

# Ekurhuleni Consumer Guide *No 1*

Payment  
made easy



City of  
Ekurhuleni

a partnership that works

## Foreword

Ekurhuleni is a great place to live in and the municipality is pulling all the stops to make life for its residents better. To ensure that all residents continue enjoying their freedom, the municipality has drawn up operational rules within the Metro. These rules are called bylaws and policies.

Just like the laws of the country, the municipality's bylaws and policies must also be obeyed. It is important to know these rules and policies, to ensure that we stay on the right side of the law.

Should you wish to obtain copies of council's bylaws or policies, contact your Customer Care Centre (CCC) in person, telephonically or by facsimile at the numbers indicated within this guide or visit [www.ekurhuleni.gov.za](http://www.ekurhuleni.gov.za).

## About this guide

Payment made easy is the first in a series of guide booklets, which deals with the financial aspects of service delivery. Please note that this is a guide and not a detailed document of all bylaws and policies within Ekurhuleni.

Instead, it provides answers to questions that are frequently asked by the communities.

The Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality recognises the fact that information is power, and the information in this guide showcases the Metro's effort to:

- Be people centred;
- Provide a gateway to basic services for the people of Ekurhuleni; and
- Facilitate a better life for all by making services accessible.

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# 1 Connection of services

## 1.1 What must I do when moving into a house/flat/business in Ekurhuleni?

- Visit the enquiries counter at your nearest Customer Care Centre to collect the necessary forms to fill in to apply for connection of services. The form includes a service agreement that must be signed by the prospective consumer before the supply may be connected;
- You will need to pay a deposit fee, the amount of which will be communicated to you when you collect your forms. A deposit is required as a form of security in the event of a consumer absconding, as is determined by Council policy;
- Once you have completed the forms in full and signed them, hand them in at the enquiries counter for capturing onto the municipal billing system. Please remember to take your ID with you;
- You will be given an account number after which you can proceed to the cashier to pay the required deposit;
- The cashier will keep the connection form in order to process your request for connection of services; and
- You should receive your first account within approximately six weeks.

## 1.2. What must I do when moving out of a house/flat/business in Ekurhuleni?

- Visit the enquiries counter at your nearest Customer Care Centre to complete the necessary termination of services forms. (Make sure you list the correct address, stand number and date on which supply of service should be disconnected, as well as your correct forwarding/future address);
- Hand the forms in at the enquiries desk, together with a certified copy of your ID;
- Remember that your account is billed in arrears (you are billed only after using

- the service) and you may still receive one or two active accounts after you have disconnected the services;
- Your account will be credited with the deposit you paid when applying for connection services;
- On giving notice of the termination of services, apply for the refund of the deposit at the relevant Customer Care Centre.

## 1.3 How do I claim a refund of my deposit once I have terminated my services and a credit balance still remains on my account?

- Communicate with the transferring attorney, as any balance due will be paid over to him/her.

# 2 Property rates

## 2.1 What is a rates clearance certificate?

- When a property owner wishes to sell a property, all service charges have to be settled in advance, as required by national legislation;
- Once the account is settled, a certificate of clearance will be issued to the firm of attorneys handling the transfer of the property;
- This certificate allows the attorneys to lodge the transfer documents with the registrar of deeds, for the change of ownership to be recorded.

## 2.2 I own my property, why should I pay rates on it?

Rates on properties are charged by the Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality in order to fund projects and maintenance work within its municipal area.

These projects and maintenance refer to the likes of:

- Roads;

- Storm water drainage systems;
- Street lighting;
- Community facilities (libraries, halls, swimming pools, sports facilities); and
- Other services which directly or indirectly benefit the city's residents.

# 3 Billing

## 3.1 What do I pay the Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality for?

You are billed directly with a monthly account by the Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality for services supplied / rendered to your property. This means that levies or charges in respect of the following municipal services and taxes:

- Electricity and water consumption;
- Refuse removal;
- Sewerage services;
- Rates and taxes;
- Interest; or
- Miscellaneous and sundry charges.

## 3.2 How will I be billed for these charges?

- Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality will send you a monthly statement that provides a detailed account of what you are being charged for and the due date for payment will be clearly indicated;
- Assessment rates are calculated by charging a percentage of the valuation of your property as an annual fee payable in 12 monthly installments;
- Water and electricity charges are based on the actual consumption determined by readings taken from the meters (in the case of credit meters) or by "loading" the meter with units (in the case of pre-paid meters);
- Please note that water is billed according to a sliding scale. This means that the more water you use, the higher the average cost per unit you will pay;

- Sewerage fees are calculated as a pro rata cost of water consumed;
- Refuse charges are determined according to the type / size of property you occupy and the frequency of collection payable as a fixed monthly fee.

## 3.3 What do I do when I want to change from a conventional meter to a pre-paid meter?

- Contact your relevant Customer Care Centre;
- Complete the required forms;
- Pay a prescribed fee; or
- The technical staff will schedule your pre-paid meter for installation.

# 4 Account enquiries

## 4.1 How do I make an enquiry on my municipal account?

- You are welcome to contact the Customer Care Centre in person, website: [www.ekurhuleni.gov.za](http://www.ekurhuleni.gov.za), telephonically or by facsimile at the numbers indicated within this guide, you can also visit the website at [www.ekurhuleni.gov.za](http://www.ekurhuleni.gov.za). Please remember to include your account number on all enquiries;
- If you choose to speak to someone in person, or over the telephone, kindly ensure that you record that person's name. This will be of assistance should you need to follow up on your enquiry.

## 4.2 What do I do if my complaint has not been resolved?

- Make sure you have recorded the name of the person who attended to the complaint;
- Ask to speak to that person's supervisor;
- If you are still unhappy with the service, forward your complaint to the Customer Care Area (CCA) manager. The name and contact detail of the CCA manager is displayed in every payment hall.

#### 4.3 What happens if I do not receive an account?

- The Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality makes every effort to print accurate statements and have them posted timeously;
- If the due date is approaching and you have not yet received your statement, kindly request a copy from the nearest Customer Care Centre;
- If you fail to pay your account on time, you will be liable for credit control action irrespective of whether you received your account or not;
- The onus is on the consumer to request a duplicate statement.

#### 4.4 Why does my electricity or water account reflect a consistent average and then suddenly drop or rise?

- Your meter is read each month. If the meter reader is unable to gain access to your meter (e.g. dogs, gate locked), he may record an estimated reading;
- When a proper reading is taken and the estimated figure is found to be lower than the actual reading, your account will be higher due to the amount you were under charged for when the meter could not be read;
- On the other hand, if it is found, after a proper reading, that the estimated figure was higher your account will be lower as a result of the amount you were overcharged during the unread period;
- Continuous restriction to the meter may result in additional costs to the owner.

## 5 Payment of account

#### 5.1 What methods can I use to pay my account?

The Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality supports the following methods of payment:

- Cash;
- Cheque (if cheque payment history is good);

- Debit order - make arrangement with your nearest Customer Care Centre;
- Direct deposits at ABSA Bank Ltd;
- Electronic fund transfers (internet); and
- Payment at approved third party vendors.

It is vital that you include a valid reference number (municipal ten digit account number) and not names or alphabetic characters when making a direct deposit or electronic fund transfer.

#### 5.2 How do I make a payment in person?

- Ensure that you bring your account number or a copy of the account and the amount to be paid with you;
- Visit your nearest Customer Care Centre;
- Make sure that the cashier counts the money in front of you;
- Do not accept any receipt other than one printed by the computer, or an official hand written receipt;
- Check your change in front of the cashier. If you leave before checking your change, you are implying that you are satisfied with the transaction;
- Ensure that the correct account number is printed on the receipt and that the amount is correct.

#### 5.3 What will happen if I issue a cheque that is not honoured by the bank?

- A dishonoured cheque may be considered as fraud;
- You will be levied additional fees on your account;
- The payment will be reversed and services to the relevant property will be discontinued;
- No arrangements will be entertained and only cash payments will be accepted in future.

#### 5.4 What if my direct deposit payment is not reflected on my account?

- Check that you used the correct account number (municipal 10 digit account number) as a reference;
- Make sure that your payment was made before the date on which the account was due;
- Remember that this type of payment will only appear on your account a few days after payment was made;
- If your payment does not appear, kindly contact the Customer Care Centre with proof of payment.

#### 5.5 How do I make an electronic fund transfer?

- The Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality bank account details for account payments are indicated on your monthly account statement;
- Always use your Municipal account number (municipal 10 digit account number) as reference;
- If you have internet access, set up the municipality as a beneficiary and initiate the payments as required;
- If you don't have internet access, see if you are able to make payments from an Automatic Teller Machine (ATM) using the above details;
- Visit your bank and request that they set up the details and show you how to initiate payments.

#### 5.6 Where can I pay my municipal account?

The Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality, in partnership with various stakeholders, has made service payment a lot easier. Convenience was the motivation behind this initiative and it has put an end to long queues to pay services accounts.

Remember, your municipal account must be produced when making a payment at one of

the following places:

- EasyPay vendor;
- Post Office; and
- Any ABSA branch in South Africa or Rates Hall within the Ekurhuleni metropolitan area, without having to fill out a deposit slip.

## 6 Failure to pay

#### 6.1 What will happen if I fail to pay my municipal account?

- Should an account not be paid by the due date, credit control measures will apply;
- If the consumer uses the conventional type electricity meter, the supply to that property may be suspended until the arrears and penalty fee have been paid in full, or a suitable arrangement to settle the balance has been made;
- If the consumer uses a prepayment type electricity meter, a blocking will be placed on the vending computers to prevent the consumer from purchasing electricity until all arrears have been settled in full, or a suitable arrangement to settle the balance has been made;
- Legal action will be instituted should the above mentioned measures fail to recover the arrears;
- Water may be restricted.

#### 6.2 What do I do if my services are disconnected for an overdue account?

- Contact the relevant CCC to find out what amount is owed as well as what the reconnection fee is; or
- Make these payments, or an arrangement to pay, and take the receipt/arrangement to the relevant CCC to arrange for the reconnection of your services.

## 7 Arrangements to settle arrears

### 7.1 Can I make an arrangement to settle my arrears?

Yes, Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality operates a customer friendly Credit Control Policy to assist consumers in making arrangements to pay off monies owed to council.

### 7.2 What happens in the case of dishonoured arrangements?

In the event that an arrangement has been dishonoured, the arrear arrangements amount and the current monthly account have to be paid before the arrangement is reinstated. If the required payments are not made, debt collection action will be instituted immediately, which can include the following:

- Disconnection of electricity supply;
- Restriction or disconnection of water supply;
- Blocked from buying electricity on the prepayment system; and
- Legal proceedings to collect arrears.

### 7.3 What will happen if I am handed over to attorneys for failing to pay my account?

Visit the attorney's office, or debt collector, and make arrangements to settle your account.

## 8 Electricity

### 8.1 How do I purchase pre-paid electricity?

- Visit your nearest vendor, automated vending machine or pay point office with either your swipe card or an old token;

- Make sure that the correct details are printed on the token and that the amount is correct;
- At specific points there are stand alone automatic vending machines for you to use.

### 8.2 What if my pre-paid electricity meter does not accept my token?

- Make sure the meter number on your token is the correct number applicable to your property. Given the possibility of fraud, this token cannot be replaced;
- The token you are trying to enter may have already been used. The 'Used token' message will appear on the screen of your meter. If the meter number reflected on your token is correct, your meter may be faulty. Visit your nearest CCC for further investigation and replacement thereof.

### 8.3 What if I lose my pre-paid electricity token before using it?

- If it is a numeric (paper) token, go to the vendor or municipal office where you bought the token and ask for a reprint of your token;
- You must be able to supply the cashier with all the necessary details, such as date of purchase and the value of the token.

### 8.4 What can I do to save on my electricity consumption?

- Buy a solar geyser;
- Know all your energy consuming equipment inside your house / business, such as geyser, heater, lights;
- Replace incandescent lamps with compact fluorescent lamps;
- Fit a geyser "blanket", also isolating the first 1.5 metres of the hot water pipes, leading into and out of the geyser;
- Use electric heaters, tumble dryers and the like sparingly;

- Adjust the geyser thermostat downwards as far as is suitable for your situation.

### 8.5 Do I have a choice when it comes to electricity tariffs?

- Yes, there is a choice of four standard tariffs, however, only two of these will be suitable for smaller consumers. Our customer advisors will assist in this regard;
- There is no fee involved to change tariffs, but only one change per annum is allowed.

### 8.6 What are the benefits of energy efficient lamps?

Energy efficient lamps, also known as Compact Fluorescent Lamps (CFLs) are equivalent to the older types of lamps, but using markedly less electricity. The quality of the light is often better and much less harsh on the eye.

CFLs come in various sizes of light strengths, but as an example, a 14 watt CFL will produce the same light output as a 75 watt incandescent (old type) lamp. At the same time the life expectancy is six times that of the old type of lamp.

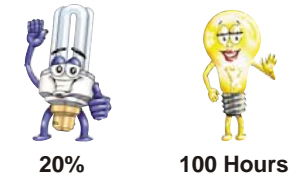
CFLs have a longer working life-span. An incandescent lamp will provide about 1 000 hours of light, while a CFL has a lifespan of approximately 6 000 hours.

Although CFLs cost slightly more to purchase, the reduced energy consumption, coupled with their longer lifespan, means that they are much more cost-effective in the long term.

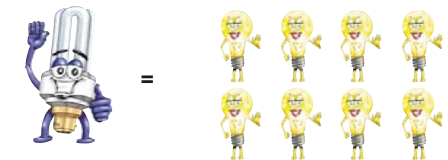
### 8.7 Comparison between compact fluorescent and standard incandescent lamps

7W		40W	
11W		60W	
15W		75W	
20W		100W	
	6 000 Hours		1 000 Hours

#### Power Consumption



#### Lamp Life



### 8.8 You can save electricity and keep your home's heating costs down by following these tips.

- Buy a solar geyser and ensure that a timing device disables the backup electrical element during daylight hours;
- The right type of insulation, especially in the ceiling, and weather stripping of windows can cut heating costs by up to 45%;
- Typically, living rooms are comfortable at 20-22°C in winter and bedrooms at 17°C;
- Open curtains on sunny days;
- Close curtains over large glass areas at other times-this can stop some of the heat lost through windows;
- Using small kitchen appliances instead of the stove can save energy. Toasters, electric grills and skillets, slow cookers,

electric coffee pots and bottle warmers usually requires less energy than the stove when used correctly;

- Use an electric kettle to boil water, not a saucepan or a microwave;
- Faulty appliances will not work efficiently and can waste energy. Repair or replace them promptly;
- By taking a shower instead of a bath you can save hot water, which saves on electricity costs;
- Get the family into the habit of plugging the water basin when washing or shaving. Allowing hot water to pour out of the taps and down the drain is wasteful;
- Do not set the geyser thermostat too high. A setting of 50-60°C is recommended.

## 9 Water

### 9.1 How do I know if there is a water leak on my property?

- One of the easiest ways to check if you have a leak on your property is to make sure that all taps are closed and then take the reading on your water meter. If after approximately 30 minutes later the meter reading has changed and your taps are all still shut, there is a leak;
- Look out for any damp areas on the ground or on the walls where your water pipes are located;
- Make sure that the geyser is not overflowing by checking the overflow pipe, which is usually situated on the roof;
- Check the cistern of toilets to ensure that the rubber seal is effective and water does not continually run into the bowl;
- If a hissing sound can be heard from the water pipes where no taps are running, there is probably a leak; or
- Make sure that no taps are leaking - a dripping tap can waste more than 200 litres of water per day, or about 6.5 kilolitres a month.

### 9.2 Who is responsible for repairing a water leak on private property?

- The Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality maintains and repairs the water mains up to the water meter. All piping from the meter onto private property is the responsibility of the owner or tenant, as dictated by the lease agreement;
- If a leak occurs on the property, a registered private plumbing contractor should be called to fix the problem;
- It is in your best interest to have a leak repaired immediately as it will push your water consumption up and you will incur a higher rate;
- Water use is billed according to an increasing sliding scale tariff. In effect this means that the more you use due to the leak, the more you pay;
- Should a burst pipe or leak occur on a roadway or pavement, it must be reported to the municipality as soon as possible;
- It is illegal for a consumer or private contractor to tamper with a water meter.

### 9.3 Will my account be reduced if I find a water leak on my property?

- Yes, the account will be recalculated if the following criteria are met:
  - a) The leak must be repaired immediately; and
  - b) A letter from a registered plumber must be submitted.
- The excess charges will be recalculated in terms of the Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality policy.

### 9.4 How to repair leaking tap or toilet

Usually, leaking taps are caused by a worn washer, which costs less than R2.00 in a plumbing store. However, if this doesn't fix the problem, you may need to buy a whole new tap. This will cost you about R100.00.

#### How to replace a washer

1. Close the stop-cock (the main supply tap to your home);

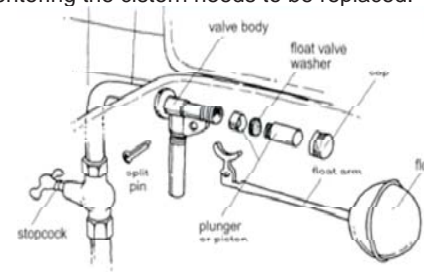
2. Open the leaking tap to its maximum;
3. Unscrew the cover;
4. Unscrew the spindle (Hold tap firmly otherwise you might damage supply pipe below basin or sink);
5. Unscrew the washer-retaining nut and remove the washer;
6. Fit in a new washer and replace the nut;
7. Re-install the spindle and screw down the cover;
8. Close the tap, restore the water supply and check for leak.



When you have replaced the tap washer, be careful not to over-tighten the tap. A new washer will feel comparatively "soft" and will be damaged if it is over compressed.

### 9.5 How to repair leaks from the overflow pipe in the toilet cistern

Leaks from the overflow pipe mean that the float valve washer that blocks the water from entering the cistern needs to be replaced.



1. Close the stopcock;
2. Remove the split pin and float arm;
3. Unscrew the cap;
4. Withdraw the plunger using water pressure to push it out (open the stopcock slightly);
5. Screw the plunger apart and remove the washer held inside it;
6. Fit a new washer and reassemble parts.

Open the stopcock and check that the float

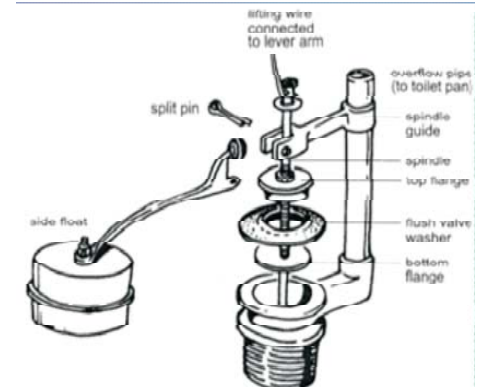
valve closes off when the water reaches full level.

### 9.6 Leaks through the toilet bowl

A water leak might be visible in the toilet bowl or you may hear a sizzling noise at the cistern inlet side. To confirm an invisible leak, add some food colourant into the toilet cistern. If the colorant flows into the toilet bowl without you flushing, you have a leak.

Leaks through the toilet bowl could be a result of a number of things:

- The float ball adjustment is incorrect. The float is set too high and this causes constant inflow of water into the overflow pipe and into the bowl. Adjust float by bending the float arm carefully. Other units may require adjustment via pre-set holes in the float arm. Make sure the float is not cracked or damaged;
- Float inlet valve washer is damaged. Water fills the cistern and overflows into the bowl although the float is set at correctly. Replace washer. See replacing of float valve washer;
- Float level is correct but water is leaking into bowl. The flush rubber washer is worn. Replace washer; or
- External leaks on cistern. Damp or water shows on floor. Make sure that cistern is not cracked or damaged or check for a leak at outlet pipe at underside of cistern. If leaks occur replace seal or if cistern is damaged replace cistern (preferable by qualified plumber).



### Replacing a typical cistern flush valve washer:

1. Close the stopcock;
2. Disconnect the lifting wire from the lever arm;
3. Remove the split pin and the side float;
4. Withdraw the spindle assembly;
5. Unscrew the bottom flange and remove the washer;
6. Install a new washer with the sloping side uppermost;
7. Re-assemble the parts;
8. Open the stopcock and test.

#### Note:

Cistern flush valve washers and tap washers are not manufactured as a standard item, you should first establish the type of valve and tap washer needed for your specific tap or toilet. Your local hardware store should be able to help you in this regard.

## 10 Consumer assistance schemes

### 10.1 Indigent Support

Indigent relief can be applied for by a household where the combined gross monthly income is less than the equivalent of two social grants per month.

### 10.2 What benefits will I receive if I qualify for an indigent support subsidy?

Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality may pay an amount towards your municipal account each month as determined by council in respect of:

- Refuse removal/collection;
- Water and electricity;
- Sewerage; and
- Assessment rates.

### 10.3 How do I apply for an indigent support subsidy?

- Collect an "Indigent Grant Application" form from your nearest Customer Care Centre;
- If you are unemployed or a pensioner, you will need to make an affidavit to that effect at a police station or commissioner of oath;
- If you are employed you will need certified proof of your income;
- You will need a certified copy of your identity document;
- Submit all the relevant documents to your nearest CCC;
- Your application will be checked by a staff member tasked with auditing the applications and will involve a visit to your property;
- You will be notified by postal correspondence of the outcome of your application.

### 10.4 How do I get my free electricity and water?

- The free portion of the water will automatically be credited against your monthly account;
- The free portion of the electricity will automatically be credited against your monthly account;
- You will automatically get your free basic electricity token, the first time that you purchase electricity in a calendar month. You do not need to purchase electricity to get the free electricity token, you are welcome to collect only the free basic electricity token every month.

### 10.5 Will I still receive my free electricity if my prepaid meter is blocked?

- Yes, depending on your applicable tariff.

### 10.6 What is a rates rebate and what are the benefits?

- The rates rebate is a "discount" of 40% applied to the consumer's domestic rates charges;
- A dwelling must be erected on the residential stand to qualify for the 40% rebate;
- This is also to encourage property owners to develop their vacant stands;
- A copy of the Certificate of Occupancy issued by the building inspectors, must be handed or faxed to the relevant valuers in order to do a supplementary valuation of the new dwelling, where after the 40% rebate will become effective;
- The benefit will vary depending on the amount charged for rates.

### 10.7 Who qualifies for a further rates rebate?

The following criteria has to be met in order to qualify for a further rebate:

- Pensioners who receive a combined income less than the limit determined by Council from time to time)
- Physically disabled;
- Indigent;
- Over 60 years of age; and
- Occupy the property for which rebate is applied.

### 10.8 How do I apply for a rates rebate?

- Application forms are available from Customer Care Centre;
- Application forms, together with the proof of income and proof of home ownership, must be submitted to your nearest CCC.

of a meter box or interfering with the meter or municipal wiring, piping or other installations in any manner constitutes tampering;

- Only authorised municipal personnel/contractors are permitted to work on meters, municipal installations (e.g. transformers) and municipal wiring and piping;
- Severe penalties will be imposed on any person found to have committed tampering;
- Tampering constitutes fraud and may result in criminal charges.

### 11.2 What should I do if I am approached by someone who says he/she can reduce my monthly electricity or water account?

- Obtain as much details from the person as possible;
- Telephone the relevant Customer Care Centre for advice;
- Do not allow anyone to tamper or interfere with your meter, pipes or cables leading to the meter;
- You will be held liable should your meter be found to be tampered with.

## 11 Meter tampering

### 11.1 What is meter tampering?

- Any action resulting in the breaking of a seal, the opening, adjustment or removal of a meter, bypassing the meter, opening





City of  
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Communications and Marketing in conjunction with the  
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Private Bag X1069, Germiston, 1400, South Africa

Tel: +27 11 999 0099

[info@ekurhuleni.gov.za](mailto:info@ekurhuleni.gov.za),

[www.ekurhuleni.gov.za](http://www.ekurhuleni.gov.za)