

# FAQs for Drinking Water Providers

From 1 January 2024, fees apply for drinking water audits and inspections carried out by SA Health under the *Safe Drinking Water Act 2011*.

## Why has SA Health introduced fees?

Charging fees for regulatory inspections is standard practice and is implemented by SA Health, other Government agencies and local councils for other types of inspections/audits. Some local councils currently charge fees for drinking water audits and inspections. Independent auditors and inspectors also charge for these services. The introduction of fees by SA Health will promote consistency in practices and remove the disincentive for entry of other auditors/inspectors.

## How much does a drinking water audit or inspection cost?

Fees are prescribed under the Safe Drinking Water (Fees) Notice 2023 as published in the SA Government Gazette ([Number 91, 2023](#)). Fees are categorised based on classes of drinking water providers ranging from Level 1-3. These levels reflect the size and complexity of the provider or water supply. For example, a capped fee of \$209 will be charged for audits or inspections of Level 3 drinking water providers including water carters and small rain and bore water supplies. Fees range from this lower tier to a maximum cost of \$627 for a larger, more complex Level 1 supply. A summary of classes of drinking water providers and audit and inspection costs is provided in Table 1.

## An Environmental Health Officer from the council currently undertakes my drinking water audit/inspection, do councils charge the same fees?

The gazetted fees apply to audits/inspections undertaken by SA Health only. The Act does not prescribe fees for routine drinking water audits and inspections undertaken by councils. Councils can, however, impose fees and charges for services supplied under section 188 of the *Local Government Act 1999*. Some councils charge for undertaking drinking water audits/inspections while other councils may offer this service free of charge. The fees charged by SA Health do not impact council fee arrangements. Drinking water providers should discuss any associated fees directly with councils prior to the audit/inspection being undertaken.

## I engage an independent auditor/inspector, does this fee structure impact on these arrangements?

The gazetted fees apply to audits/inspections undertaken by SA Health only. The Act allows for audits and inspections to be undertaken by independent auditors or inspectors that have been approved by SA Health. The Act does not prescribe fees for routine audits and inspections and rates are at the discretion of independent auditors/inspectors. The SA Health fee structure does not impact on the fees charged by independent auditors/inspectors. Drinking water providers are encouraged to discuss any associated fees directly with their auditor/inspector prior to engaging them.



## The previous auditor/inspector I engaged is no longer listed as approved, what do I need to do?

Look for an auditor/inspector who is available in your local area (noting some auditors/inspectors cover all areas). Ensure that the level of the auditor/inspector is adequate for the class of your drinking water supply, e.g., Level 1 auditors can audit or inspect any drinking water provider whereas Level 2 and 3 auditors/inspectors can only audit/inspect certain providers. A list of classification levels and approved auditors/inspectors including contact details is available on the SA Health [website](#). Consideration should be given to the availability and timeframe for completing the audit/inspection and the associated cost. Fees may vary between auditors/inspectors so getting a several quotes (where possible) is encouraged.

## Do fees apply for not-for-profit organisations?

Not-for-profit community groups and charitable organisations registered under the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012* of the Commonwealth will not be charged a fee for a drinking water audit or inspection undertaken by SA Health. This includes organisations who currently have an exemption from the payment of GST as a not-for-profit organisation (as notified by the Australian Tax Office). Please confirm your not-for-profit status with SA Health when scheduling your audit or inspection. Where services are undertaken by council or an independent provider, please discuss any applicable fees directly with your auditor/inspector.

## Will the fees charged by SA Health increase?

Fees will be increased annually based on the Department of Treasury and Finance approved indexation figure. This indexation figure is published in the Government Gazette annually. Fees will be updated on the [SA Health website](#) and will be applied from 1 July each year. Providers will be advised of the applicable fee for a drinking water audit or inspection at the time of scheduling with SA Health.

## How can I pay the audit/inspection fee to SA Health?


Following completion of the audit/inspection, an invoice will be generated by SA Health and emailed to you. Payment of fees will be accepted by BPay or cheque/money order. A receipt will be provided once your fee has been paid.

## If two SA Health auditors/inspectors attend, will I be charged double the price?

Where more than one SA Health officer attends a drinking water audit or inspection, the relevant fee will not increase. For example, if two officers undertake an audit of a desalinated water supply, a single fee of \$418 will be charged as applicable for the Level 2 category.

## The drinking water supply I operate includes multiple sources and systems. Which fee applies?

Where a drinking water provider supplies water from a mix of sources and/or aligns with multiple classes, the larger/more complex category applies. For example, if a provider operates a surface water supply blended with rainwater, a Level 1 supply category fee applies (\$627). Classes of providers and fees are outlined in Table 1. The relevant fee can be confirmed with SA Health prior to your audit or inspection being undertaken.



## My drinking water inspection is usually combined with my food inspection. Do fees apply for both inspections?

Some businesses (e.g., hospitals) are regulated under multiple Acts, for example the *Food Act 2001* and the *Safe Drinking Water Act 2011* and require an audit or inspection under both legislative frameworks. In these instances, SA Health will endeavour to combine the audits or inspections, so both processes are completed at the same time. Only one fee will be charged when this occurs, and this will be for the audit or inspection which takes the most time (e.g., in the instance of a public hospital the Food Safety Audit fee will apply).

## What if a follow-up audit or inspection is required?

Where a follow-up audit or inspection is required to facilitate compliance with the Act, a capped fee of \$209 is applicable for all providers. This fee applies where the follow up audit or inspection is conducted within the same prescribed period (as per [Gazette Notice](#)) as the initial audit or inspection. For example, if your registration notes a requirement for an annual audit and two audits are required within a 12-month period, an additional fee of \$209 applies.

**Table 1: Classes of drinking water providers and audit and inspection costs.**

<b>CLASSES OF DRINKING WATER PROVIDERS</b>		<b>FEE FOR 2023/24</b>
<b>Level 3</b>	(a) Water carters (b) Small rainwater supplies (c) Small bore water supplies (d) Regulated care premises (e) Education - childcare and preschool (f) Education – primary and secondary schools (g) Regulated food premises (h) Primary producers (excluding dairy) (i) Accommodation and food premises (j) Wineries and restaurants; or (k) On-supply from other drinking water provider where materially altered by treatment or extended storage	\$209
<b>Level 2</b>	(a) Desalinated water supplies (b) Bore water with reverse osmosis treatment; or (c) Providers with multiple source waters – rainwater and bore water	\$418
<b>Level 1</b>	(a) Drinking water providers greater than 2,000 population; or (b) Surface water supplies – River Murray or Dam	\$627
<b>Follow up audit or inspection</b>	All providers	\$209

Note: where a drinking water provider aligns with multiple levels, the higher level applies.  
Example: a winery using a surface water supply (River Murray or Dam) would align to Level 1.

## For more information

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