

# Sub-meter options for residential and commercial developments

This fact sheet provides information about Water Corporation installing sub-meters and replacing existing private sub-meters in both residential and commercial developments.

The purpose of this information is to ensure:

- you receive the correct water usage charges
- we can safely access your meter to read and replace it.

## Key Terms

**Master Meter** – the main meter that provides water to the development/units. These vary in size but must be at least 25mm for a residential development.

**Sub-Meter** – the individual meter used to record water usage for any individual unit. Sub-meters are connected back to the master meter. These are standard 20mm meters.

**Supply and Install** – we supply and install a sub-meter (this is for all new developments).

**Replace** – where we replace an existing private sub-meter and become responsible for ownership and meter reading.

**Unit** – a single unit that is eligible to have a sub-meter.

**Development** – a development consisting of more than 3 units. These are typically strata developments and could be survey strata or built strata.

**Private Plumbing** – Any internal pipework and fittings which begin at the master meter and are contained within the property boundary. This includes all pipework either side of the sub-meter. All private plumbing is the responsibility of the property owner.

## 1. Metering of multi-unit developments

### What developments do we provide sub-meters for?

We provide sub-meters for multi-unit / dwelling developments that receive individual annual service charges, these developments are typically strata lots. Commercial properties must be strata titled to apply for our sub-meters.

The sub-meters must be located at ground level. We are unable to provide sub-meters for high rise apartment blocks or where the sub-meter is required to be located on different levels.

### What types of meters are there?

The meter supplying water to the land is called a master meter. The master meter measures all of the water use within the development. Private plumbing connects to the master meter which feeds water to each unit in a development. Each unit has a sub-meter which measures the amount of water that each unit uses.

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## 2. Getting a meter

### When do I apply for a master meter?

You can apply for the master meter as part of your building application using our online system called [BuilderNet](#). Please note you will need to pay water use charges once a meter has been installed.

### When do I apply for a sub-meter?

If you have just completed a survey strata development and have the titles for each lot; you can apply for a sub-meter at any time if the pipework is in place.

If your development is a 'built strata; you should only apply for a sub-meter to be installed once the building construction is complete and ready for occupancy. This can be done by using our online system called [BuilderNet](#) and selecting 'Lodge a water service application' then selecting 'Install Sub-meter' under work required. You will need to include a plan of the location of the pipework/existing sub-meter so we can verify that we install the sub-meter in the right location as well as confirming it will be accessible for our readers and maintenance crews. You'll also need to demonstrate that the private plumbing meets our requirements by providing a photo clearly showing the vertical and horizontal pipework.

### How much does it cost?

The cost of a master meter will depend on what size meter you need, all our fees for master meters and sub-meters are shown on our [website](#).

### How long does it take to install a sub-meter?

Please allow 10 working days from the date we receive your payment for your sub-meter to be installed. If we are unable to install or replace a sub-meter at the first attempt, a new application may be required (including the fees).

## 3. Meter locations

### Is it important where sub-meters are located?

It is important sub-meters are located so we have access to them. We need to be able to read the sub-meter and, if required, replace it. We need a clearance distance of 300mm horizontally and 1200mm vertically from the sub-meter. They should be free of obstacles and any hazards.

It is also important we can identify which unit is connected to the sub-meter. This is to ensure each unit receives the correct water usage charge.

### Where are master meters installed?

Master meters are fed from our mains and brought just inside your property boundary – usually between 400mm and 800mm. The meter should be between 100mm and 150mm above the finished ground level.

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## Where are sub-meters installed?

Sub-meters are connected to the internal pipework installed by a licensed plumber. The layout of the development will determine where the best place is for the sub-meters. They can be located just outside a unit,

or they can be located close to the master meter. We are unable to install a sub-meter at the rear of a unit where we would need to access the sub-meter through the building.

All sub-meters must be located at ground floor level for easy access for us to read and replace. We are unable to install sub-meters where our meter readers would need to access different floors in a development.

## Can meters be installed below ground?

Master meters up to 50mm in size can be fitted in a meter box and installed below ground. You can request a meter box in BuilderNet when you lodge your application.

Sub-meters can also be installed below ground level, you can request a meter box in BuilderNet when you lodge your application (this fee includes both the supply and installation). If you request us to install a box and cover at the same time as the sub-meter, you will need to ensure that the pipework is at the correct height.

If you want us to replace a private sub-meter that is below ground level it must be positioned within a Water Corporation approved meter box and cover, please read important information below

**Important information: There is only one meter box, and two covers that are approved by Water Corporation. The covers are not compliant if they are installed without the approved meter box.**

Details of these approved products and suppliers are:

- METER BOX - Meter Box MMR 21099, Water Meter/Valve Service Chamber, GRP Plastic Underbox
- METER BOX COVER OPTION 1 - MMR 22230 Plastic Meter Box Cover

SUPPLIER OF BOTH METER BOX AND METER BOX COVER OPTION 1 - Stockbrands Co Pty Ltd, 53 Edward St, Osborne Park, WA 6017

- METER BOX COVER OPTION 2 - MMR 2024 Cast Iron Hinged Meter Box Cover

SUPPLIER OF METER BOX COVER OPTION 2 - Galvin Engineering Pty Ltd 410 Victoria Rd, Malaga, WA 6090

For the cost of supply and installation of a meter box and cover by the Water Corporation, please refer to our [Water supply service fees](#).

More information on meter boxes can be found at: [watercorporation.com.au/Developing-and-building/Applying-for-services/New-water-services/Meter-boxes](http://watercorporation.com.au/Developing-and-building/Applying-for-services/New-water-services/Meter-boxes)

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## What if I need to install a sub-meter behind a gate or door?

We might not be able to access your sub-meter if it's located behind a locked gate. If you would like to provide access but also want to maintain security, you can install a Western Australian Services (WAS) lock.

WAS locks are padlocks that can only be accessed by ourselves, Western Power, Synergy and Alinta Gas. They are available from licensed locksmiths and security suppliers.

If you install a WAS lock, please contact us on **13 13 85** so we can let our meter readers know.

## How do I label sub-meters?

It's important that we can identify which unit the sub-meter is connected to. This allows us to make sure your water use charges will be correct.

This means when you request a sub-meter from us, you must include some information to outline which unit the sub-meter will connect to. If you want us to supply and install a sub-meter you should put a tag on the pipework to identify which unit the sub-meter will serve.

If we are to replace a sub-meter it will have a unique identification number which you should use to tell us which unit it is serving, alternatively you should clearly identify the unit number on the meter. This can be done by using a permanent marker on the body of the sub-meter. This will reduce confusion and speed up your application.

## 4. Pipework for sub-meters

### Who is responsible for the pipework that the sub-meter connects to?

This is your responsibility. If you're building and want us to install a sub-meter you should speak to your builder and/or plumber and tell them so they can put the correct private plumbing in to accommodate our sub-meters.

If you want us to replace your private sub-meter you should make sure that the pipework is suitable. Refer to the sub-meter diagram which shows the basic arrangement of a sub-meter.

### What can I do if the pipework isn't correct?

You should engage a licensed plumber who will be able to modify the private plumbing.

We only install the sub-meters and aren't permitted to install or modify 'private plumbing'.

# Sub-metering options for residential and commercial developments

## What does a sub-meter arrangement look like?

This is an example of how a sub-meter is installed. The main points to note are:

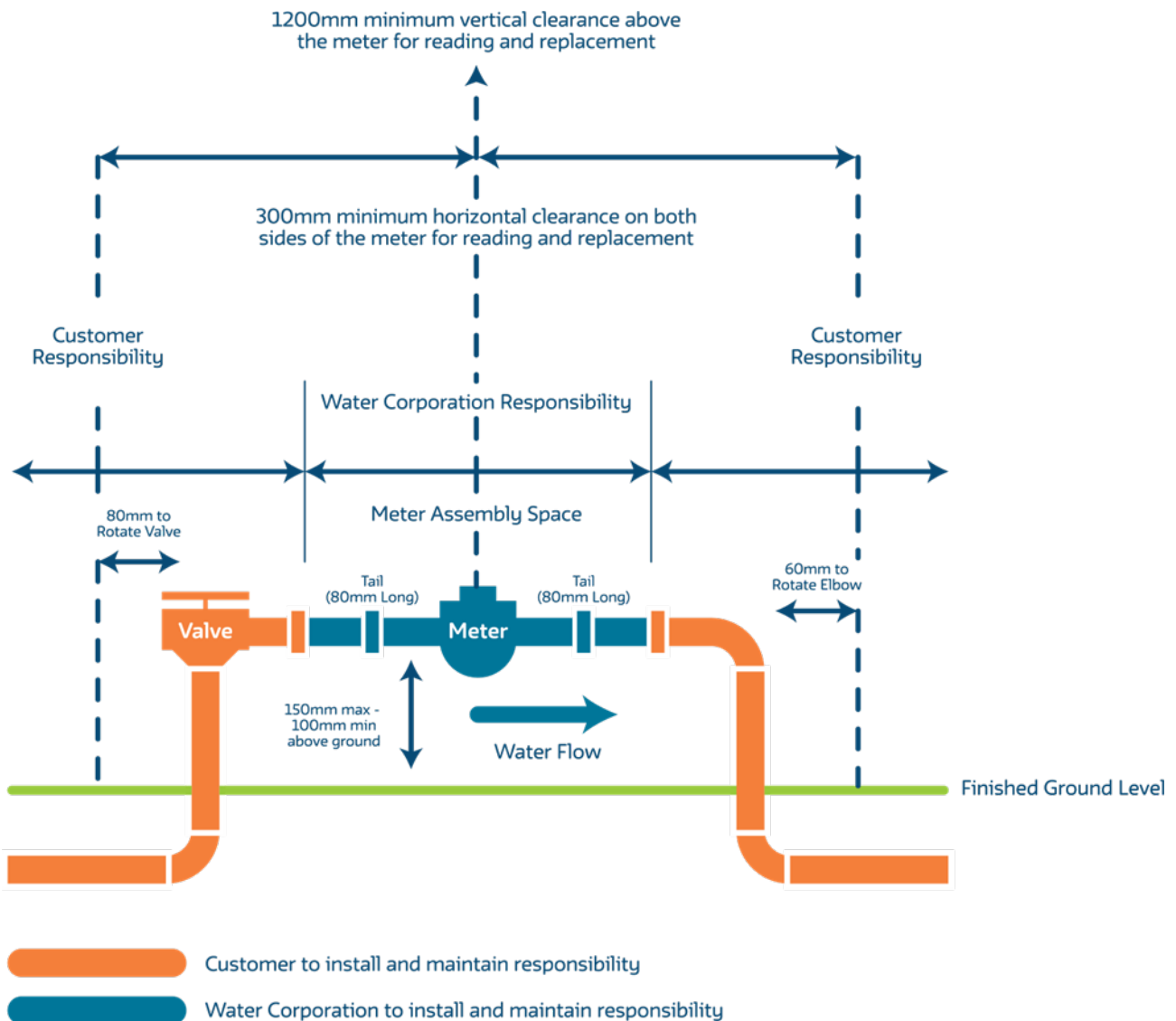
- The sub-meter is easy to access and not obstructed by bushes, building structures (e.g. wall or landscaping feature), a power dome or garden bed etc.
- The vertical pipework is spaced correctly and has 80mm tails on each side.
- The vertical pipework allows bridging cables to be attached.
- The vertical pipework has some flexibility and is not set in concrete, bitumen or paving etc.
- The sub-meter is the correct distance above finished ground level.



The below photo is an example of the pipework set-up where there is not an existing sub-meter, a piece of poly pipe has been placed where we will install the tails and sub-meter and the unit number is clearly marked.



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This diagram shows the spacing arrangements and who is responsible for each part.

Some important things to note about this arrangement are:

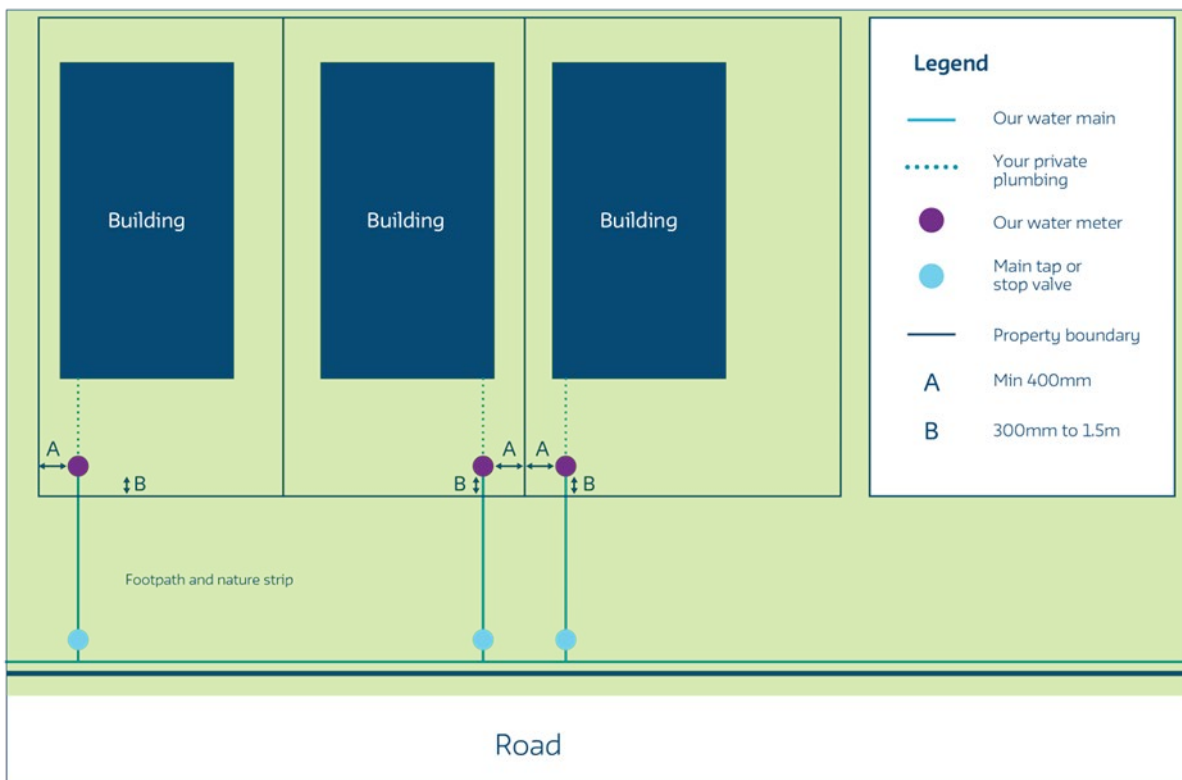
- The meter should be between 100mm and 150mm above the finished ground level.
- We are only responsible for the tails and meter.
- You are responsible for arranging a plumber to install the private pipework needed to accommodate the sub-meter.

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- We need to be able to attach a bridging cable (earthing strap) to the vertical pipes on both ends of the meter assembly.
- No branch or fittings are to be connected within one metre from the valve.
- Vertical pipework needs to be spaced to fit a standard 20mm meter and two 80mm long tails.
- Vertical pipework is not to be set in concrete, brick paving, bitumen etc, as some flexibility in the pipework is required for meter replacement.
- Water Corporation personnel must always have access to meter assembly.
- PVC and/or MDPE (plastic) fittings or pipe, if used, must be at least 225mm below finished ground level.

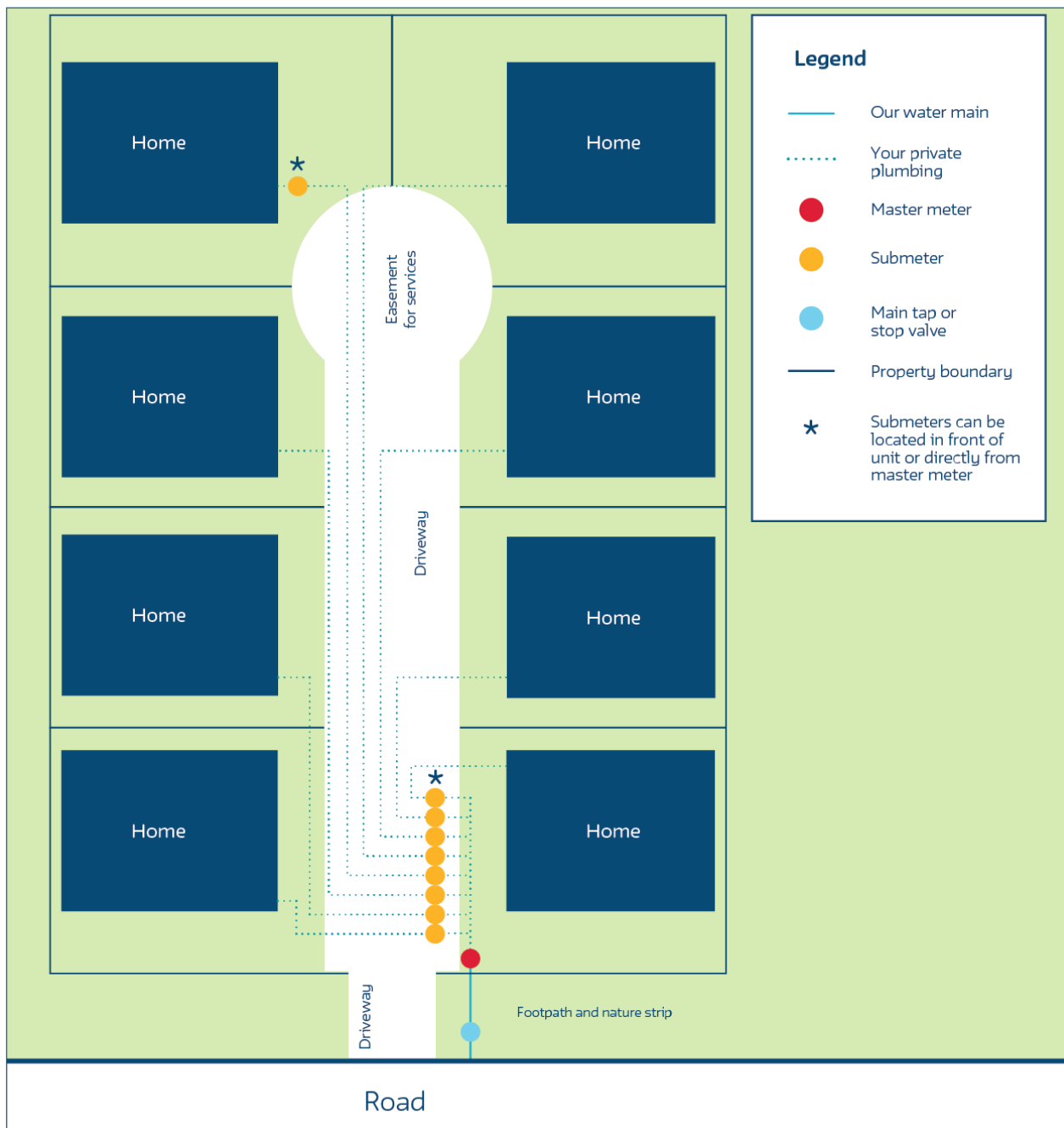
For further information, you can email us at [building.services@watercorporation.com.au](mailto:building.services@watercorporation.com.au) or call **13 13 95**.

## Examples of water supply arrangements



In this layout, each unit has direct access to our water main and can have an individual direct service.

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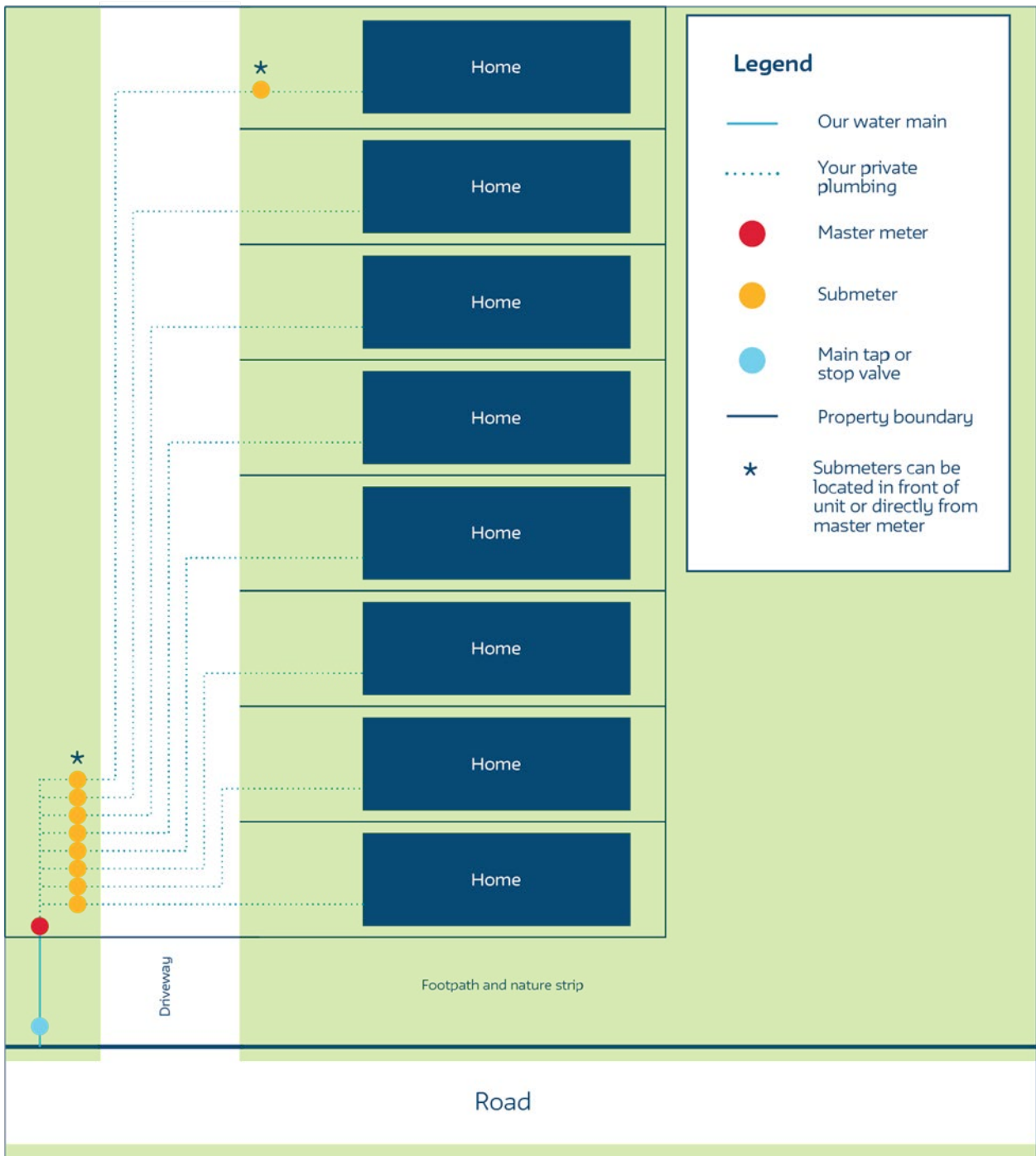


In this layout, the land is served with a master meter. Each unit is supplied off the master meter.

*Please note: the sub-meters can be located directly off the master meter or in front of the unit.*



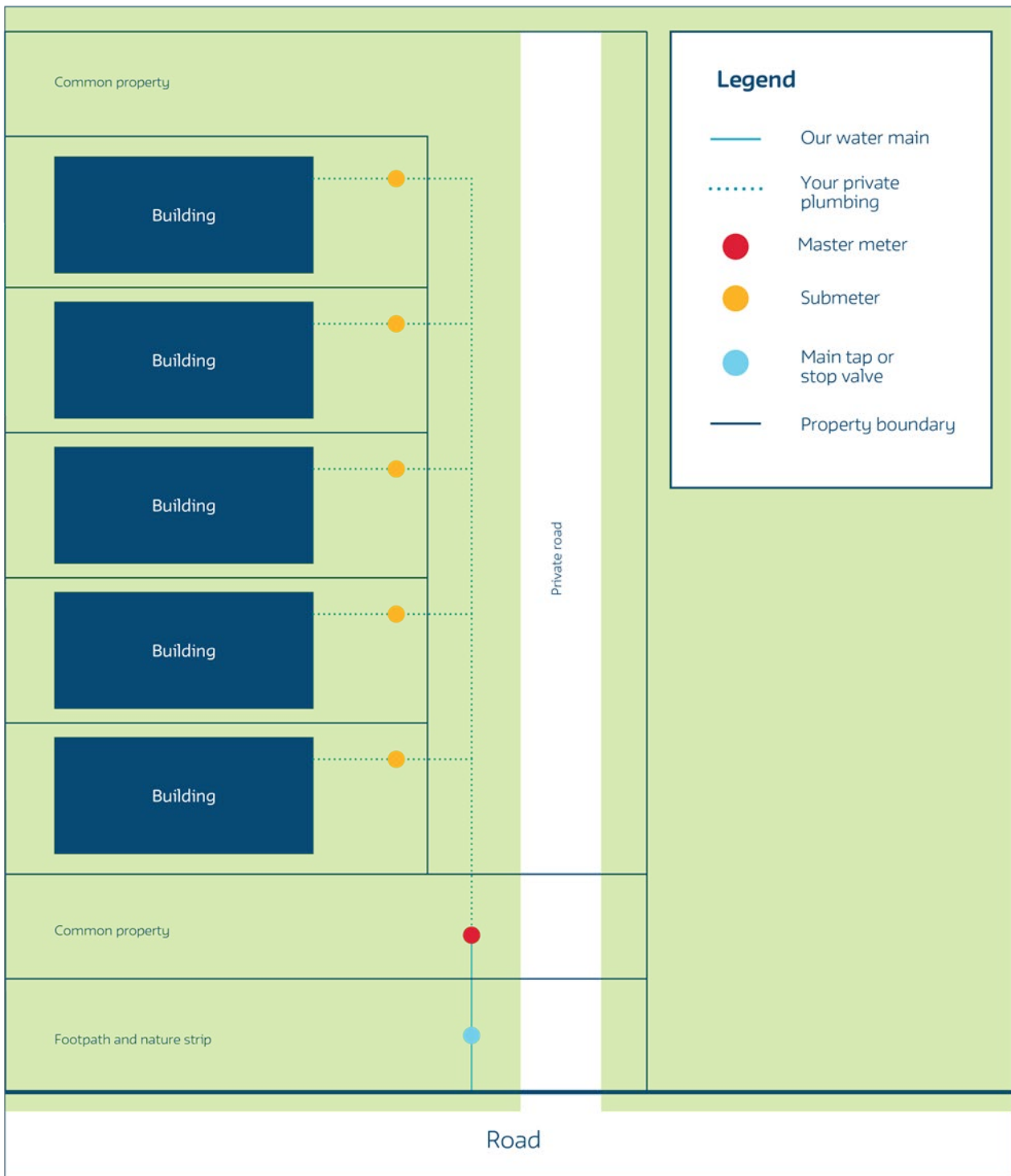
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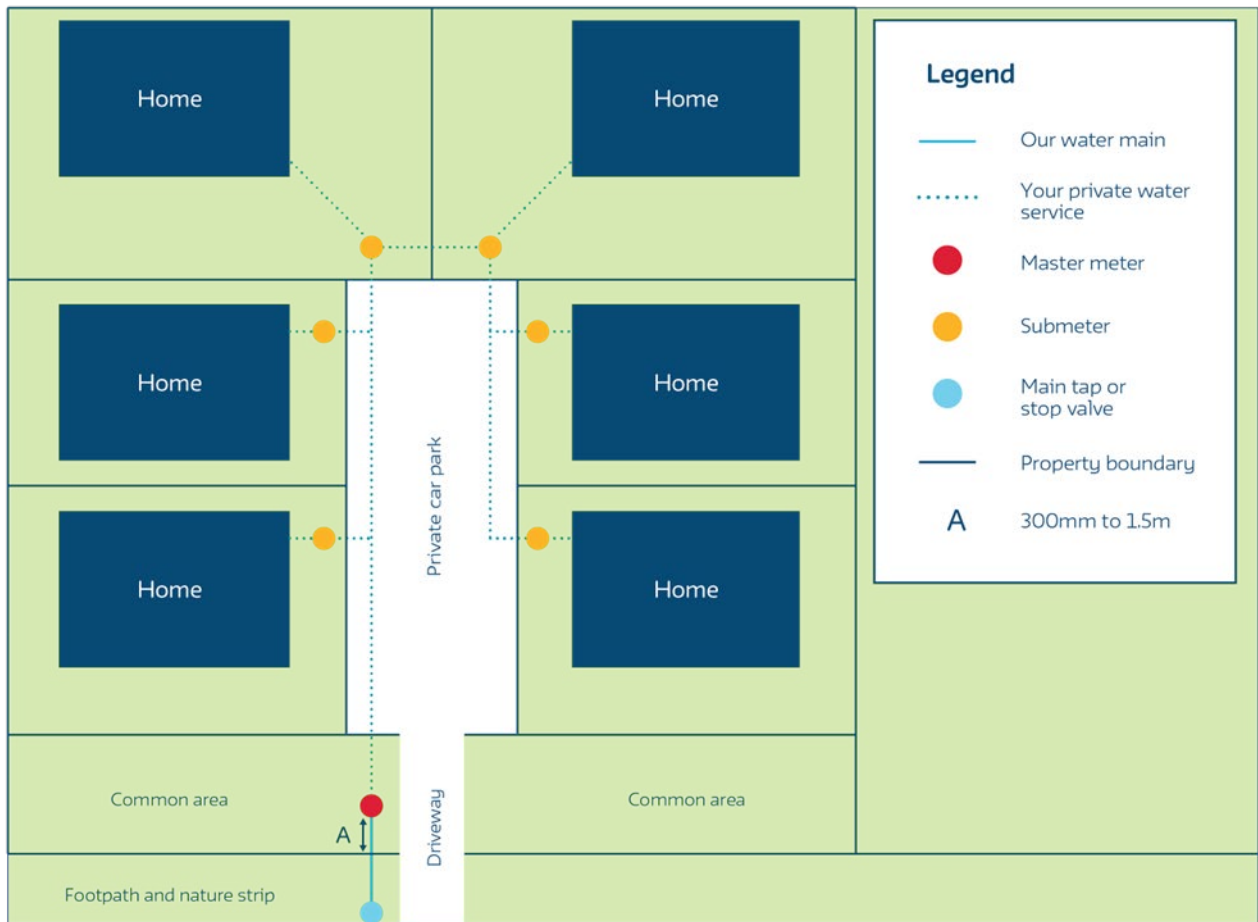
*Please note: the sub-meters can be located directly off the master meter or in front of the unit.*

# Sub-metering options for residential and commercial developments



In this layout, the sub-meters must be located in front of the unit because they all come off the same private plumbing pipe.

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# Sub-metering options for residential and commercial developments

The following images demonstrate sub-meter pipework that does not comply with our requirements.

## Examples of meter not fitted in correct below ground box



This box is not an approved box and we will not install a sub-meter in this situation.



This box is not an approved box and has a build up of soil covering the meter.

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Wrong pipework material installed on meter



This meter has a plastic vertical pipe and doesn't allow us to fit bridging cables.

**Meter pipework access not possible**



This meter has been covered by concrete and we can't install our sub-meter.

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**Meter pipework access not possible**



This pipework has been installed in limestone pavers and we will not install our sub-meter.

**Meter pipework too close to power dome**



This meter has been positioned too close to a power dome and the pipework is installed in pavers.