



CITY OF CAPE TOWN
ISIXEKO SASEKAPA
STAD KAAPSTAD

Frequently Asked Questions

Limitation of excessive use of water among indigent-registered customers

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1. Which properties in Cape Town will have their water supply limited to a 'trickle flow'?

The City will limit your water supply if you do not pay your water bill, or if you are registered as indigent and you have exceeded the monthly water allocation despite warnings. The City will give you notice before limiting the water flow from your tap.

If you are registered as indigent you will receive up to 15 000 litres of water a month at no charge. You therefore need to keep your monthly water use within this limit, which is an average of 500 litres per day. If you have more than 10 people living on the property, or you are sick and need more water, you can apply for a higher allocation of water.

2. How does the flow limiting process work if I am registered for indigent benefits?

- If you are registered for indigent benefits, the process will be as follows:
- If water usage on the residential property is higher than 15 000 litres a month (daily average of 500 litres) for two consecutive months, a warning letter will be sent asking for the usage to be lowered to required levels by the following month.
- If usage is higher than 15 000 litres a month (daily average of 500 litres) for a third consecutive month, despite the issued warning, a flow limiting disc will be inserted in the meter to limit water supply to a trickle flow.
- These discs are designed to allow 6 000 litres (6 kℓ) per month to the property, which is aligned with the free basic allocation provided for in South Africa's national water standards. This disc will remain in place for the following 12 consecutive months.
- After the 12-month period has passed, the disc will be removed and the same process for the property will start again.

3. How long does flow limiting last?

The flow-limiting disc will remain in place for 12 consecutive months if water usage has exceeded 15 000 litres a month for three consecutive months despite written warnings from the City.

After the 12-month limitation period has passed, the disc will be removed and the same process to manage water use to within the 15 000-litre allocation will start again for the property.

4. How much water will 'trickle flow' provide, and how long will it take with the tap open to get enough to use?

The flow-limiting disc will provide a minimum of 6 000 litres a month (same as 6 kilolitres), which equates to around 200 litres of water a day. This is aligned with the free basic allocation provided for in South Africa's national water standards.

The water flow will be very weak, as the disc is designed to deliver a drip or trickle flow. This means it will take a long time to fill jugs, containers, bottles, basins and sinks.

To put this in perspective, it will take approximately 4 hours with the tap open to get 200 litres. It is therefore important for you to manage your water usage carefully.

Make sure you store your water in clean, tightly sealed containers. You may want to fill containers in the afternoon or evening so that you have enough water for body washing, brushing your teeth and breakfast in the morning.

This new system is different from the old 'Water Management Device' meters. The water supply will not be cut off if you use more than 200 litres in one day. Water will continue trickling through if the taps are left open.

However, water is a precious resource, so it is important to use only as much water as you

need for essential activities like cooking, drinking, washing and cleaning. There are also costs associated with getting clean, treated water piped to your property, so if you are not paying for it then others are paying for you and it is fair to not waste water.

5. Does the City completely cut off my water?

No. It is illegal in South Africa to cut off the water supply completely because access to water is a right entrenched in the Constitution, which is the supreme law of our land.

If you are registered as indigent, the City limits the supply of water to your property when water usage has exceeded 15 000 litres a month for three consecutive months despite written warnings from the City (or if you have exceeded a higher allocation if you qualify for that).

The flow-limiting discs are designed to allow a minimum of 6 000 litres of water per month (which is an average of 200 litres a day) to the property, which is aligned with the free basic allocation provided for in South Africa's national water standards.

6. What if I am registered as indigent and there is a leak on my property that I am unaware of?

The water flowing through leaks on private property plumbing will be counted by the meter as part of your usage. Even though you're not using that water for anything useful, it is still running through your system and will count towards your allocated amount. It's being 'lost' (not productive use), but it is still accounted for because there are costs associated with getting clean water treated and piped through thousands of kilometres of reticulation pipes to get to you and all water in the system needs to be tracked so we can manage it wisely in our water-scarce region.

If it's a big leak which loses a lot of water, your monthly amount may go higher than the 15,000 litres allocated at no charge and the City may start the warning process as outlined in Question 2.

If it's a smaller leak, it will lose water at a lower rate and you may not notice it if you're using less than 15,000 litre allocation.

It's essential that you as a property owner or resident check regularly to see if you have a leak, and act quickly to fix any leaks.

As per section 2.21 of the City's Tariff Policy of 2022-2023, if your excessive use was found to be caused by a leak, you will need to advise the City within the first two months of the discovery of the leak and request for once-off assistance from the City.

7. How do I check if there is a leak on my property?

An easy way to check for leaks on your property is to check your water meter.

- Turn off all the taps on your property
- Find your water meter (usually on the verge/kerbside outside your property) and open the lid.
- Note how much the meter reading is.
- Keep the taps closed, then wait about 15 minutes and check the meter reading again. If the numbers have gone up, it means you probably have a leak.

Read our 'Find and fix Leaks' and 'DIY Guide to Finding and Fixing Water Leaks' [publications](#) to find out how you can prevent, detect and fix leaks on your property.

8. How does the City’s leak fixing programme work for indigent properties with excessive use?

The City has embarked on a once-off water leak repair programme for 2 522 identified indigent households using more than 50 000 litres a month and who have not benefited from the City fixing their leak before. They will not be limited if they accept the leaks repair/investigation and water consumption subsequently reduces to 15 kilolitres or less.

9. Can properties with a large number of residents get a higher allocation of water?

Yes. Provision for a usage increase allowance was introduced in the new 2022/2023 tariff policy, which came into effect on 1 July 2022.

Indigent customers can now apply to use more than the 15 000 litre allowance per month if they have more than 10 people living on the property, or due to health reasons:

NUMBER OF RESIDENTS	WATER ALLOWANCE
11 to 14 people (or households with fewer than 11 occupants and valid medical reasons)	21 000 litres per month
15 to 18 people	27 000 litres per month
19 people and above	30 000 litres per month

10. How can customers with more than 10 people on the property or sick people apply for a higher allocation of water?

Apply with the following supporting documents:

- certified copies of IDs
- an affidavit
- proof of medical reasons
- Submit your application in one of these ways:
- Visit a City walk-in centre - see www.capetown.gov.za/facilities to find the nearest one.
- Email water@capetown.gov.za
- Online at www.capetown.gov.za/servicerequests
- WhatsApp 060 018 1505

11. I am registered as an indigent customer. If I am having an event like a wedding, funeral or ‘after tears’ at my property is it possible to have a higher allocation of water for a short time for this?

Yes. You will need the following supporting documents:

- certified copies of IDs
- an affidavit
- a death certificate or marriage certificate (if applicable)

Submit your documents in one of the following ways:

- Visit a City walk-in centre - see www.capetown.gov.za/facilities to find the nearest one.
- Email water@capetown.gov.za
- Online at www.capetown.gov.za/servicerequests
- WhatsApp to 060 018 1505

12. If the flow-limiting disc is inserted in the meter for my property by mistake, what can I do?

If a flow-limiting disc has been inserted in your meter by mistake, you will need to contact the City to explain that it has been done in error. You can request that it be removed and your flow reconnected to 15 000 litres a month. The City will come to your property to investigate and remove the disc.

You can contact the City through one of the following channels to log a service request:

- Visit a City walk-in centre - see www.capetown.gov.za/facilities to find the nearest one.
- Email water@capetown.gov.za
- Online at www.capetown.gov.za/servicerequests
- WhatsApp to 060 018 1505

13. What can I do if I suspect my water meter is faulty?

If you believe your meter is faulty, you can apply for the meter to be tested, as per section 2.27 of the [City's Tariff Policy](#), which sets out the procedure to be followed:

- Registered indigent customers will need to pay a deposit of R106, 20 (incl. VAT) prior to the testing of the meter by the City or its appointed contractors.
- If the meter is found to be faulty, the deposit will be returned to you and you will not need to pay the balance.
- Your account will also be adjusted to an estimated consumption for the period that the meter was found to be faulty. It is therefore important to apply for a meter test as soon as you become aware that your meter is no longer working correctly.
- If the meter is found to be working correctly, you will need to pay the balance after the test is completed. This balance will depend on the size and age of the meter.

14. Is limiting the excessive use of water legally allowed?

Yes, Sections 2.5; 2.18 and 2.21 of the [City's Tariff Policy](#) allow for this. It is also aligned with national legislation.

15. Where can I find out more about the new water meter approach?

Go to www.capetown.gov.za/wmd for more information, or speak to your [ward councillor](#).