Guide for sub-meter options for multi-residential developments

This guide provides information about Water Corporation installing sub-meters and taking over existing private sub-meters in multi-residential developments.

This purpose of sharing 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 are usually at least 25mm in size.

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.

Private Plumbing – Any internal pipework and fittings which begin at the master meter and are contained within the property boundary. All private plumbing is the responsibility of the property owner.

1. Metering of multi-residential developments

What developments do we provide meters for?

We provide sub-meters for multi-residential developments that receive individual annual service charges. These developments are typically strata lots.

The sub-meters must be located at ground level. We may be able to provide sub-meters to low level developments but 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.

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 changes 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 the sub-meter at any time as long as 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 it is ready for living in. This can be done by using online system called BuilderNet and selecting 'Lodge a water service application'.

You will need to include a plan of how the private plumbing is laid so we can make sure we install the sub-meter in the right location. You'll also need to demonstrate that the private plumbing meets our requirements. A photo should give us the information we need.

How much does it cost?

The cost of a master meter will depend on what size of meter you need. All our fees are shown on our website.

The cost for us to supply and install a sub-meter to a new unit is $359.92.

The cost for us to replace a sub-meter is $255.62.

How long does it take to install a meter?

Please allow 10 working days from the date we receive your payment for your meter to be installed.

If we are unable to install or replace a sub-meter at the first attempt, a new application will be required, including the fees.

3. Meter locations

Is it important where 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.

Where are sub-meters installed?

Sub-meters are connected to the internal pipework installed by a 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. You can request a meter box in BuilderNet when you lodge your application. If you require us to install a sub-meter below ground you will need to ensure that the pipework is at the correct height.

If you want us to replace a private sub-meter which is positioned below ground; you need to make sure it is positioned within a Water Corporation approved meter box.

For the cost of a meter box, please refer to our Water supply service fees.

More information on meter boxes can be found at: watercorporation.com.au/home/builders-and-developers

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

We might not be able to access your 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 the sub-meter has a unique identification number you should tell us which unit it is serving. This will reduce confusion and speed up your application.

If you want us to replace your private sub-meter; 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.

4. Pipework for 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?

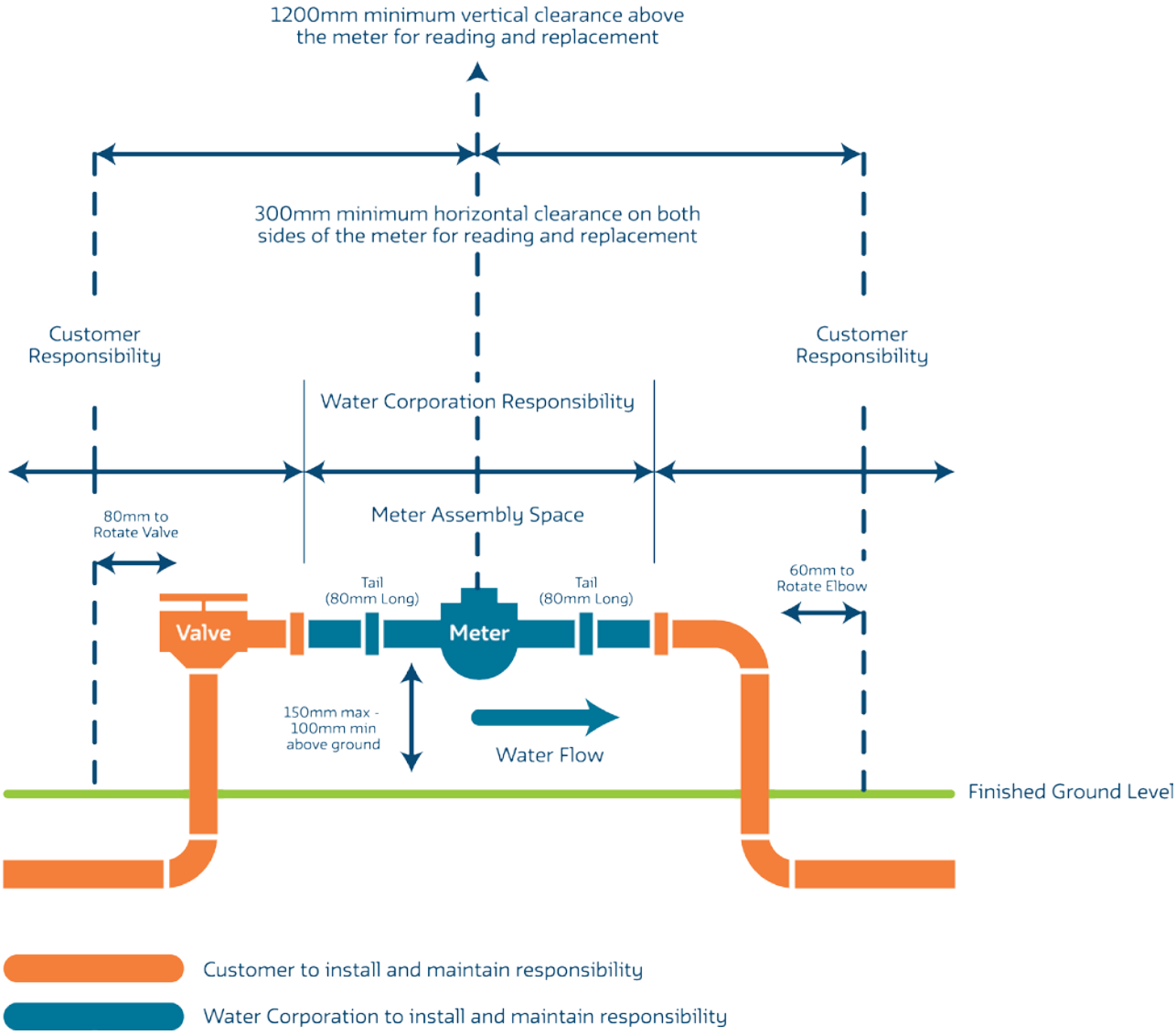
You should engage a licensed plumber who will be able to modify the private plumbing.

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

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
- 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



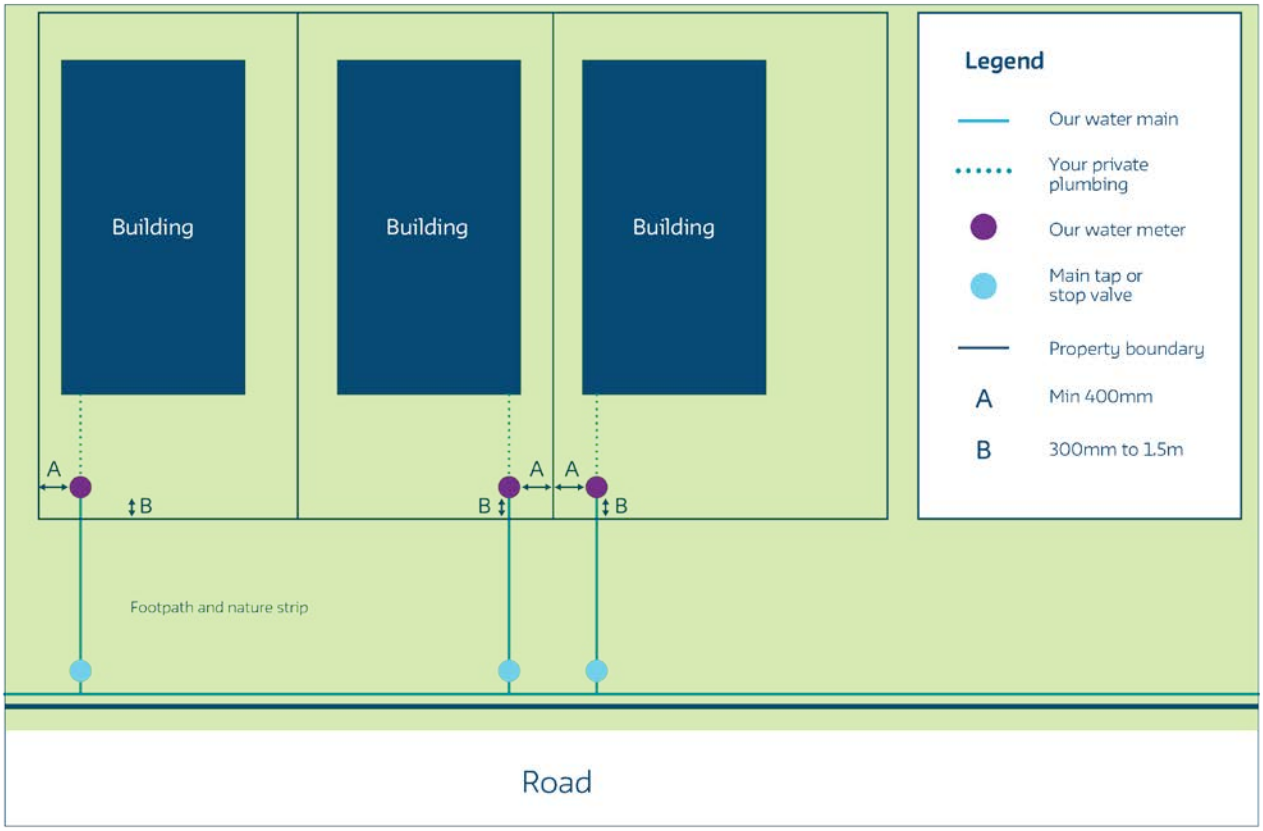
This diagram shows the spacing arrangements and who is responsible for each part.

Some important things to note about this arrangement are:

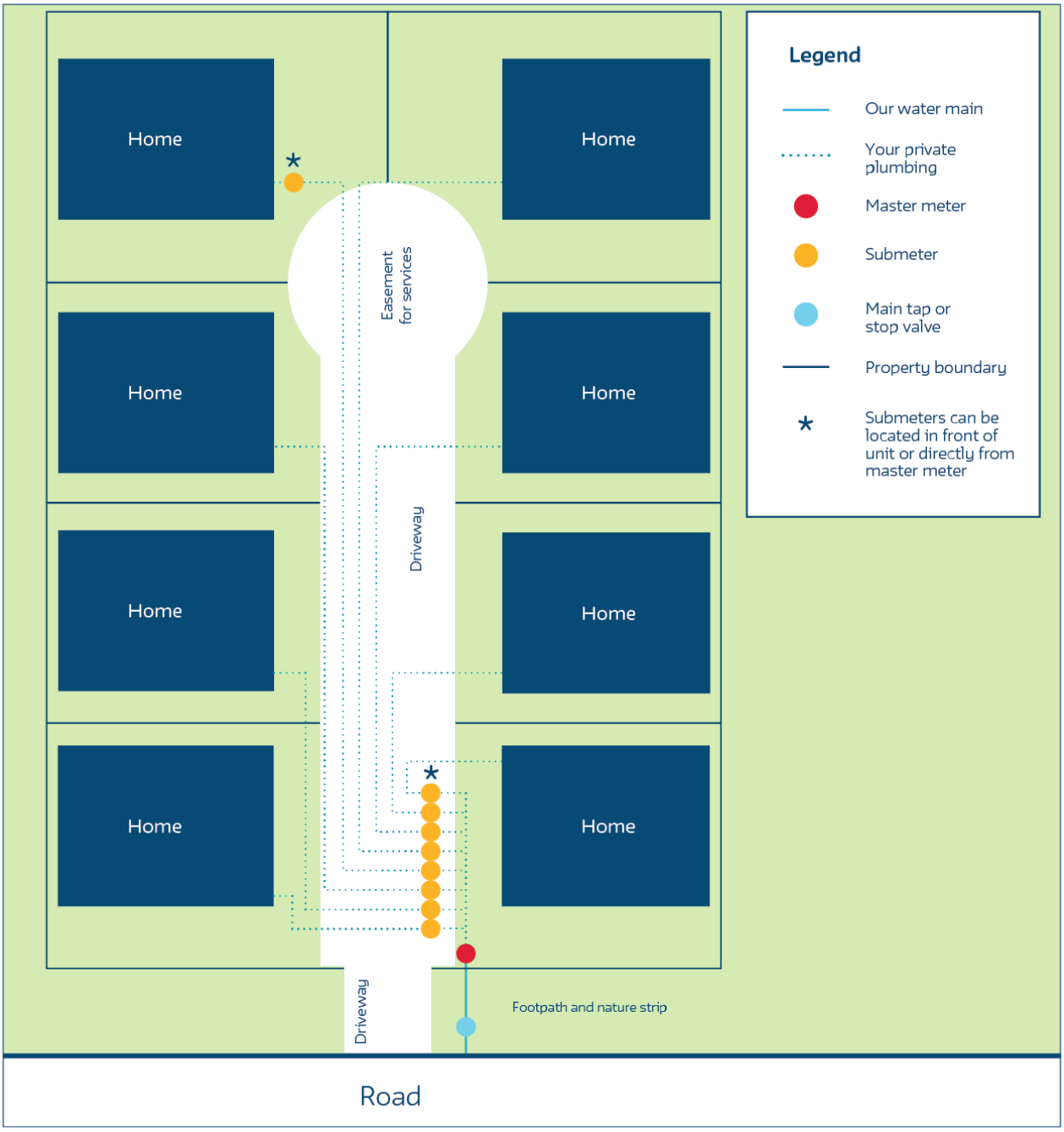
- The meter should be between 100mm and 150mm above the finished ground level.
- We are only responsible for the tails and meter.
- You are responsible for arranging a plumber to install the private pipework needed to accommodate the sub-meter.
- We need to be able to attach a bridging cable (earthing 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 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 have access to meter assembly at all times.
- 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 or call **13 13 95**.

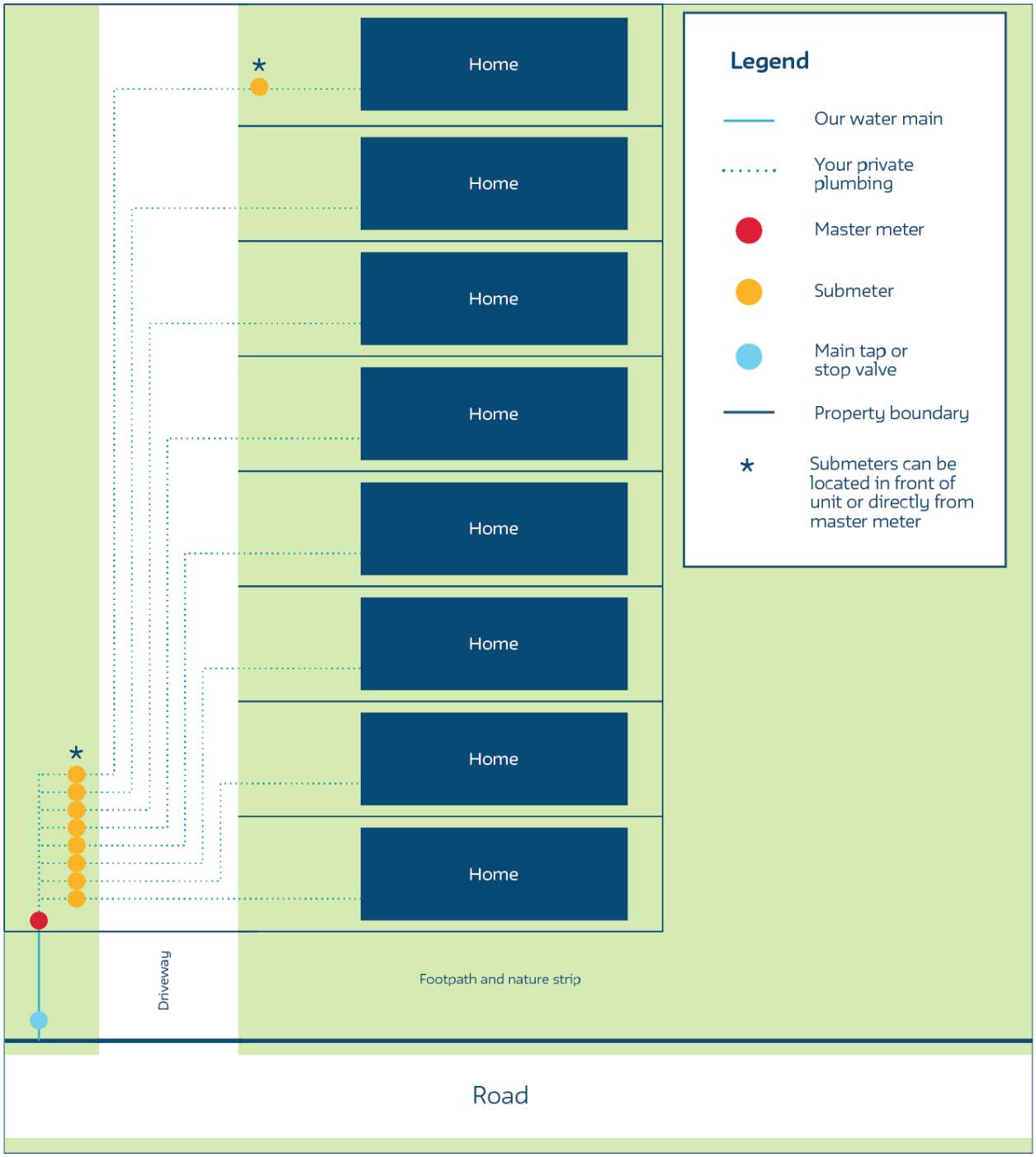


In this layout, each unit has direct access to our water main and is able to have an individual direct service.



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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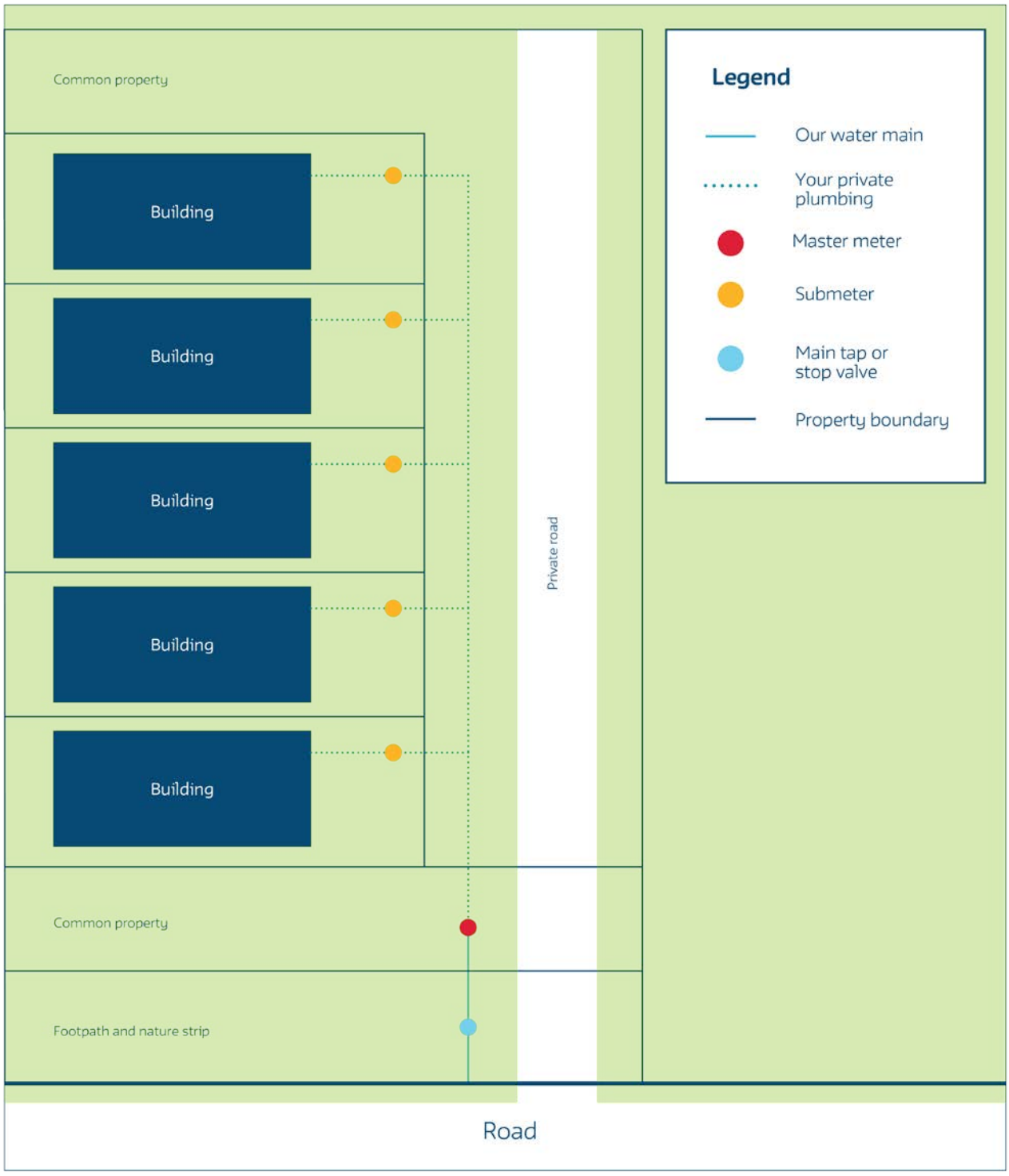
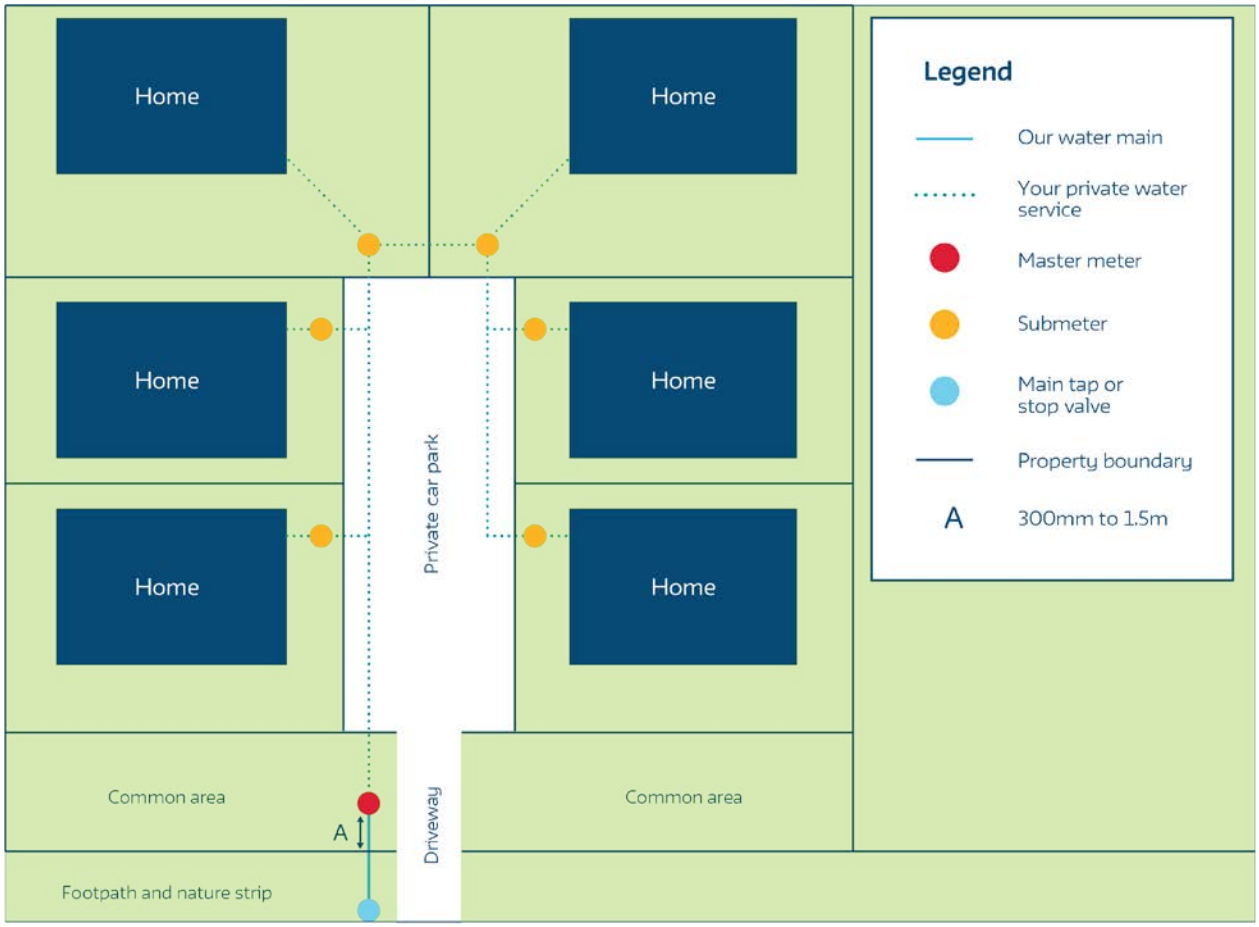


In this layout, the sub-meters must be located in front of the unit because they all come off the same private plumbing pipe.



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The following images demonstrate sub-meters that have been installed in manners that don't comply with our requirements.

Examples of meter not fitted in correct below ground box

This box is not an approved box and it doesn't allow us to replace the meter.

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

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 doesn't allow us to replace it.

Meter pipework access not possible

This meter has been set into limestone pavers and doesn't allow us to replace it.

Meter pipework too close to power dome

This meter has been positioned too close to a power dome and doesn't allow us to replace it.