

# Adjustments to Bills/Leak Adjustments

## ***INTRODUCTION***

This Introduction has been attached to the Policy to assist the UTILITY in the implementation of the Policy. It is not actually a part of the Policy. Any requests for a copy of this Policy by a customer should not include a copy of this page.

## ***BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE***

Generally, the customer must pay for all water which passes through the customer's meter. When a customer does not pay for all water metered, the cost of such water must be recovered from other customers. Because an unknown leak may cause an undue burden on individual customers, this policy balances these interests by allowing the customer a leak adjustment under certain circumstances.

The UTILITY is run for the benefit of all present and future customers. While no customer shall be treated unfairly intentionally, no customer shall be treated in any way that compromises the interests of other current and future customers.

## ***LIMITATIONS***

The UTILITY is subject to various city, county, state, federal or other governmental agency requirements and has no discretion to adjust bills in a manner which would violate these regulations.

## ***RECORD KEEPING DURATION***

All records of billing adjustments shall be kept for a minimum of ten years.

## ***OMISSIONS***

In special circumstances not covered by this Policy, the disposition of billing adjustments shall be made by the Governing Board in accordance with its usual and customary practices. When the UTILITY suspects leakage on the customer's side of the meter, the UTILITY shall attempt to notify the customer by leaving a "door hanger" on the premises or by telephone. The Utility's attempt to notify the customer of a suspected leak is an accommodation to the customer, not a duty to the customer, and is not included in the Policy.

## **POLICY**

1 ... The need to adjust a utility bill may be evident by a customer complaint of excessive billing or evidence of leakage on the customer side of the meter.

2 ... It is the customer's responsibility to keep his plumbing system in good working order.

3 ... No customer shall receive more than **one leak adjustment during any one calendar year.**

4 ... The UTILITY will first determine that the meter was properly read. If an investigation of the meter and meter records establishes that the meter was misread or that there was a failure of utility equipment, a new bill will be issued using an estimated reading based on an average of the past 3 months seasonal billing period. There will be no penalty assessed in the event the adjustment procedure delays payment past the penalty date.

5 ... If an investigation of the meter and meter record establishes that the meter was properly read and that there was no failure of utility equipment, the bill will remain valid and payable.

6 ... If the customer questions the accuracy of the meter, he may pay the utility bill in question plus a meter testing deposit of \$45 ( $\frac{3}{4}$ " meters) or \$250 (1" or 2" meters). The UTILITY will remove the meter and ship it to the manufacturer or other approved testing facility or have a recognized meter testing company test the meter on site.

If the meter proves to be accurate within guidelines established for used meters by the American Water Works Association (AWWA), it is deemed to be accurate. If the meter tests accurate, the customer forfeits the meter testing deposit. If the meter does not meet AWWA accuracy standards, the UTILITY shall refund the meter testing deposit to the customer and repair or replace the meter.

7 ... If an adjustment of the customer's bill is warranted, the amount of the bill will be determined based on an average for the billing period for a three month seasonal months billing plus one-half of the overage.

8 ... To be adjusted, the leak must not be readily evident to a reasonable person (such as leaks that are underground, within walls or under floors) or the leak must occur while occupants are away from the premises.

9 ... Adjustments on WATER bills will NOT be made on the following:

- (1) Routine dripping faucets, or any type of faulty customer plumbing;
- (2) Premises left or abandoned without reasonable care for the plumbing system;
- (3) More than one occurrence per calendar year;
- (4) Filling of swimming pools; and
- (5) Watering of lawns or gardens.

10 ... The UTILITY shall not be obligated to make adjustments of any bills not contested prior to the due date.

11 ....The UTILITY shall be under no obligation to extend the discount or due date or the time for paying any bills because the customer disputes the amount of the bill.

12 ... All requests for billing adjustments must be received by phone, in writing or in person at the business office of the UTILITY during regular business hours or official meetings of the UTILITY.

13 ... The manager or his designee shall file a written report of the customer billing adjustment and the action of the staff regarding the adjustment.

14 ... The adjustment will be calculated based on the 3 month seasonal average bill. The amount of the adjustment will be the average bill and half of the usage over the average, based on current water rate.

**ADOPTION DATE: August 12, 2002**

**EFFECTIVE DATE: August 12, 2002**