

DEPARTMENTAL OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS

 CITY OF RALEIGH, N.C.	MANUAL Departmental Operating Instructions			
SUBJECT Customer Leak Adjustment	NUMBER 100-1109	REV 6.0	EFFECTIVE DATE 4/21/2014	PAGE OF 1 3
	SUPERSEDES N/A	PREPARED BY Utility Billing Division		APPROVED BY Robert Massengill

1.0 PURPOSE:

1.1 To provide an opportunity for residential and commercial customers to request consideration for a financial adjustment to water and waste water or water only use charges where a leak has been repaired in the water system on the customer's side of the water meter or there is exceptional unexplained increase in consumption that a licensed plumber and/or Meter Operations staff has validated.

2.0 REVISION HISTORY

Date	Rev. No.	Change	Reference Section (s)
2/04/1986	0.0	Original – Resolution No (1986) – 75 Resolution to Establish an Excessive Utility Bill and an Insufficient Utility Bill Adjustment Policy	All
11/07/2011	1.0	Establish procedure for customer leak adjustment	All
12/5/2011	2.0	Corrected typographical error in header on second page- Updated DOI Number and corrected Page #	Page 2
4/11/2012	3.0	Corrected typographical error- the word “bid” to bib”	Section 6.8.5.1
4/23/2013	4.0	Establish procedure for an adjustment when there is exceptional unexplained consumption or a preventable/accessible leak.	All
7/16/2013	5.0	Added wording “per customer’s Account/Premise” to Section 4.7	Section 4.7
4/21/2014	6.0	Removed Section 4.8 “Customers must be in good standing to receive any monetary adjustment on their bill”; removed Robin Rose from Approved by Section on first page	Section 4.8 Page 1

3.0 ORGANIZATIONS AFFECTED

- 3.1 Finance Department/Utility Billing (UB) Division
- 3.2 Public Utilities Department (PUD)/Meters Division

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4.0 POLICY

- 4.1 Once a customer notifies the City of Raleigh about a possible high bill that may be related to a leak, the City policy is to provide consideration for leak adjustments for water and waste water or water only **usage charges** caused by a leak that occurred on the customer's side of the meter. The consumption will need to exceed the average monthly usage or twice the average monthly usage over the previous twelve (12) month period dependent upon the type of leak
 - 4.1.1 This monthly average will not include any bills that have been estimated or that have fewer days than the normal 28-33 day billing cycle, or for periods of zero usage and/or non-occupancy of premise.
- 4.2 If a leak occurs on a readily available water pipe (toilet leak, leaking faucet, leaking hose bib, etc) the water use for customers on Raleigh residential rates will have the water consumption charges returned to the lowest residential tier for the amount in excess of the average monthly consumption. There will be no adjustments made for sewer charges.
 - 4.2.1 Adjustments to water consumption will not occur on non-tiered rates.
- 4.3 If a leak occurs in a non-accessible area such as underground lines, pipes within walls, hot water heaters, the water and wastewater consumption charges will be adjusted to double the monthly average.
- 4.4 If there is usage registered that is above the monthly average on the meter and a plumber (or meter operations staff) can find no plumbing related problem and the usage has returned to the monthly average consumption, the customer may request a financial adjustment to the Appeals Officer with City of Raleigh.
 - 4.4.1 The Appeals Officer will have the authority to adjust leaks based on consumption usage which exceeds twice the normal monthly consumption average for both water and sewer.
- 4.5 Administrative fees will not be adjusted in any case.
- 4.6 Once a City of Raleigh employee or representative notifies a customer of a water leak and it is not repaired in forty eight hours, it may result in the disconnection of service until such time as the leak is repaired. (The time may vary dependent upon water conservation mandates.)
- 4.7 Financial adjustments associated to billed usage/consumption will be allowed one (1) per every two (2) years per customer's Account/Premise.

5.0 DEFINITIONS

- 5.1 **Leak Adjustment** – Leak adjustments are financial adjustments to water and waste water or water only usage charges on a customer's utility bill caused by a leak on the customer's side of the meter or exceptional unexplained consumption that has been verified by a plumber and/or Meter Operations staff.
- 5.2 **Preventable/accessible leaks** – Examples of readily available water pipes or hoses include but are not limited to; toilet leak, leaking faucet, leaking hose bib, etc.
- 5.3 **Explained/non-accessible leaks** – Examples of non-accessible leaks include but are not limited to underground lines, pipes within walls, hot water heaters, etc.
- 5.4 **Exceptional unexplained usage** – usage that after a plumber's review and/or Meter Operations testing of meter, meter flow search results, and/or meter investigation and no repair has been made and the cause cannot be determined and the usage returns to the monthly average.
- 5.5 **Consumption or usage** – are synonymous and reflect the amount of water and waste water consumed in a monthly cycle.
- 5.6 **Appeals Officer** – designated individuals in the Meter Operations and Utility Billing divisions that have subject matter expertise in the meter and billing operations and are designated to review and provide sound decisions for exceptional, unexplained usage and determination of the leak adjustment

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5.7 **Excessive Water Bill** – The amount of which exceeds by at least \$15 and at least 100% the average water usage of the particular customer and location during the twelve month period immediately preceding the complaint.

5.8 **Monthly Average** – Calculated by taking the previous 12 months that do not include estimated readings or that have fewer days than the normal 28-33 day billing cycle, or for periods of zero usage

6.0 PROCEDURES

6.1 Water leak adjustments must be requested by contacting the Utility Billing Division and must be accompanied by a plumber's receipt or other proof of the repair.

6.2 After all documentation has been received by the Utility Billing Division, a determination is made regarding what type of leak this is/is not and if the leak is adjustable or not and a letter is sent to the mailing address on file within the billing system stating approval or disapproval of the leak and the details.

6.2.1 The determination may require contact with repair company/plumber.

6.3 A leak adjustment may occur only after all leaks have been repaired or any exceptional unexplained consumption has been verified by a plumber and/or Meter Operations staff, usage has returned to its previous norm/average and may require a verified meter read by the City of Raleigh's Public Utilities Division.

6.3.1 Customers are responsible to pay the entire amount due within the normal payment period or enter into payment arrangements for the billed amount in order to remain in good standing on all current billings.

6.3.1.1 If this does not occur, the customer is subject to all current and applicable collection and termination of services, processes, and procedures.

6.4 Average monthly usage will be calculated using twelve consecutive bills.

6.4.1 This average will not include any bills that have been estimated or that have fewer days than the normal 28-33 day billing cycle, or for periods of zero usage and/or non-occupancy of premise.

6.5 Average monthly usage for customers that have little or no usage history will be estimated at the current City wide average.

6.6 No adjustments will be granted where the following situations exist:

6.6.1 Usage above the customer's average monthly consumption is due to seasonal usage such as watering of sod, gardening, filling swimming pools or whirlpools, washing vehicles, etc.

6.6.2 Leak was caused by a third party from whom the customer is able to recover their costs.

6.6.2.1 Examples of these are included **but are not limited to** theft, vandalism, and construction damage, unoccupied or vacant properties.

6.6.3 Leak continues for three (3) or more months

6.6.3.1 Leak adjustments will cover a two month consecutive period only.

6.6.4 The meter at said property, has been accessed, tampered with, or turned on/off by any one other than a City of Raleigh employee (including a licensed plumber) and resulting in further loss of water.