



**Disconnections
and
reconnections
policy.**

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1. Background

The Water Act 2014 includes provisions for market opening for the non-household market on 1 April 2017. To allow this to happen, the regulators and market participants have developed a set of binding processes (or codes), the Wholesale Contract/Wholesale-Retail Code, for water and/or wastewater wholesale business to follow when providing their services. The Wholesale Contract/Wholesale-Retail Code is setting the rules of interaction between the wholesalers and retailers in relation to disconnection and reconnection services provided by wholesalers, without overriding any of the duties or powers of the wholesaler imposed by the Water Industry Act 1991.

2. Scope

This policy is in place to define how TWUL Wholesale will carry out our disconnections and reconnections services, including:

- Disconnections for non-payment
- Disconnections in emergencies
- Disconnections for illegal use
- Disconnection requested by the non-household customer
- Reconnection following a disconnection for non-payment
- Reconnection following an emergency disconnection
- Reconnection requested by the non-household customer

In addition, this policy defines TWUL Wholesales position on the use of accredited entities to carry out disconnections and reconnections for non-payment.

For the avoidance of doubt, this policy applies to non-household customers only, within our wholesale operational area.

The legal relationship between TWUL and retailers is regulated by relevant legislation and written contracts, which require compliance with, among other things, the Wholesale Contract/Wholesale-Retail Code. This document should not be relied upon as an accurate summary of these legal obligations and in the event of any conflict the statutory and contractual obligations will take precedence over this policy.

3. Definition of terms

Accredited entities – an entity which has been independently evaluated and accredited under an accreditation scheme to carry out certain activities.

WIRSAE provider - The Water Industry Registration Scheme Accredited Entity (WIRSAE) established by Lloyds Register to allow companies, who fulfil the scheme requirements, to become registered as accredited WIRSAE providers. WIRSAE providers are referred to as accredited entities in the Wholesale Contract/Wholesale-Retail Code.

Emergency disconnection - A permanent or a temporary disconnection made by us without any previous warning.

Permanent disconnection - A disconnection where a connection to the water network is removed or otherwise made unworkable, such that the supply of water services at that point could only resume if a new connection was made. The Supply Point ID is deregistered.

Temporary disconnection - All other disconnections, which may subsequently be reconnected without a new connection being made. Supply Point ID is not deregistered.

Standard disconnection - Disconnections that are charged by reference to a specified standard price within the wholesaler's Wholesale Tariff Document.

Non standard disconnection - Disconnection for which the wholesaler's Wholesale Tariff Document sets out the price point other than the standard price, or the wholesaler provides for a quotation for the work to be done.

OSV - Outside stop valve

SPID - Supply Point ID

Illegal use of water services - Unauthorised connections to the water supply which may include: theft by bypassing or tampering with a meter or making an unauthorised connection to the main, connecting another property onto your existing supply without informing us.

Eligible premises - The non-household customers premises, which the retailer has asked for the disconnection or reconnection to be applied to.

4.Principles

We offer our disconnection and reconnection services, in accordance with the Wholesale Contract/Wholesale-Retail Code Operational Terms, in order to:

- control and protect our assets from illegal use and contamination from breaches of water regulations, to allow us to continue to provide retailers and non-household customers a high quality water service;
- support the retail market to operate in a financially sustainable way;
- allow non-household customers to disconnect themselves from our network, if they no longer require our water services;
- comply with our regulatory and statutory obligations for our water services.

We welcome any information from you, where you become aware of any illegal use, a breach of water regulations or misuse of our water services. This will help us provide a better service to non-household customers and retailers alike.

5.Policy

a. General disconnection policy statements

We allow accredited entities to carry out temporary disconnections and reconnections on our network. Where a retailer chooses to use an accredited entity to carry out temporary disconnections for non-payment section B of this policy applies. Where a retailer would like us to carry out the work all other sections apply.

It is our policy to carry out disconnections on the water services of your non-household customer once we have accepted the appropriate service request form you have submitted to us.

For any non standard disconnection, a quote for the services will be provided. In the preparation of the quote we may have to visit the non-household customer's premises.

We will only notify you of the date and time of a planned site visit if you request us to. It remains your responsibility to inform us of your intentions by completing the appropriate field within the corresponding service request form.

Where the water supply of a non-household customer's eligible premises is, or is planned to be, disconnected for more than 24 hours, we will notify the environmental health department and any other relevant authorities at the same time as notifying the retailer(s) of the water outage.

We may charge you for the disconnection visit, irrespective of the disconnection outcome. If the reason why we cannot disconnect is due to a faulty asset on our water network, then we will fix the problem as soon as reasonably practicable, and carry out the disconnection at a later stage. Please refer to the corresponding service for more detail.

The chargeable disconnections services are defined within our Wholesale Tariff Document. Also, please refer to the corresponding service for more detail.

Meter readings of the eligible premises will be taken before any disconnection is carried out.

b. Accredited entities

We only allow accredited entities registered as accredited WIRSAE providers by Lloyds to carry out disconnections and reconnections for non-payment.

Companies registered as accredited WIRSAE providers may provide disconnection and reconnection services as described in

- Process I2 – Disconnection requested by the retailer and performed by an accredited entity in relation to non-household customer non-payment
- Process I9 – Reconnection requested by the Retailer and performed by an accredited entity

in the Wholesale Contract/Wholesale-Retail Code.

WIRSAE providers may carry out temporary disconnections and reconnections for non-payment of a retailer's invoice by turning the outside stop valve on the TWUL water network.

We do not guarantee the availability of an operable outside stop valve for the WIRSAE provider to use to disconnect the supply.

Retailers and accredited entities should report any damaged or faulty assets and we will assess the priority of the work and determine the timescale for completing any repairs.

We do not accept liability for any losses incurred by the retailer and/or the accredited entity/ WIRSAE provider.

WIRSAE providers are not permitted to make permanent disconnections, make modifications to the water network or remove water meters or data logging equipment.

We may carry out audits on WIRSAE providers and work carried out by WIRSAE providers.

Where work carried out by a WIRSAE provider has had, or is having an adverse effect on our network and/or other customers we may:

- carry out an emergency reconnection and may charge you; **or**,
- ask you to instruct the accredited entity to carry out an emergency reconnection, which must be completed within 24 hours of us notifying you that an emergency reconnection is required; **and/or**,
- we may request that the accredited entity ceases all work immediately.

WIRSAE providers or the retailer may be asked to rectify any damage caused to our network and/or pay any losses incurred by TWUL Wholesale.

If we receive any complaints relating to work carried out by the WIRSAE provider we will advise the person making the complaint to contact the retailer who instructed the WIRSAE provider to carry out the work.

The retailer must provide any information reasonably requested by us to meet our statutory obligations or enable us to respond to any enquiries or establish accountability for a complaint.

c. Out of hours and power of entry services

Out of hours services are subject to availability for disconnections and reconnections. For more information on our of hours services, please refer to section r of this policy.

Power of entry service is available for disconnections only, and is delivered within our normal working hours.

d. Permanent disconnections

Permanent disconnections are those where a connection to our water supply system is removed, or otherwise made unworkable, such that the supply of water services at that point could only resume if a new connection is made. As part of any permanent disconnection, we will deregister the Supply Point ID of the eligible premises.

e. Temporary disconnections

Temporary disconnections are performed by shutting off the outside stop valve. If the outside stop valve is inoperable or damaged, we will repair the outside stop valve before the disconnection can be carried out. As part of any temporary disconnection, we will not deregister the Supply Point ID of the eligible premises.

f. Impractical disconnections

It is not legal to carry out disconnections for non-payment for certain classes of non-household customers, as described by schedule 4a of the Water Industry Act 1991, which provide services to customers who may be regarded as vulnerable, or sites that lead to a health and safety risk.

Shared supplies, where two or more premises are connected by a single service pipe to our network, is another class where the disconnection may be considered to be impractical.

g. Standard and non standard disconnections

Disconnections are classified as follows:

- temporary standard disconnection – Isolation of the supply from the network (please refer to section d of this policy), at a fixed price, without the removal of any assets or any excavation activity. A temporary standard disconnection is carried out by shutting off an operable outside stop valve, during normal working hours, where access has not been refused, and requires only the commitment of technician resource to deliver the service.
- temporary non standard disconnection– Isolation of the supply from the network, without the removal of any physical asset where resources are required over and above the technician attendance, ie traffic management. Additional charges above the fixed price apply, and will be provided upon request of the service.
- permanent standard disconnection – Disconnection of the water service, at a fixed price, where the following applies:
 - the existing supply pipe's diameter is 75mm and below;
 - the existing supply pipe is located at a maximum depth of 1.2m;
 - only the meter installed will be removed;
 - the land is not contaminated;
 - no other utilities' supplies (such as gas, electricity, telephony) require work ie diversion;
 - work will be performed with basic signing, lighting, guarding and a NRSWA permit; and
 - no traffic safety measures (chapter 8 traffic signs manual) are required, such as two way traffic lights or parking bay suspensions or road closures.

- permanent non standard disconnection – Disconnection of the water service with the removal of fixed assets, where resources are required over and above those required for carrying out a permanent standard disconnection, for example traffic management involving two way traffic lights, or parking bay suspensions or road closures. Additional charges above the fixed price apply, and will be provided upon request of the service.

h. Disconnections for non-payment

It remains the retailer's responsibility to exhaust all consumer protection measures, before requesting a disconnection service for non-payment. Retailers need to provide us with evidence such as copy of any notice they've served on their non-household customer, accompanying their service request form.

Also, it is our policy to remain on site for 30 minutes to allow the retailer to confirm whether they wish the disconnection to be cancelled. Retailer's representative on site advising that the disconnection should be cancelled, will be instructed to submit a cancellation request via our Wholesale Market Services team or else the disconnection will proceed as planned.

We do not tolerate threatening behaviour to our staff and where entry is refused, we may return at a later date to carry out the disconnection, using our 'powers of entry'.

Disconnections for non-payment are chargeable services as defined in our Wholesale Tariff Document. Standard charges apply for any standard disconnections. Non standard disconnections are subject to additional charges and are provided by a quote on an individual basis.

Where a retailer chooses to use an accredited entity to carry out temporary disconnections for non-payment section B of this policy applies.

i. Disconnections for illegal use

It is within our statutory obligations to investigate, without any prior warning to retailer(s), or non-household customers, any suspected illegal use.

For confirmed circumstances of illegal use, we reserve the right to decide whether to carry out a disconnection of the illegal connection, as appropriate. Disconnected non-household customer(s) will be notified after the disconnection being carried out within the appropriate timescales.

Non-household customers disconnected for illegal use will need to apply for a new connection.

j. Disconnections in emergencies

In cases we deem to be an emergency, we have power to disconnect supplies in the following circumstances:

- where damage to persons or property is being caused or is likely as a result of defective water fittings;
- where water in water mains or service pipes is being or is likely to be contaminated as a result of backflow from the premises supplied;
- where water in a pipe connected to our water main is or is likely to be contaminated before it is used; and
- where water we are supplying is or is likely to be wasted, misused or unduly consumed

This may involve carrying out visits to your non-household customers premises without prior warning.

We will issue your non-household customer with an emergency disconnection notice as soon as reasonably practicable after the disconnection has been carried out and send a copy of the notice to you once issued.

To protect our network from any contamination caused by connections breaching the water fittings regulations we will investigate any incoming leads or reports of breaches of water regulations. This may include carrying out visits to your non-household customer's premises without prior warning.

We will issue your non-household customer with an emergency disconnection notice prior to or within 24 hours of the disconnection being carried out and send a copy of the notice to you once issued.

Following an emergency disconnection, we may carry out visits to the premises to monitor the ongoing situation without prior warning.

We will inform your non-household customer specifying the steps which need to be carried out before the water supply can be restored.

Emergency disconnections are not ordinarily chargeable.

k. General reconnection statements

Non-household customers who have been temporarily disconnected are reconnected through our "Reconnecting for non-household customer request" service. Non-household customers who have been permanently disconnected must apply for new connection to be reconnected to our network, via our new connections service.

We will charge for the reconnection visit, irrespective of the reconnection outcome. If the reason why we cannot reconnect is due to a faulty asset on our water network, then we will fix the problem as soon as reasonably practicable, and carry out the reconnection at a later stage.

l. Unauthorised reconnections

Retailer(s) are liable for unconsented reconnections made by their non-household customer and for any primary charges incurred from illegal water usage.

Non-household customers who reconnect without our consent may be permanently disconnected and prosecuted.

It is within our policy not to offer any services investigating unconsented reconnections by the non-household customer following any disconnection.

m. Standard and non standard reconnections

These are classified as follows:

- a standard reconnection is carried out by turning on an operable outside stop valve, during normal working hours, where access has not been refused, by a technician and without the need for additional resources or street access permissions to support.
- a non standard reconnection is a reconnection where resources are required over and above the technician attendance, for example traffic management, access has been refused etc. Recognition of non standard reconnection will be at either receipt of reconnection application, or during the site visit. For these reconnections our Wholesale Tariff Document sets out the applicable tariffs or where we may provide a quote for the work to be done.

n. Reconnection following disconnection for non-payment

Following regulatory requirements, reconnections following disconnections for non-payment are only carried out for temporary disconnections. Retailers must submit the corresponding form, materially complete, where they want the non-household customer to be reconnected to the water supply system.

We will carry out the reconnection; if standard we'll use reasonable endeavours to visit the eligible premises on the following basis:

- on the **same business day**, if the service request form is successfully received **by 3pm** on a standard business day.
- on the **next business day**, if the service request form is successfully received **after 3pm** on a standard business day.

These are chargeable services as defined in our Wholesale Tariff Document. Standard charges apply for any standard reconnections. Non standard reconnections are subject to additional charges and are provided by a quote on an individual basis.

Where a retailer chooses to use an accredited entity to carry out a reconnection following temporary disconnections for non-payment section B of this policy applies.

o. Emergency reconnections

It is the retailers responsibility to ensure that all necessary checks have been carried out prior to requesting us to disconnect a premises. Where a premises has been disconnected but shouldn't have been, an emergency reconnection will follow.

In the rare circumstances where we have wrongly disconnected a non-household customer, who is not legally allowed to be disconnected, we will carry out an emergency reconnection as soon as possible.

Emergency reconnections will be made in the following instances:

- the wrong premises has been disconnected
- the disconnection will affect the supply of water to premises that are listed in Schedule 4A of the Water Industry Act 1991 e.g.
 - any dwelling or any house in which any person has their only or principal home
 - accommodation for the elderly
 - any hospital or other premises used for the provision of medical or dental services
 - a school or other educational institution
 - a nursery or other premises which is used for registered childcare
 - a prison or removal centre
 - a premises occupied by the police, fire, rescue or ambulance services and/or
 - any farm with commercial livestock
- the occupier of the premises is not liable under an agreement with you to pay the charges
- you have not served notice on the occupier of the premises
- you have not exhausted all applicable consumer protection measures
- a copy of the validly served notice has not been provided to your non-household customer
- payment in the notice is not outstanding
- the water supply or supplies also supply any other premises (i.e. another non-household customer or a household customer)
- the occupier of the premises, which the disconnection request relates is a 'sensitive customer'
- the period of notice has not expired
- an objection to the notice of the intention to disconnect has been raised

Emergency reconnections are carried out 24/7.

Charges will apply for emergency reconnections of non-household customers' premises who have been wrongly disconnected where the retailer is deemed to be at fault. For more information on charges, please refer to our Wholesale Tariff Document.

p. Reconnections for breach of water regulations

We will only arrange a reconnection following a temporary emergency disconnection when either:

- an industry approved plumber or contractor has completed the work and submitted a certificate of compliance to us and our water fittings regulations team has confirmed onsite that satisfactory rectification has been carried out; or
- when we have been informed by you that the work has been completed and our water fittings regulations team has confirmed onsite that satisfactory rectification has been carried out.

We will only process “new connection” applications following a permanent emergency disconnection submitted to us from your non-household customers once their eligible premises have successfully passed any re-inspection(s).

Any non-household customer disconnected for breach of water regulations will remain disconnected until they have confirmed that the required rectification(s) have been carried out. We will revisit the site until the rectifications have been carried out satisfactorily.

Reconnection service requests can be submitted only from retailers. Any non-household customers submitting a reconnection service request will be re-directed back to their retailers and their service requests are considered as general enquiries.

q. Interacting with the market operator

Where we have carried out the work:

- we aim to notify the market operator of any disconnection within 2 business days of any disconnection being made.
- as part of any reconnections, we aim to notify the market operator of any reconnection being made, within 2 business days.

Where the work has been carried out by an accredited entity we aim to provide the following service levels:

- within 2 business days of receipt of form I/01 we will notify the market operator of the change in connection status.
- within 1 business day of receipt of form I/04 we will notify the market operator of the change in connection status.

r. Reschedules and cancellations

For more information on rescheduling and cancellations, please refer to our Wholesale Tariff Document.

s. Working hours

There are two categories of working hours:

- normal working hours (Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm, excluding bank holiday and public holidays, for which this is no additional charge);
- out of hours (Saturday 10am to 4pm, Sunday 10am to 4pm, Monday to Friday 5pm to 7pm, excluding bank holiday and public holidays, at an additional charge).

Out of hours and appointments are subject to service availability and would need to be agreed between us and the retailer in advance.

t. Appointments

Appointments with non-household customers or retailers will be available during our normal working hours between 9am and 5pm. If an appointment is required, the following 4 hour time slots are offered:

- 9am – 1pm
- 1pm – 5pm

Please note that appointments are not usually made for emergency callouts as this could cause delays in dealing with the problem.

u. Enquiries and complaints

Any enquiries or complaints that we receive from non-household customers or retailers, either by email or letter, will receive a substantive response within 10 business days for enquiries and 8 business days for complaints. If we're unable to provide a substantive response within this timescale then we'll explain why and give an estimate of when we'll be able to provide it.

Any non-household customers requesting a retailer-led service will be re-directed back to their retailers and their service request will be treated as an enquiry.

6.Changes to policy

This policy will be reviewed annually and updated periodically as required.

7.References

- Guaranteed Standards Scheme
- The Water Industry Act, 1991
- Water Industry Registration Scheme Accredited Entity (WIRSAE)
- Wholesale Contract/Wholesale-Retail Code
- Wholesale Tariff Document

8.Appendices

No appendices are attached to this policy.