

HOW TO TAKE BACK CONTROL OF YOUR WATER COSTS

While most businesses already have a comprehensive strategy in place for their electricity and gas consumption, water management is often overlooked. And it's easy to understand why – as an energy professional, your to-do-list is already overflowing – especially if you have a large portfolio to manage and regulatory reporting to contend with.

But if water optimisation isn't on that to-do-list for 2021 then it needs to be and here's why: 1 in 3 water bills contain errors, meaning you could be unknowingly overpaying. And these errors aren't small mistakes – you could be owed thousands from historical billing errors.

How can I take back control of my water costs?

Of course, you could try to investigate your water charges yourself, but water billing is a complex matter and needs an expert eye. Your water bill is made up of a range of different elements and will vary depending on whether you're metered or unmetered, with businesses paying a standing charge plus either a volumetric rate or a charge related to the value of your property. You might be billed for sewerage services for collecting and treating foul sewage, surface water drainage, highway drainage and trade effluent. Likewise, water retailers have different approaches to charging for surface water drainage and highway drainage. Without a thorough knowledge of the network with its complex water market and charges, you're fighting a losing battle.

Revenue recovery water audit

Carried out by qualified water engineers, our 5-step audit process will allow you to determine whether your charges are correct. Our team will carry out your audit without any cost to you or obligation – we just ask that you read the results of our report to see where we can save you money.

Step 1: Analysis

We start our audit by analysing your charges, costs, and consumption, starting with the last 12 months of your water bills. We investigate every single element of your water usage which has an associated cost. We also look at your consumption levels, benchmarking them against what we'd expect for your site(s). Once our desk analysis is complete, we'll conduct an unobtrusive site survey to further validate our investigation.

Step 2: Site survey

Many of our clients come to us having already had their costs validated but without having had any targeted site visits. Without going to site, you simply cannot check that water charges are correct for complex and non-standard sites. A site visit allows for in-depth checks to be carried out to ensure your site infrastructure and network diagrams correlate with the audit findings. For example, most bills include a fixed standing charge based on the size of your water meter – without visiting the site and looking at your water meter, it's not possible to ascertain whether you've been overpaying.

Step 3: The report

This is where it gets interesting – in your report, we'll either give you the news that everything is in order, or we'll provide details of where you've been charged incorrectly. As well as checking your charges, we'll identify areas of excessive consumption. Where inefficiencies are identified, we'll tell you what remedial action is required, together with the associated costs and the potential savings, so that you can make an informed decision on whether to move forward with our recommendations.

Steps 4 & 5: Implementation and recovery

If you do decide to go ahead with our recommendations, then we do all the hard work for you, putting together your case, contacting your supplier to correct your charges, and recovering any monies overpaid. You'll receive a refund for any historic billing errors, as well as benefitting from the long-term cost savings of having your charges corrected by us. Where excessive consumption has been identified, our engineers will identify the cause and arrange for remedial action.

Put simply, we'll ensure that your future charges are accurate and that they are as low as possible.

Our end to end water solution

Our water audit is the basis for any good water optimisation strategy, but there's more you can do. You can't manage what you can't measure, and many of our clients use the funds recovered from our audit to invest in monitoring technology, helping them to better manage their water usage and spot leaks early. We can also support with bill validation and water procurement – using our industry knowledge to secure the best value contracts for your business, as well as advising on self-supply for larger consumers.

Previously, business customers had no choice if they were receiving poor service and being incorrectly charged by their water provider. However, since the opening of the water market in 2017, consumers have started to realise that they now have a choice. They can choose what is the right approach for their business. Using an independent water audit specialist can help you take back control and reduce your costs significantly.

To find out more about our revenue recovery water audit, contact our team on 01772 689 250 or email partnerships@inspiredenergy.co.uk.