



**STONEHURST**  
M O U N T A I N E S T A T E

fine living - naturally

Stonehurst Mountain Estate  
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## **WATER LEAK POLICY**

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The Estate unfortunately does not give rebates in the case of water leaks on private property resulting in high water bills. There are a number of reasons for this, as detailed below, and the responsibility remains with the owner to ensure their infrastructure is sound.

### **HOW THE SYSTEM WORKS**

- Water reticulation system was put in by the developer with a ball-valve connection for every plot
- System receives water from a reservoir above the Navy base to the South of Estate - responsibility of COCT
- Reservoir receives water via a mains delivery to a pump station to the right of our water feature - responsibility of COCT .
- Bulk water entering the estate reticulation system is measured by a meter - responsibility of COCT.
- SMEOA are billed monthly by COCT for water usage.
- Responsibility for the distribution system from the bulk meter to the individual plot ball valves is for SMEOA. Each homeowner receives a water meter (originally supplied by the developer) at the commencement of the build phase.
- The installation of these meters and the reticulation system to the house/plot is carried out by the homeowners' building contractor.
- Metering Analytics read all meters on a monthly basis, around the 10<sup>th</sup> of each month, and pass this information to Cape Classic (Administrators) from which the individual homeowners are billed on the same tariff system as the CoCT
- Metering Analytics information calculates a balance of the bulk COCT meter readings and the sum of the individual homeowners as well as SMEOA other meters (Lifestyle Centre, gatehouse, etc) and this is checked each month for anomalies.
- Metering Analytics reread meters should excess use anomalies appear in individual homeowner consumptions
- Metering Analytics and Cape Classic (Administrators) charges are not borne by individual households but are a general charge covered by levies

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STONEHURST MOUNTAIN ESTATE OWNERS ASSOCIATION

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## HISTORICAL CASES

- A few cases of bulk water loss from reticulation on common property due to line failure have been claimed from COCT with some success.
- Bulk water loss caused by building contractors damaging the SMEOA system have been claimed from the individual Building contractors, as well as subsequent repair costs
- Several cases of excessive use by residents have been investigated, some entailing the homeowner installing an additional water meter loaned from the SMEOA to rule out faulty meters. (see info below)
- In all except one case of a failed meter, the excessive water use was traced to water usage issues within the homeowners area of responsibility

## HIGH WATER BILLS – POSSIBLE REASONS

Note also that all your irrigation water if you are watering with municipal water is attracting a further 70% of the water reading for the sewerage component - So the REAL figure you are paying to water your garden is the water tariff x 1.7 / kilolitre. (up to the cap of 35kl)

There are basically only 4 reasons for a higher than normal account, i.e.

- (a) incorrect reading
- (b) leakages on the property
- (c) own consumption or
- (d) defective meter.

### (a) Incorrect Reading

- Read the black numbers on the water meter and compare this with the meter reading on the current bill. If the reading on your meter is less than the reading stated on your account, you should contact [helpdesk@stonehurstmountainestate.org](mailto:helpdesk@stonehurstmountainestate.org)
- If the reading on the meter is more than the reading appearing on your account, then you can reasonably assume that your water meter was read correctly.

### (b) Leakages

Use the following as a guide for carrying out a leak check:

- Turn off all the taps on your property, avoid flushing the toilets and ensure that any **automated devices** such as washing machines and dishwashers are not in use.



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- You could then just check the meter and usually if there is a significant leak, the little dial would be spinning.
- to check for sure if there is a slow or minor leak (which adds up) Carry out a meter reading and write down all the numbers on the meter (black and red), then leave everything off overnight, read the meter again. If there is a difference in readings, it would suggest that a leakage exists on your property.
- Check for dripping taps, leaking cisterns in toilets, wet spots, green spots and if the problem is not obvious, contact a local plumber to investigate and repair the leak.

### **(c) Own Consumption**

Sometimes a higher account can be caused by own consumption, i.e. excessive irrigation, building work and renovations, cleaning / washing habits

If you're on a timed / automated irrigation system the flow adds up VERY quickly and this is the most likely scenario as to your increased water account.

### **(d) Defective Meter**

If you have undertaken the above checks and still is of the opinion that the water meter is registering incorrectly, a 'by-pass' meter can be connected IN SERIES with the existing meter. Usage / consumption on both meters can be checked over the duration of say a month, and if the consumption differs significantly by more than a few kilolitres, the meter could be defective and a **credit can be considered**. The Estate will provide the temporary by-pass meter, but the fitting (and removal) of the meter will be to the home owners account if the readings are similar and it is indicated that the original meter is not defective.

### **SUMMARY**

- Given the above, bulk water loss on individual private property cannot be rebated by the Estate as then the SMEOA would be effectively self-insuring these claims, with all owners effectively carrying the cost of private water loss.
- The SMEOA cannot go to the Council Ombudsman on behalf of the owner, as private installations and property falls outside of the area of responsibility which the SMEOA bears, and the personnel time costs cannot justifiably be used for one property owner, as this is essentially then being subsidised by all owners
- In the case of a defective meter, once this is established as the cause of the excessive water bills, this will be considered for a rebate.

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