

Complaint : Water Meter calibration - SYABAS

Written by Administrator

Friday, 11 September 2009 10:02 -

WATER METERS CALIBRATION Would like to know if the water meters installed at home / residence are required to be calibrated before installation. Recent change exercise of water meters at our homes have resulted in abnormal higher bills.

◆ Upon seeing them to complain about the matter at SYABAS Kajang, and after sending their staff to check on the meters, which they found to be OK, it was recommended that the house owner seek authorised SYABAS contractors to conduct a test on the meter -- for a fee.

I find this arrangement absurd. It seems, the onus of proving the meter is in good working condition, now lies with the owner, when in actual fact, the meters should have been pre tested and calibrated before installation. Records of all meter calibrations should be well kept by SYABAS, and be able to show proof to that effect, to consumers on demand. Was informed that the meters are not calibrated.

FORMULA USED ON TABULATING COST OF WATER CONSUMED DUE TO IRREGULAR READING PERIODS The Customer Rep was unable to explain satisfactorily on how water consumed was calculated based on the formula reflected in the bill. There appears to be x2 factor used, resulting in higher bill charges. Another concern raised was on the timing of bill issued. Is there a way of accurately determining the actual cost of water consumed, if a bill is issued at irregular intervals, resulting in total water utilised to fall into a different & higher cost bracket. For eg, a one day delay may cause the water consumption in cubic meters to exceed the lower bracket, thus charges computed are higher.

Likewise, if bills are issued earlier, it will result in a lower consumption for the current month, but much higher bills for the subsequent month. The same applies for ANGGARAN or ESTIMATE readings. I certainly expect better service after the utility body had been corporatised. Issues:- 1) Requirement on water meter calibration & records of calibration. 2) Costs of calibration borne by customer. 3) Costs resulting from faulty meters borne by customers, when meters not calibrated against the standard. 4) Consistency in the time frames for billing customer.

Is there a procedure on this? There appears to be lack of transparency on this. Meters should be read on timely basis and billing dates should be consistent, without fail irrespective of public holidays, etc.. Consumers are made to pay extremely higher costs if water usage falls in the third bracket. 5) Formula used should be explained to customer. Can you enlighten me on the above issues.

Thank you.

Reply By Syabas

SYABAS CLARIFIES COMPLAINT ON WATER METER CALIBRATION

1. Requirement on water meter calibration and records of calibration.

All consumer water meters are manufactured in accordance with internationally accepted standards and specifications on accuracy and endurance. To confirm compliance with the standards and specifications, the water meters are individually tested using special meter testing facilities at the manufacturer's factory before the meters are installed at the consumers' premises. For this purpose, the meter testing facilities are calibrated and accredited based on accepted international standards, on a scheduled basis by the relevant authorities. Any water meter that does not pass the factory tests is rejected at the factory itself. All the consumer water meters that have passed the tests are delivered complete with the test certificates and these records are kept by SYABAS.

However, these meters installed at the consumers' premises in good and accurate working condition will start to under-record the flows after some time due to wear and tear. It is due to this reason that meter change usually results in higher bills because the new meter is now recording correctly at the actual flow. The abnormally high bills after the meter change could also be due to leakage inside the consumer's premise which has not been recording by the previous meter probably

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having been also faulty. Hence, the statement that the house owner was recommended to seek an authorized SYABAS contractor to conduct meter test for a fee is a MISUNDERSTANDING, in that the house owner would have been advised to quickly repair his internal leakage using a licensed plumber to avoid wastage of water and further high bills. In this case it is the responsibility of the house owner to repair the leakage at his own cost since it is after the meter and the house owner is free to choose any licensed plumber.

2. Costs of calibration borne by customer.

Whenever the consumer feels that his water meter is over recording resulting in higher bills, he has the option to request SYABAS to conduct a meter test. The fee charged by SYABAS for the meter test is a deposit as gazetted under Second Schedule of Water Supply (Selangor) (Charges) Rules 2006, Water Supply Enactment 1997 as follows:

Charges for meter test:

(a) Deposit for testing 15mm meters or smaller sizes : RM 22.50

(b) Deposit for testing 16mm to 20mm meters : RM 30.00

(c) Deposit for testing 21mm to 50mm meters : RM 75.00

(d) Deposit for testing 51mm to 80mm meters : RM150.00

(e) Deposit for testing 81mm meters and : Actual cost plus a 25% meters of larger sizes with a minimum of RM150.00

The meter test will be carried out at SYABAS meter testing facilities which is also calibrated and accredited by the relevant authorities. In this case, the consumer is also invited to witness the test. If the meter is found to be truly over recording by more than 3%, then the meter test deposit will be returned to the consumer and his meter will be replaced with a new meter, otherwise the meter test deposit is retained by SYABAS. This is to pay for the cost of removing the meter from the consumer's premise and conducting the meter test.

3. Costs resulting from faulty meters borne by consumers, when meters not calibrated against the standard.

All meters when installed at the consumers' premises are tested for accuracy and are in good working condition. Over time these meters will begin to under-record flows due to wear and tear or even become faulty due to several reasons. In any case these old meters which are no longer within their accuracy range or meters found to be faulty are replaced at SYABAS' own cost and NOT borne by customers. Only in cases where the meters are found to be still working within its accuracy range after testing the meter on the customers' request, the cost of testing according to the gazetted schedule of charges has to be borne by the customers.

4. Consistency in the time frames for billing consumer. Is there a procedure on this? There appears to be lack of transparency on this. Meters should be read on timely basis and billing dates should be consistent, without fail irrespective of public holidays, etc. Consumers are made to pay extremely higher costs if water usage falls in the third bracket.

All customers under SYABAS are billed monthly and on a timely basis, i.e. within a billing period of 31 days, irrespective of public holidays, etc. However, sometimes due to various reasons which cannot be avoided, there may be instances where the billing period is exceeded. Hence to overcome the bills falling into the third band due to late reading, SYABAS has introduced a Prorate Billing formula for all SYABAS' customers from 1 December 2007. Thus, with the prorate billing formula in place, the calculation is apportioned to reflect the 31 day billing period irrespective of the actual reading period.

5. Formula used should be explained to customer.

The Prorate Billing formula has been published widely in the media as well as shown clearly in every water bill. For example if the consumption has been read as 50m³ over a billing period of 35 days instead of 31 days, the billed amount is apportioned as shown below:

Consumption = 50m³

Actual Billing Days = 35 days

Billing Period = $35/31 = 1.13$

Billed

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Amount based on Prorate Billing Formula:

1st Band: $20\text{m}^3 \times 1.13 = 22.60\text{m}^3 \times \text{RM}0.57 = \text{RM } 12.88$

2nd Band: $15\text{m}^3 \times 1.13 = 16.95\text{m}^3 \times \text{RM}1.03 = \text{RM } 17.46$

3rd Band: $(50\text{m}^3 - 22.6\text{m}^3 - 16.95\text{m}^3) = 10.45\text{m}^3 \times \text{RM}2.00 = \text{RM } 20.90$

Total Bill = RM 51.24

Hence under the Prorate Billing Formula, an additional 2.6m³ is charged under the first band and another additional 1.95m³ is charged under the second band which otherwise would have been charged under the third band.