

CORPORATE POLICY



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Policy Title: **High Water Bill Adjustment Policy**
Policy Category: **Financial Control**
Policy No.: FC-022
Department: Integrated Planning and Public Works – City Utilities
Approval Date: May 27, 2019
Revision Date: N/A
Author: Todd Chapman, Manager of Programs, City Utilities
Attachments: N/A
Related Documents/Legislation: N/A

Key Word(s):

POLICY STATEMENT:

The City of Waterloo is committed to formalizing a well-defined, equitable and transparent process in the event of a high water bill situation / dispute

PURPOSE:

The main objectives of adopting a high water bill adjustment policy are:

- to provide a consistent approach in responding to high water bill situations
- to establish a transparent process for city staff and utility customers to follow
- to establish a clear threshold for high water bill situations
- to reduce the investigative burden on both operational and administrative staff
- to provide relief for customers who have experienced a catastrophically high water consumption situation

DEFINITIONS:

'Adjustment' – A rebate given for an approved high water bill adjustment application, to be deducted from a city utility customer's account

'High water bill' – Water consumption exceeding three (3) times the customer's average monthly consumption, AND the exceedance is greater than thirty (30) cubic metres

'Low Density Residential' – Properties classified as residential, including and up to a triplex structure.

SCOPE:

This policy applies to City Utilities customers who qualify per the Eligible Applicants section of the policy and will be administered by City Utilities Management staff.

POLICY COMMUNICATION:

This policy will be posted on the City Website, the City Intranet, and made available to the Operational Leadership Team and Corporate Management Teams.

POLICY:

This policy applies to, and is defined by, the following:

1. Eligible Applicants

Low density residential water accounts would be eligible for the high water bill adjustment process, subject to the following:

- 1.1 Water usage due to filling a pool or spa, irrigation system or other similar uses of water is not eligible for an adjustment
 - a. Properties that were vacant or unattended during the period of high consumption are not eligible for an adjustment
 - b. Water loss due to theft, vandalism, or construction damage is not eligible for an adjustment

To be considered for an adjustment under this policy, the homeowner must complete an application form.

2. High water bill threshold

A minimum threshold of three (3) times the customer's average over the past twelve (12) months, as well as a minimum of thirty (30) cubic metres for the high water bill situation will be considered for an adjustment.

3. Frequency of participation

The adjustment program will accept one application per property, per decade.

4. Time limit to apply

Customers will have 90 days from the date of the high water bill situation to apply.

5. Number of Water Bills applicable to an adjustment

Customers will be eligible to apply for an adjustment for one (1) water bill only.

6. Calculation of adjustment

The high water bill adjustment policy is calculated using a credit of 50% of the water and wastewater rates for the high consumption, minus the customers' twelve (12) month average consumption.

Example calculation:

In this example, a customer receives a high water bill, where 102 cubic metres of consumption was registered, compared with their normal average consumption of 34 cubic metres per billing cycle (60 days).

	2019 Rates	Cubic Meters	Cost
Customer High Bill (3 times avg)			
Water Charge	\$1.90	102	\$193.80
Wastewater Charge	\$2.45	102	\$249.90
TOTAL			\$443.70
Customer Average Bill			
Water Charge	\$1.90	34	\$64.60
Wastewater Charge	\$2.45	34	\$83.30
TOTAL			\$147.90
Consumption Eligible for Adjustment			
Water	\$1.90	68	\$129.20
Wastewater	\$2.45	68	\$166.60
High Bill Adjustment			
Water Adjustment (50% X \$129.20)			-\$64.60
Wastewater Adjustment (50% X \$166.60)			-\$83.30
TOTAL			-\$147.90
Revised Customer Bill			\$295.80

7. Adjustment Cap

The maximum adjustment available per application is \$2000.

8. Governance

As noted above in the “Scope” section, this policy allows for the City Utilities division to administer the policy, and in addition allows for the Integrated Planning and Public Works Commissioner’s discretion during situations of appeal or conflict with regards to the interpretation of this policy.

COMPLIANCE:

In cases of policy violation, the City may investigate and determine appropriate corrective action.