the Government's 2006 deadline. At the end of November 2005, this figure had risen to 23.

3. Number of Non-Domestic Customers

- Authorities have identified 225,339 non-domestic customers and it is likely that this figure will increase further as the metering programme is implemented nationally.
- Almost all authorities will have the county or citywide consolidated charge in place for all non-domestic users for water services by 2006.

4. Implementation (Contract) Information

- 5 authorities are at contract stage (end June '05)
- 18 authorities are at tender stage (end June '05)
- 11 authorities are at installation stage (end June '05)

5. Metering Programme

- There is an estimated 73,935 meters installed nationally, a substantial number of these will be replaced.
- Local authorities now estimate that over 223,378 meters will have been installed in the period up to 2006. The estimated total number of meters installed (at the end of each year) is outlined below, with more tentative 2004 data in brackets.

2005	100,382	(113,699)
2006	223,378	(180,549)

ANNEX 2

UNIVERSAL NON-DOMESTIC METERING QUESTIONNAIRE REPORT ON PROGRESS TO 31 December 2005

You are asked to complete all of the following questions 1 to 9 and to forward your response to the Department by Monday 16 January 2006:

Question 1: Is your non-domestic metering programme:
(a) at tender stage; (b) meter installation stage or (c) other (describe)

Reply 1: _____

.....
Question 2: When was/will metering installation (give month/year) be commenced by your authority?

Reply 2: _____

.....
Question 3: When was/will meter installation (give month/year) be concluded?

Reply 3: _____

.....
Question 4: How many non-domestic customers are there in your administrative area as of end December 2005?

Reply 4: _____

.....
Question 5: How many of these non-domestic customers are charged for their water services provision?

Reply 5: _____

.....
Question 6: How many non-domestic customers are now metered (at end December 2005)?

Reply 6: _____

.....
Question 7: How many non-domestic customers will be metered at the end of 2006?

Reply 7: _____

Question 8: State the volume (in cubic meters) and percentage of non-domestic water supply metered (at end December 2005)?

Reply 8: _____

.....
Question 9: Will the Government's non-domestic metering deadline be achieved in your administrative area? (Answer Yes or No).

Reply 9 _____

.....
To be signed by Director of Services, Water Services: _____

Sanitary Authority _____