

**LEAK ADJUSTMENT AND METER POLICY  
TOWN OF HAMILTON**

**Adopted by Hamilton Town Council - January 9, 2006**

The purpose of this policy is to provide a basis for the Town to adjust high bills caused by leaks in water lines or appliances on user's property. The reason for providing a policy for reducing these bills is to relieve possible financial hardship, on residents and businesses, caused by faulty appliances and water lines. The intent is to provide relief for catastrophic losses of water and some relief for water loss that results in higher bills as set forth below.

**A. LEAK ADJUSTMENTS FOR LOSS TO WATER AND SEWER BILLS**

**THRESHOLD CONSIDERATIONS FOR CATASTROPHIC LOSS**

Water use volume is 300% (triple) of previous usage history, or the previous billing if no history exists.

The account holder provides a written report or detailed statement that must demonstrate presence, size and location of leak.

Documentation must be provided that the leak has been repaired.

Account Holder requests adjustment before due date of bill.

Account must be up to date and must have paid at least the average bill based on usage history.

Account Holder has not received an adjustment within the last 12 months.

**THRESHOLD CONSIDERATIONS FOR NON-CATASTROPHIC LOSS**

Water use volume is at least 200% (double) of previous usage history, or the previous billing if no history exists.

The Account Holder provides a written or verbal statement demonstrating the presence and location of leak.

Account Holder requests adjustment before due date of bill.

Account must be up to date and must have paid at least the average bill based on usage history.

Account Holder has not received an adjustment within the last 12 months.

## **POTENTIAL ADJUSTMENT OPPORTUNITIES**

The Town assumes no responsibility for damage, repairs or inspections necessitated by leaks. If all above items have been met, leak adjustments will be issued as follows:

### **Sewer Charges Adjustment Policy**

1. If leak is shown not to have entered the sewer system, sewer charge will be waived for portion above normal use based on previous usage history. The threshold consideration does not have to be met in this case to be eligible.
2. If leak is shown to have entered the sewer system, the adjustment is the same as for the water adjustment explained below and threshold consideration would apply.

Note: Water used to water lawns and gardens is built into the water rate and is therefore not a valid reason to request waiving sewer charges.

### **Water Charges Adjustment Policy**

1. For a catastrophic loss, the water charge will be adjusted by applying a credit of 75% of the amount above 300% of normal use based on previous usage history.
2. For a non-catastrophic loss, the water charge will be adjusted by applying a credit of 50% of the amount above 200% based on previous usage history.

Note: Toilet leaking (running) may result in a catastrophic loss of water. Adjustments will be made as set out above.

## **B. ACCURACY OF METER CONSIDERATIONS**

Town policy assumes that meters are operating properly and accurately.

The Town will send meters off to be tested upon Account Holder's request. A deposit must be made to cover the cost of testing.

1. If meter is found to be reading 95% of correct value or less, the deposit will be retained to cover the cost of testing the meter, but the Account Holder will not be back charged for the indicated under reading of the meter.
2. If meter is found to be reading 105% or more of correct value, the Town will pay for the cost to test the meter and will adjust the disputed bill by the percent of inaccuracy. The deposit will be returned to the Account Holder.

3. If meter is found to be reading between 95% and 105% of correct value, the meter is considered to be correct within allowable limits and the deposit will be retained to cover the cost of testing the meter.

Note: Older meters tend to under register, so when a new meter is installed user may experience a small increase in bill.

### **C. RE-READS**

Water meters are the property of the Town and at all times subject to its control and inspections (Town Code Chapter 3 Sec.2-4). Therefore Account Holders are not permitted to tamper, open or read their own meters.

Requests for re-reads should be directed to the Town Office and the following conditions will apply:

1. If water use is above 50% of previous history for same period (if available), the Town will re-read the meter and check for an indication of a leak.
2. If a leak was indicated, one follow-up read will be provided to verify that leak has been eliminated.
3. If a reading or billing error is indicated, the bill will be adjusted based on re-reading the meter and re-calculation of the water and sewer charges. Customer pays adjusted amount on original due date.
4. Any further requests for re-reads during the same billing period may be charged at \$10.00 per re-read.
5. In accordance with Water/Sewer Billing Policy, special meter readings will not be done when bills are estimated due to inclement weather.

### **D. METER CHANGE OUTS**

The Town considers all meters to be operating in a proper and accurate manner until proven otherwise, and reserves the right to change meters at any time for any reason.

### **E. SWIMMING POOLS AND HOT TUBS**

The filling of swimming pools and hot tubs shall be charged at the prevailing rate for water consumption only and shall not be charged for sewer usage. The following requirements shall govern the filling of these receptacles (Town Code Chapter 3 Sec. 3-5).

1. The citizen must contact the town office at least twenty-four (24) hours in advance of the time the pool is to be filled.
2. A service charge of \$10.00 will be charged for reading the meter before and after the filling of the pool.
3. Six (6) gallons per each hour the pool is being filled shall be deducted from the water meter reading to allow for normal household usage.

Note: Topping off of pools may not result in any savings, due to the \$10.00 service charge.

#### **F. POLICY AMENDMENTS**

Each new account holder is provided with a current copy of the Leak Adjustment and Meter Policy, if requested. This policy is subject to change and the Town can provide an updated policy at the account holder's request.