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Domestic vulnerable customer : code of practice

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Domestic vulnerable customer Code of Practice



This publication is available in Braille, on CD and in large text format on request by calling 1890 448 448.

If you have any questions or require further information, please contact us:

Web: **www.water.ie** **Irish Water**
Twitter: **@IrishWater** **PO Box 860**
 South City Delivery Office
 Cork City

Email: **vulnerablecustomer@water.ie**

General queries

8am-8pm Mon-Fri, and 9am-5.30pm Sat

Telephone: **LoCall 1890 448 448** or **+353 1 707 2824**

Minicom: **LoCall 1890 378 378**
(for hearing impaired customers
with their own minicom equipment)

Emergency queries

24 hours a day, 7 days a week

Telephone: **LoCall 1890 278 278** or **+353 1 707 2828**

Minicom: **LoCall 1890 378 378**
(for hearing impaired customers
with their own minicom equipment)

Please note that the rates charged for 1890 (LoCall) numbers may vary across different service providers. Calls made using mobiles may be more expensive.

Safeguarding your water for your future

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Introduction

We understand that some of our customers have different needs when it comes to using our Water Services and communicating with us. We will respond to the specific needs of customers who tell us they are 'vulnerable' due to age, disability or medical condition.

This Code of Practice informs our vulnerable customers how we plan to respond to their needs when using Water Services. We will also address their information requirements. To look after our vulnerable customers, we have developed:

- a special services register for those customers who are registered as vulnerable;
- a priority services register for those customers who are registered as critically dependent on water.

In this Code of Practice, 'Water Services' means the public water and wastewater services that we provide. This Code of Practice applies to domestic customers only.

Our commitment

- > We will promote this Code of Practice so that customers can easily get a copy.
- > We will train our staff to deliver the services outlined in this Code of Practice and will keep our training up to date.
- > We will deal with all customer enquiries courteously and fairly while in line with stated policy.
- > We will keep all the information given to us in the strictest confidence.
- > We will provide customers with a choice of ways to communicate with us.
- > We will monitor the service we give to make sure we are meeting our commitments.

Special services register customer commitments

Irish Water offers a confidential special services register for those who:

- > are aged 66 or over;
- > are blind or vision impaired;
- > are deaf or hard of hearing;
- > have mobility difficulties;
- > have an intellectual disability; or
- > have a mental health difficulty.

Help with reading bills

We will help customers who are blind or vision impaired to read their bill. We offer Braille bills and talking bills (where one of our advisers will call you after receiving the bill and read your bill to you, allowing you to ask any questions you may have). You may also choose to use paperless billing. This means you can access your bills electronically, which will be compatible with assistive technologies. Visit **www.water.ie** for more information.

Information provided in other formats

We offer key information in audio on CD. If you would like to request a CD, please call us on **LoCall 1890 448 448**. There is also a 'BrowseAloud' function on our website so that you can listen to information within documents on the website.

Hearing difficulties

If you have a hearing difficulty and you have minicom equipment, you can get in touch with us by calling **LoCall 1890 378 378**.

Or, email us at **vulnerablecustomer@water.ie**

Additional support

Whenever possible, Irish Water will adapt the services and communications provided to suit the needs of customers on the special services register. We will, where possible, provide extra assistance or advice where:

- > additional assistance is needed in accessing alternative water supplies, where provided, due to mobility restrictions;
- > specific communication assistance is needed due to sight, hearing or intellectual impairments;
- > there is an unplanned interruption to water supply that is anticipated to last for longer than 12 hours and where an alternative supply is arranged. In such circumstances Irish Water will directly contact those on the special services register (or their nominated contact) to determine if any assistance is needed to access the alternative supply;
- > water from the public infrastructure is declared 'unfit for human consumption' and/or an alternative supply is arranged. In such circumstances Irish Water will directly contact those on the special services register (or their nominated contact) to determine if any assistance is needed to access this alternative supply.

All of the above will be provided free of charge to the registered customer.

Priority services register customer commitments

Irish Water offers a confidential priority services register for domestic customers who have a critical dependency on water as a result of their medical condition.

Additional support

We offer additional support to those on the priority services register. This includes:

- > the provision of safe and clean water supply will be prioritised for those customers registered as critically dependent on Water Services on the priority services register. If we plan to interrupt the water supply, we will directly contact registered priority customers expected to be impacted at least two days in advance to highlight the anticipated duration of the interruption. Where possible, Irish Water will endeavour to make an alternative water supply available for those customers, if required;
- > where there is an unplanned interruption, we will investigate to determine, insofar as it is possible, the area affected and the possible cause of the unplanned interruption. Following that investigation, if we think that the interruption will last longer than four hours, we will directly contact all registered priority customers expected to be impacted to inform them of the interruption and determine how best we can help them;
- > informing registered priority customers on how they can keep up to date on interruptions and plans for restoration of supply;

- > where water from the public infrastructure is declared 'unfit for human consumption' and/or an alternative supply is arranged, Irish Water and/or its agents will directly contact all registered priority customers expected to be impacted to inform them it is not safe to drink the water and let them know of any precautionary measures that should be taken. Irish Water will also give further information or updates on the duration of the notice and facilitate any extra requirements, where possible;
- > where an alternative water supply arrangement is being put in place (due to public health and safety reasons, or other emergency reasons) Irish Water will directly contact all registered priority customers expected to be impacted to inform them it is not safe to drink the water and let them know of any precautionary measures that should be taken. We will also give information and updates on the location and duration of the alternative supply, give updates on progress to rectify the issue and facilitate any extra requirements, where possible.

All of the above will be provided free of charge to the registered customer.

Nominate an alternative contact

If you wish to nominate an alternative person to deal with your bills and correspondence, you should register their contact details with us on the vulnerable customer registration form.

With this permission, we can send the named person any correspondence about your Water Services account. We can also contact the named person if we need to get in touch with you.

Complaints

At Irish Water, we are committed to delivering the best service possible. If you are unhappy with any part of our service, we encourage you to let us know and we will do everything we can to resolve the matter quickly and to your satisfaction.

Call us on **LoCall 1890 448 448** or **+353 1 707 2824**
(8am-8pm, Monday to Friday and 9am-5.30pm on Saturday)
and we will try to resolve any problems over the phone.

Or write to us at:

Irish Water
PO Box 860
South City Delivery Office
Cork City

Email: **vulnerablecustomer@water.ie**

We aim to settle any concerns as quickly and as fairly as possible. Within five working days of receiving your complaint, we will offer you a resolution or an outline plan of the steps we need to take to achieve a satisfactory resolution to your complaint (under normal conditions).

We are committed to resolving all complaints within two months (where you are engaging with Irish Water).

We will keep you informed on progress we are making in resolving your complaint. We have a separate '**Code of Practice on complaint handling**'. To receive a copy, please call us on **LoCall 1890 448 448** or view it online at **www.water.ie**

How to contact us

If you need help or assistance please contact us at:

Irish Water
PO Box 860
South City Delivery Office
Cork City

General queries: **LoCall 1890 448 448** or + **353 1 707 2824**

Minicom: **LoCall 1890 378 378** (for hearing impaired customers with their own minicom equipment)

Please use these details for general enquiries such as billing and payment queries and general customer service issues. These numbers are in operation from 8am-8pm, Monday to Friday and 9am-5.30pm on Saturday.

Emergency queries: **LoCall 1890 278 278** or **+ 353 1 707 2828**

Minicom: **LoCall 1890 378 378** (for hearing impaired customers with their own minicom equipment)

Please use these details to report a water emergency (including faults and interruptions to supply). These numbers are in operation 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Irish Water can be contacted 24 hours a day. Currently, the out of hours (5pm-8am Monday to Friday, weekends and public holidays) response varies across Local Authorities. We are working to establish standard national out of hours services.

Each month, we will give the Commission for Energy Regulation a detailed update on progress to make sure that all necessary arrangements are in place at the earliest possible date.

Email: **vulnerablecustomer@water.ie**

Twitter: **[@IrishWater](https://twitter.com/IrishWater)**

Website: **www.water.ie**

Visiting your home

Our staff and agents are trained to always identify who they are and who they are representing. They will always show you their identity card.

Below is a series of sensible steps you should follow when dealing with people calling to your home:

- > Always look through a window or door viewer before opening the door.
- > Only open your door after connecting a door chain lock or placing your foot behind the door.
- > Switch on outside lights when it is dark.
- > Request and examine identity cards.
- > Always think 'safety' – do not leave strangers alone on your doorstep while you go into another room. Always close the door if you need to do this. Do not leave strangers alone in your home.
- > Take precautions – if you are unsure or suspicious please refuse access.

