

YOUR 2023-2024 INVOICE EXPLAINED AND FAQ'S



To help you understand why SEPA has invoiced you and provide you with answers to frequently asked questions regarding invoices.

How do I pay my invoice?

We can take payments by BACS, online at <https://webpayments.sepa.org.uk> or by cheque.

Currently we are unable to take card payments over the phone.

If paying by BACS clearly reference your invoice, account, or permit number so that we can ensure it is matched to your account correctly.

If you are sending a cheque, please only send to:

Angus Smith Building, 6 Parklands Avenue, Eurocentral, Holytown, North Lanarkshire, ML1 4WQ.

With a clear reference of your invoice, account or permit number.

To arrange a payment plan please contact SEPA at invoices@sepa.org.uk.

What is best way to contact SEPA if I have any questions over the current period?

The best way to contact us is by email. We have identified the best email to use under each section so that you get the quickest response. We will, if requested in your email, call you back.

Why have I received an invoice?

SEPA raises invoices to recover the costs it incurs regulating, monitoring, and reporting the environmental impact of operators' activities as part of our statutory duty. These costs are referred to as subsistence costs and we are required to recover these costs from authorisation holders. This invoice is for annual subsistence charges related to your authorisation.

Spreading the cost of the invoice by a monthly standing order, who do I contact?

We are able to offer payment plans, by standing order, to help spread the cost of your annual charges over 6 months of the year starting from on or before the invoice due date. If you would like more information please contact invoices@sepa.org.uk.

Why have my charges changed from 2022-23?

We have applied an inflationary increase to the 2022/23 charges to arrive at the 2023/24 charges. This increase is included in both the regulatory and environmental component of the charge. Your charges may also be impacted by applications for temporary cessation, or if you only started operations part way through a year. If you have a query, please contact charging@sepa.org.uk.

The increase to subsistence charges varies between 7% to 12.64%. The average increase is 7.5%.

Why is the increase in charges more significant than in previous years?

As you will be aware inflation has significantly increased which has an impact on SEPA costs. SEPA is required to recover its costs and whilst charges have increased, the average increase is 5% **below** the retail price inflation (RPI) figure which could have been used. This is the second year we have increased charges below the RPI, last year charges were increased by 3% compared to RPI of 4.9%.

The average increase is 7.5% for 23/24, the typical increase ranges from 7% to 12.64%. Only where SEPA are predicted to under recover, costs have been increased by 12.64%. To re-iterate SEPA are required to recover our costs and not cross subsidise between different areas of work.

We appreciate increases are always unwelcome, but we have tried to minimise them. SEPA do offer ways to spread your payments and encourage you to contact us as at invoices@sepa.org.uk as soon as possible to arrange this payment method.

There are also other ways to reduce charges depending on your circumstances particularly if you do not need to use the licence for at least 6 months (or 12 for a seasonal licence) by applying for temporary cessation at https://www.sepa.org.uk/regulations/authorisations-and-permits/application-forms/#fee_waiver.

Which site does it relate to?

Your invoice should contain the site detail. This is located in the **Your reference** section on the invoice. Please contact SEPA at charging@sepa.org.uk if the description does not have enough detail to clearly identify the site, or if this information is incorrect.

No one told me about SEPA charges when I bought the site/farm/premises, and the previous owner is no longer here.

It is the purchaser's responsibility to check for any authorisation(s) that are held or should be held. Some authorisations (licences) apply to premises while others are to an individual or company. Non-payment of charges may mean you are operating illegally. Information on how to transfer an authorisation is available on the SEPA website:

[Transfer an authorisation | Scottish Environment Protection Agency \(SEPA\)](#)

<https://www.sepa.org.uk/regulations/authorisations-and-permits/transfer-an-authorisation/>

I am not carrying out the activity so why do I need to pay charges?

If you have stopped the authorised activity and do not intend to undertake the activity in future, you should apply to surrender your authorisation. Information on how to do this is available on the SEPA website: [Surrendering an authorisation | Scottish Environment Protection Agency \(SEPA\)](#)

<https://www.sepa.org.uk/regulations/authorisations-and-permits/surrendering-an-authorisation/>

Charges will cease from the date the surrender process is completed. If you need to discuss your surrender, please contact the relevant Permitting team:

Water (CAR Controlled Activities Regulations), Waste (Waste Management Licence) & PPC (Pollution Prevention and Control) - charging@sepa.org.uk

Reservoirs - reservoirs@sepa.org.uk

Radioactive Substances - radioactivesubstance@sepa.org.uk

Emissions Trading Scheme - emission.trading@sepa.org.uk

I need to make a change to the activities I have been billed for.

If you have changed the authorised activity you have been billed for, you should apply to vary your authorisation. Information on how to vary an authorisation is available on the SEPA website:

[Vary an authorisation | Scottish Environment Protection Agency \(SEPA\)](#)

<https://www.sepa.org.uk/regulations/authorisations-and-permits/vary-an-authorisation/>

Charges will change from the date the variation process is completed.

My licence has been surrendered or revoked. Why do I still need to pay?

If you have applied for a surrender or revocation and have still received an invoice, please contact registry@sepa.org.uk to ensure that the application has been received and processed through our systems.

I was expecting to be notified in advance of invoicing so I could apply for temporary cessation reduction of charges?

Applications for temporary cessation should have been made already. The [normal rules](#) under section 6.11 of the charging guidance applies. If you have any queries on this area, then they should be sent to charging@sepa.org.uk.

Why have I received an invoice when I have applied for a Mothballed/Fallow (non-operational) Exemption?

If you have applied for a mothballed/fallow exemption you will have received an invoice for 15% of the annual activity charge for the period. If the reduction is not shown, then please contact charging@sepa.org.uk.

There are many permits that cover activities that go through periods when they do not operate (for example fallow fish farms and irrigation permits) although ongoing work is still required for these licences.

There is a minimum of 6 months (12 months for irrigation or other seasonal licences¹) and a maximum of 2 years that can be mothballed at a time, although a further application to mothball a site can be made prior to the expiry of the previous one. Please see our application forms webpage https://www.sepa.org.uk/regulations/authorisations-and-permits/application-forms/#fee_waiver (bottom of the webpage) for further information.

I require a purchase order for this invoice, who do I contact?

The invoice is described as a statutory debt, this is any debt, other than debts relating to taxes that may be owed to a statutory body such as a government department, local authority, or court. We are issuing the invoice for this type of debt. We are NOT providing a service, we are undertaking our statutory duties and recovering our costs therefore **no** purchase order is required

¹ A seasonal licence is where the permit restricts which months that the activity is permitted. For example many irrigation licences are only allowed to abstract from April through to October.

The information on my invoice is incorrect, who do I contact?

If you have recently applied for a change (within the last few months) this may not have been reflected in this invoice since it was generated earlier in the year. We will be running an update so you may get a corrected invoice in the next few weeks reflecting any changes.

However, if you want to check, or you think that any of the information on the invoice is incorrect, in the first instance please contact SEPA at invoices@sepa.org.uk. They will record the issue and pass on to the appropriate SEPA contact.

Non-payment of an invoice

If an invoice is not paid within 30 days of the invoice date, or a payment plan has not been agreed by the payment date, you may be charged a late payment fee of £50. To arrange a payment plan please contact SEPA at invoices@sepa.org.uk.

Where can I find out more information on Charging Schemes?

The charging scheme section of the SEPA website details how we interpret and apply charges. <https://www.sepa.org.uk/regulations/authorisations-and-permits/charging-schemes/charging-schemes-and-summary-charging-booklets/>

For information on accessing this document in an alternative format or language please contact SEPA by email at equalities@sepa.org.uk

If you are a user of British Sign Language (BSL) the Contact Scotland BSL service gives you access to an online interpreter enabling, you to communicate with us using sign language.

<http://contactscotland-bsl.org/>

www.sepa.org.uk

SEPA Office for mail:

Angus Smith Building, 6 Parklands Avenue, Eurocentral, Holytown, North Lanarkshire, ML1 4WQ