



## **Residential High Water Leak Adjustment Policy**

### **Policy Statement**

Although the property owner is responsible to maintain their plumbing system in good order, it is recognized that a high water and/or wastewater bill resulting from an unintentional water leak can present financial hardship to a customer. The County may provide financial assistance to qualifying residential customers in respect of unusually high water and/or wastewater fees or charges, resulting from leaks. The County may provide this financial assistance by way of a Leak Forgiveness Rebate against the water and wastewater fees and charges ordinarily imposed under the County's Fees and Charges By-law.

### **Purpose:**

To provide incentive for customers to repair leaks within a reasonable timeframe by providing a billing adjustment under certain conditions for customers that have been issued a high water/wastewater bill due to a leak/plumbing failure at their property.

### **Eligibility/Requirements:**

1. This policy is applicable only to single family residential units serviced by a County municipal drinking water system. For the purpose of this policy single-family residential unit is defined as a detached or semi-detached home or an individual townhouse or condominium. It does not apply to multi-unit residential, commercial, industrial, or institutional properties.
2. The Customer must provide a satisfactory explanation for the water and wastewater usage they are applying for relief from and the cause of the problem has been determined and repaired.
3. The Customer must complete in full and submit a Water Leak Adjustment Request Form within 60 days following the issuance of a high bill. For the purposes of this program, the Bill Issue Date indicated on the high bill will be used to determine if the submission date of an application is compliant with this requirement.
4. Water consumption indicated on the high bill must exceed three (3) times the customer's average consumption. Average consumption will be calculated based on the customer's previous 12 meter readings.
5. This is a one-time only adjustment per property owner. The Customer must not have a previously approved rebate for the premises.
6. Proof of repair must be provided which may include pictures, receipts, and/or invoices from a licensed plumber. The County may be required to visit the property to ensure that the leak has

been repaired and must be granted access to the property for this purpose within two (2) weeks of the request to gain access.

7. Water consumption resulting in a high bill cannot be a result of:
  - a. Filling a pool or hot tub, watering lawns/gardens, washing cars, or other outdoor or discretionary water uses.
  - b. The property being vacant or unattended during the timeframe when the leak occurred. For extended absences, customers should consider shutting off the water supply except where water is used for heating.
  - c. Water loss due to theft, vandalism, or construction damage is not eligible for an adjustment.
  - d. The leak being caused by a third party from whom the customer is able to recover their costs.
8. The high water bill cannot be a result of a “catch-up” bill where an actual reading was obtained following estimated bills. Customers are informed on their water bill if their bill was based on an ESTIMATE or ACTUAL read.
9. There is no extension of the due date or the time for paying water and/or wastewater bills because of a pending water and/or wastewater bill adjustment request. Customers are advised to pay the entire bill amount due within the normal payment period or enter into payment arrangements for the excessive amount in order to remain in good standing on all current billings.
10. Determination of the adjustment will be made by the County based on the review of documentation submitted.
11. The water/wastewater account must be in good standing to be eligible for adjustment under this policy.

### **Eligible Adjustment Amount:**

1. Adjustments may be based on 50% of the difference between the actual water consumption that the high water bill was based on and the customer’s average consumption at the discretion of the General Manger of Operations
2. The adjustment will be calculated using the current year rates.
3. The adjustment is only applicable to volumetric charges. Fixed fee charges are not eligible for adjustment or factored in the calculation.