Government of South Australia

SA Water

e-Bulletin
Business Relations

Business Relations e-Bulletin
Issue 17 – April 2015

The Standard Customer Contract

What does it mean?

Many of our customers should be aware that when they sign up to a new water, wastewater or dual reticulation (recycled water) service with SA Water, they enter into our Standard Customer Contract. The contract is an agreement between the customer and SA Water as a service provider. It details the customers' general obligations throughout the course of the service being provided, along with SA Waters' supply obligations. The contract is available on the SA Water website, but can also be obtained from your Business Relations consultant.

The Standard Customer Contract is an important document for customers and SA Water alike, as it clearly outlines key responsibilities for the essential elements of the service being provided, notably: meters and meter accuracy, process for instances of planned and unplanned interruptions to a service, billing and meter estimation policies, bill payment terms and your rights if you believe you have been overcharged. The contract details these responsibilities in full, but see below for more information on a select few:

- **Meters and meter accuracy:** *Section 5.2 of Standard Customer Contract*
  A common question we hear is "who owns the meter?". **5.3(a)** states SA Water owns the meter including the inlet riser, stop tap and associated fittings. **5.3(d)** is important as it states the customer must protect the meter from accident or damage, and charges apply for the replacement of a damaged or lost meter and/or fittings.

  A second question we often get asked is regarding accuracy of meters and what a customer should do if they believe their meter is recording water usage incorrectly. **Section 5.5** covers accuracy of water meters and states if you believe your meter is not accurately recording your water and/or re-cycled water usage you may request SA Water test your meter. There are charges assosciated with this request that depend on the meter size and are specifically detailed in SA Water's Fees and Services Schedule, which is available on the SA Water website.

- **Interruptions:** *Section 8 of the Standrad Customer Contract*
  Bursts, leaks, blockages and spills can cause unplanned interruptions and **Section 8.2** of the contract outlines SA Water's obligations in these instances. We will endeavour to restore your retail service as soon as practically possible and within the timeframes specified in the regulatory service standards. Planned interruptions may be necessary to conduct maintenance, repair or augmentation to a network, but also in the event of emergencies and for health and safety reasons.

  Section 8.3 details SA Water's obligations in the instance of a planned interruption, including that SA Water aims to provide you with at least four business days' notice prior to planned works that will cause an interruption to your retail service. This notice will be in writing where practicable but may be by radio or newspaper.

- **Payment of bills**: *Section 11 of the Standard Customer Contract*
  SA Water has clear rules on payment of bills and these are outlined in the contract. **Section 12** also details the process for billing disputes if you disagree with the amount you've been charged on your SA Water bill. The contract states steps in the process for reviewing a bill on request, but our initial advice is to discuss the concern or query with your Business Relations consultant, who will be able to review your account and discuss the matter initally in person.

As stated, the Standard Customer Contract is an important document that clarifies your obligations as a customer and SA Water's obligations as a service provider. If you have any questions regarding the contract, your Business Relations Consultant is the first point of contact to help resolve these.

Trade Waste Concentrations and Loadings

The difference between concentrations and loadings…

The Business Relations team often field questions about how trade waste loadings are calculated and whether the concentrations or actual loadings are charged. To clarify, trade waste charges are for the total volume and contaminant load discharged to sewer.

These charges are referred to as Volume and Load Based Charges and apply to customers whose trade waste discharges exceed 10 tonnes of Biochemical Oxygen Demand (BOD) or Suspended Solids (SS), or 20 tonnes of Total Dissolved Solids (TDS) or 10,000 kilolitres (kL) in volume per year.

In this article we give a general overview of how the volume and load of trade waste discharged to sewer is determined.

Determining the discharged volume is straight forward because this is usually metered as required under a Trade Waste Authorisation. If an effluent meter doesn't exist the trade waste volume will be calculated as a

percentage of total site water use. Every kL of trade waste volume discharged to sewer is charged at a set rate detailed in our Trade Waste fees and charges fact sheet.

Determining the total contaminant loading is slightly more complex. Loadings for the different contaminants are charged **per kilogram**. The charges for each individual contaminant, such as Total Dissolved Solids (TDS) and Suspended Solids (SS) are also detailed in the Trade Waste fees and charges fact sheet. The loading is calculated based on the concentration of a trade waste sample.

For example, if a site discharges 12,000 kL of trade waste and the average for a particular contaminant concentration is 700 mg/L, the total loading is equal to 8,400 kg. The equation to determine the loading is relatively simple and is detailed below:

$$\text{Total loading} = \frac{12{,}000\ \text{kL} \times 700\ \text{mg/L}}{1000}\ \text{(kg)}$$

$$\text{Total loading} = 8{,}400\ \text{kg}$$

SA Water have developed an excel based calculator that can help you understand how these charges are calculated. This is a useful tool to begin assessing what impact potential improvements on your site can have on your Trade Waste bill. This calculator is available from the SA Water website here.

For further detail customers can refer to SA Water's Restricted Wastewater Acceptance Framework which is available on our website. The Framework establishes SA Water's policies and procedures relating to authorising, accepting and managing the specific wastewater types into the sewerage system. Alternatively you can contact your Business Relations Consultant.

Technical Series

Screening – how they can help improve trade waste quality

In the last two e-bulletins we have discussed some of the design and maintenance factors impacting the performance of grease arrestors and buffer tanks. In this edition, we elaborate on the importance of good screening practices in industrial wastewater treatment.

Screens and strainer baskets (which are a form of screen) are used to separate solids in wastewater.
Screening is a physical wastewater treatment processes that relies on good design and the screens require regular maintenance. Strainer baskets and channel screens covering drains are typically installed in factory floors to trap solids that can otherwise be washed to sewer drains. Strainer baskets should also be used in sinks and troughs. Larger screening devices can be implemented such as bow screens, rotating drum screens, and baleen filters to treat excessive suspended solids.

Theses larger screens are often found on the exterior of a factory and take up a larger area. Larger screening devices are suitable for treating suspended solids at higher flow where there is a high concentration of suspended solids. These can be more complicated to maintain as many of these devices have moving parts. It is important that a maintenance program is in place.

Screening inside the factory is important because you are controlling suspended solids closer to their source. Therefore the suspended solids have less time to break up into smaller particles. The first set of screens (primary screens) are often the first barriers to protect against suspended solids contaminating trade waste. Primary screening on the factory floor should be designed to a minimum of 2mm and secondary screening should be permanently installed where practical. In some circumstances this may not be practical as screens may become blocked too frequently. In these cases larger screens should be implemented on the exterior of the factory and improving source control should be considered.

Figure 1 illustrates screening intercepting food scraps from the drain. If the screens are not permanently installed there is potential that cleaning staff will remove the screens allowing for a greater percentage of suspended solids to enter drains.

Figure 1: Screens in a factory

Waste strainer baskets should be emptied at least daily or more frequently, depending on individual load, to solid waste disposal. As strainer baskets fill with solids, the wastewater flowing through will collect suspended solids and hence become more contaminated. The strainer baskets act like a 'tea bag' when this occurs. If strainer baskets are not emptied there is a risk of blockages, odours and higher trade waste treatment costs.

It is important to remember that screens will not intercept fat, oil and grease (FOG's), soluble biochemical oxygen demand (BOD), dissolved nutrients and total dissolved solids (TDS). As with any pre-treatment planning, it is also worth considering future plans before committing any capital. Determining the types of screening devices to implement will be impacted by the characteristics of the wastewater you are attempting to treat. Discussing this with the manufacturer and SA Water will be beneficial.

All screening devices will be more effective if they don't become overloaded. Therefore, implementing good cleaner production practices such as dry cleaning, minimising spillages and controlling wastewater at its source are all beneficial. This will reduce the load placed on the screens and reduce cleaning and disposal requirements of the solid waste that is collected.

For more information there are a number of detailed information sheets on the Trade Waste Guidelines and Fact Sheets webpage or contact us.

Ozwater Trade Show – 12th to 14th May

Opportunity to speak with trade suppliers of water services & innovative products

At the Ozwater'15 conference there will be the largest display in the southern hemisphere of products, services & innovations for all water professionals and associated industries.

The trade exhibition is free to attend, however, registration is essential. To avoid the queues, register online now: http://www.ozwater.org/tradevisitor

Disclaimer:

SA Water's Business Sustainability Group provides recommendations and suggestions only. It is advised that further investigations are detailed studies are completed before any projects are implemented. All applicable standards & guidelines (Australian, EU, AQUIS, HACCP, Australian Drinking Water Quality Guidelines etc.) should be adhered to, and care should be taken to ensure water and wastewater minimisation programs do not negatively impact health or processing operations.