

Providing a Water Advice Notice to Non-Owner Residents— Information for Water Service Providers

Water advice notices provide a great opportunity to promote, and educate the community about, water efficiency.

New provisions for water advice notices to tenants

It is now widely recognised that providing residents with comparative data about water consumption in their household and community can encourage water saving behaviours.

New legislation has been introduced to ensure Queensland non-owner residents receive consistent and standardised water advice notices that contain their current and comparative water use data.

The legislation

Under section 139 of the *Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008* (the Act), water service providers (providers) must give a water advice notice to non-owner residents of residential properties, i.e. tenants.

The regulatory requirements have been set out in the Guidelines for the Provision of a Water Advice Notice to Non-Owner Residents (the guidelines). These can be accessed online at <www.derm.qld.gov.au>.

Timing for the new arrangements

The new requirements take effect from **16 November 2011** for all providers registered prior to 16 November 2007. A four-year transitional period has been allowed for these existing providers.

Providers registered after 16 November 2007 must comply with the guidelines one year after their registration.

Ideas on how to identify non-owner occupied premises

There are several ways a provider may identify owner occupied residential premises and distinguish them from rental properties. Some suggestions include:

- determining which property addresses correspond to the rates bill addresses, as these should be owner occupied. All other residential premises are likely to be tenanted, vacant lots or in transition between tenants
- writing a letter to each premises with a tear-off/return section which requests the owner to advise if they

are renting their properties to tenants and return the section of the letter to the provider for their records

- notifying tenants through local real estate agencies that the onus is on them to advise their provider if they have received the water bill in error. Then the provider can update their records for these properties accordingly
- issuing a separate water advice notice to each property with a note for the occupier to contact their provider if they are the owner and do not want to receive a water advice notice separately from their water bill
- asking local real estate agencies if they can provide details of houses purchased as rental properties
- advertising in the local paper in areas with no street mail service and on the provider's website that water advice notices are available. They can invite tenants to contact them directly to request individual water advice notices be sent to the local post office for collection.

Providers must make a reasonable attempt to comply with the requirements to give a water advice notice to all tenants. They should also allow for sufficient time to collect this information before the compliance date.

If the provider is unable to identify all non-owner residential addresses, they should contact the regulator to discuss alternative arrangements to suit their individual circumstances.

Content of a water advice notice

A water advice notice must include:

- graphical and numerical information on water consumption for the current period compared to the previous period
- comparisons of average daily water consumption with the same period in the previous year
- the local area residential average for the current period—small providers do not have to provide this information
- litres (L) as a unit of measure on a daily comparative basis (i.e. L/day).

The inclusion of comparative water use data in the water advice notice is of great value to a tenant in considering their water use. This information is best presented in

graphical form to help people understand how their water use compares to others.

However, due to the different capabilities of providers' billing systems, information such as local area residential average may be presented in text format rather than by graphical form.

The water advice notice should be addressed to 'The Occupier', minimising the need to maintain a record of tenant's details or any tenancy arrangements.

An example of a water advice notice is attached.

Water saving messages

Water advice notices are an excellent avenue for delivering water saving messages and tips and providing comparative data to assist residents to monitor and reduce their water use.

The guidelines recommend that providers include information on water advice notices to advise residents on how they can save water.

Messages can be tailored to suit a particular region and could focus on:

- the importance of checking for and repairing leaks
- bathroom water saving tips, e.g. taking shorter showers
- kitchen water saving tips, e.g. scraping, not rinsing, plates clean
- laundry water saving tips, e.g. only washing full loads
- garden water saving tips, e.g. using mulch on garden beds.

Information on programs such as council rebates that help customers save water could also be provided.

A range of Waterwise information materials which can be used in conjunction with water bills to give more detailed information about water efficiency can be accessed online at <www.derm.qld.gov.au/waterwise/>.

Targeted messages

Targeted messages for high-use consumers can be very effective. For example, where a resident's water consumption is twice the average for the suburb, a message encouraging them to comply with designated watering times could be displayed on their water advice notice.

A leak detection message urging residents to check their property for leaking taps and pipes could be included in notices where water consumption is twice the amount for the corresponding period in the previous year.

Educating the community

Water advice notices can also be an effective mechanism for educating the community on a variety of local urban water issues. Such information could include:

- details about new water infrastructure
- an explanation of pricing changes
- information about how water revenue is used
- sustainability messages
- community achievements in relation to water efficiency
- alternative water sources being used or investigated, including pilot projects
- information on available programs that will help customers save water, e.g. government rebates, water restrictions.

Frequency of distribution

Water advice notices should be sent to tenants at the same time as rate notices or accounts for the supply of water are issued to owners. However, a water advice notice may be issued separately to the general rates payment notice if this is not possible.

Further information

For further information about providing water advice notices to non-owner residents, contact Urban Water Policy and Management in the Department of Environment and Resource Management on (07) 3247 4490.

*October 2010
W175*

**For general enquiries contact the
Queensland Government call centre 13 74 68 (13 QGOV)
or visit www.derm.qld.gov.au**

WATERUSAGENOTICE

WATER CONSUMPTION ADVICE ONLY



The Occupier
169 Water Street
WATERVILLE Qld 4975



327
48394302

Why have I received this advice?

The Waterville Regional Council is required to provide the occupier of the property with advice relating to their water consumption (*Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008*). This is an advice of water consumption only and does not require payment.

ISSUE DATE 01 January 2010
ASSESSMENT NUMBER 345678
PROPERTY LOCATION 169 Water Street, Waterville, Qld, 4975

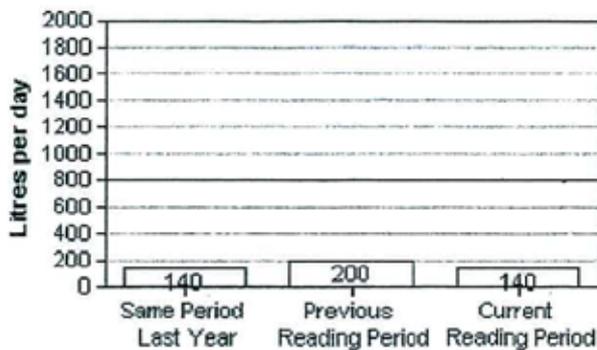
Total Property Consumption 12.00kL
Daily average usage litres - 1kL (kilolitre) = 1,000L (litres) 140.00kL

YOUR WATER CONSUMPTION

Meter ID	Current Reading Date	Current Reading	Previous Reading Date	Previous Reading	Usage	No. Days Charged
162794	30/11/2009	92.00kL	06/09/2009	80.00kL	12.00kL	85

YOUR CONSUMPTION COMPARISON

Your average daily usage in litres



Keep up your water saving habits while keeping your garden green.