



Policy or Procedure

Procedure Number: 2019-1

Policy/Procedure: Adjustments to Water and Sewer Bills

Effective/Revision Date: October 18th, 2011/November 20, 2019

Scope: This procedure outlines the City of Oxford's policy for adjusting water and sewer bills.

Exclusions:

- Rural water associations and utilities to which bulk water is sold.
- Indoor leaks in multifamily residential establishments where two or more
- Residential units are supplied through a single water meter.

1.000 Responsibilities

1.100 The Billing Supervisor shall be responsible for initiating meter reading verifications, adjustments to accounts and applicable record keeping.

2.000 Adjustment Protocol

2.100 Determination of Cause

When an adjustment to a high water and sewer bill is requested by the customer, the customer will first be asked if the high bill is due to a leak that has been repaired.

2.110 If the answer is no, the meter will be re-read. If the bill is due to a meter reading error, the customer will be notified of the amount due on the current bill along with the amount of the adjustment on the next bill (if any). If the meter reading is correct, the customer will be notified that they are responsible for the full amount of the current bill.

2.120 If the answer is yes, then the customer will be required to provide proof of where a leak had been fixed to the Billing Supervisor.

2.130 If the answer is a swimming pool fill, refer to section 2.400 of this policy.

2.140 If the answer is a fire suppression system discharge, refer to section 2.5 of this policy.

2.200 Challenges to Meter Accuracy

Should the customer desire to challenge the accuracy of the meter, the following protocol will be followed.

2.210 If the meter has been repaired or replaced within sixty (60) days prior to the commencement of the high water usage,

2.211 The meter will be tested by the City at no cost to the customer.

2.212 Meters installed as replacements for stopped meters or replacements of turbo meters with compound meters will not be tested at City expense. Exceptions are at the discretion of the Billing Supervisor when subsequent consumption appears abnormal for the size of the service line and the type of dwelling at the service address.

2.213 If the meter test indicates that the meter is overstating the water usage outside of industry accepted tolerances, the amount of overcharged consumption will be calculated from the test report results and credited to the customer's account.

2.214 If the meter is determined to be accurate within industry accepted tolerances, the customer will be notified that they are responsible for the full amount of the bill.

2.220 If the meter does not meet the criterion outlined in section 2.210 and customer desires a test of the meter accuracy, the following terms will be offered.

2.221 If the test indicates that the meter is accurate within industry accepted tolerances, the customer will have a meter testing fee of \$80.00 plus the meter cost added to their next bill. The customer is responsible for the full amount of the bill.

2.222 If the meter test indicates that the meter is overstating the water usage outside of industry accepted tolerances, the amount of overcharged consumption will be calculated from the test report

results and credited to the customer's account. The City will absorb the cost of the test.

2.300 Adjustments for Leaks

2.310 Evidence of defective plumbing and verification of repair shall be required prior to making any adjustment in billing.

2.320 Minimum adjustment shall be twenty dollars (\$20.00); no adjustment shall be made for a leak unless the excessive water consumption is more than twenty dollars (\$20.00).

2.330 The maximum adjustment shall not exceed one-half of the excess above three (3) months previous average consumption.

2.340 When evidence of the leak as stated has been verified, the following adjustments are allowed.

2.341 For **inside leaks**, the City will remove **half** of the water and **half** of the sewer above the normal monthly bill.
The customer is responsible for the balance.

2.342 For **outside leaks**, the City will remove **half** of the water and **all** of the sewer above the normal monthly bill.
The customer is responsible for the balance.

2.343 No more than one adjustment in any twelve (12) month period shall be made at any one location. (Note: This does not mean in a calendar year but one year from the time the leak occurred.)

2.344 If the City determines that the above criteria have been met, and determines further that the customer did not receive the benefits of the utility service and that a reduction is warranted, it shall make a recommendation to the governing authorities of the City, and the governing authorities may, but shall not be required, to accept the recommendation for the reduction, provided that the factual findings supporting such recommendation have been considered and reflected in the minutes of the Board of Aldermen. No reduction shall become final until and unless such finding, on the minutes of the Board of Aldermen, has been made.

2.400 Adjustment for Swimming Pool Fills

2.410 An adjustment is allowable for sewer only.

2.420 One adjustment for one bill per calendar year will be allowed (January 1 – December 31st).

2.430 The sewer consumption will be adjusted to the prior six (6) month historical average.

2.500 Fire Suppression System Discharge

Should a situation exist where potable water is metered on the same service line that supplies the fire suppression system in a dwelling?

2.510 The customer will not be charged for incremental consumption due to a fire.

2.520 The Chief of the Fire Department will provide verification to the Billing Supervisor.

2.530 The water and sewer bill will be adjusted down to the prior six (6) month historical average consumption.

3.000 Enactment

This policy is enacted immediately upon approval of the Board of Alderman as reflected in the meeting minutes dated October 18th, 2011. This policy is not retroactive. Board approved high consumption bills held in suspension on the date of enactment, awaiting the development and adoption of this policy, shall be settled according to the calculations herein with the proof of a leak requirement waived.

4.000 Revisions

Revisions to this policy shall only be enacted when approved by the Board of Alderman and reflected in the applicable meeting minutes.