



The Corporation of the Town of Cochrane  
Water & Wastewater Services

## Water Leak Adjustment Policy

2011-05-09

*Approved at the regular council meeting May 9, 2011 by Resolution No. 21-2011*

### Billing Adjustments

The Water & Wastewater Services department may consider utility adjustments for the following reasons **ONLY**:

- Clerical billing or reading error on part of the Town
- Proven malfunction of the water meter (see information below)
- Water leak adjustment in accordance with approved policy

### If you Suspect a water leak

If you determine that your water bill has gradually been getting larger and does not decrease throughout several meter reading cycles, you may have a water leak. The Town of Cochrane's Water & Wastewater Services department has a water leak adjustment policy that may give you a credit on your utility bill, depending upon the nature of the water leak and if no water has flowed into the sanitary sewer system. If the **water leak** is determined to be your responsibility, you should repair the water leak and submit documentation of the repair (including receipts for labor, supplies and equipment) to the Water & Wastewater billing office along with the completed Billing **Water Leak Adjustment Request Form**. Once your documentation has been reviewed and approved, the documentation will be processed immediately and adjustment made if merited. The amount and time period to which the adjustment can be applied varies depending on the nature of the water leak. Any request for water leak adjustments must be made within 30 days of the water leak repair. If you have any questions, call Water & Wastewater Services billing office indicated on your bill.

### Meter Tests

You can request a test of your water meter. If the meter reading is accurate, a testing fee will be charged. Please see the Water leak Adjustment Policy for further information on meter testing. For any adjustments made, there shall be no cash refund. A credit will be applied to your utility account in the event an adjustment is given. **Any dispute of a meter reading does not waive your responsibility to pay a utility bill by its due date.'**

Please read the following before submitting a request for an adjustment to your bill for a water leak. The Adjustment Request form is available at the Water & Wastewater Services billing office (CTS office).

1. The need to adjust a water bill may be evident by a customer complaint of excessive billing or evidence of water leakage on the customer side of the meter. To qualify for a water leak adjustment, the water usage must be at least 100 percent above the average monthly usage and has not entered the municipal sanitary sewer system (i.e. water leaking commode/toilet). Average usage is defined as the average normal consumption for the previous twelve months.
2. It is the customer's responsibility to keep their plumbing system in good working order.
3. Only one water leak adjustment per customer is allowed, unless otherwise waived by action of the Municipal Council.



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4. The Water & Wastewater Services department will first determine that the meter has been read properly. 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 the last 12 month 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. A testing fee will also be added to the bill for any meter proven to be in proper operating order.
6. If the customer questions the accuracy of the meter, he may pay the bill in question, plus a testing fee at a rate to be set by Council from time to time. The Water & Wastewater Services department will remove the meter and have it tested in accordance with guidelines established for used meters by the American Water Works Association (AWWA). 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 at the Water & Wastewater Services department's cost.
7. If an adjustment of the customer's bill is warranted, the amount of the bill will be determined based upon the same billing period from the prior 12 month billing plus one-half of the overage. The Water & Wastewater Services department shall collect the average water bill and 50 percent of the excess water charges.
8. To be adjusted, the water leak must be readily evident to a reasonable person (such as water leaks that are underground, within walls, or under floors) or the water leak must occur while occupants are away from the premises.
9. Adjustments on water bills will **NOT** be made on the following:
  - a. Routine dripping faucets, water leaking commodes/toilets, or any type of faulty customer plumbing;
  - b. Premises left or abandoned or vacated without reasonable care for the plumbing system;
  - c. More than one occurrence per any 12-month period;
  - d. Filling of swimming pools;
  - e. Irrigation systems, watering of lawns, water-siphon operated pump/alliances; or
  - f. Bills claimed to be lost or not received.



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**g.** Homes under Construction/Major Renovation.

**h.** Customer did not take immediate steps, after detection of the water leak, to prevent further loss of water; and

**i.** Did not provide proof of the repair (receipts for any materials or services related to that repair).

**j.** Meter was tampered with in any way

10. The Water & Wastewater Services department shall not be obligated to make adjustments of any bills not contested within thirty (30) days from the billing date. An adjustment can only be made on the billing for a one billing period. In the event the water leak extends into a second billing period, the higher bill of the two can be adjusted.
11. The Water & Wastewater Services department shall be under no obligation to extend the discount or due date or the time for paying the bills because the customer disputes the amount of the bill.
12. All requests for billing adjustments must be received by in writing or in person at the Water & Wastewater Services billing office during regular business hours. A written form must be completed for each adjustment stating the necessary information about the water leak and verifying the water leak repair. Form letters are furnished by the Water & Wastewater Services billing office. The CFO for the Water & Wastewater Services department or his/her designee shall file a written report of the customer billing adjustment and the action of the staff regarding the adjustment.



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Water & Wastewater Services of the Corporation of the Town of Cochrane  
P.O. Box 640  
Cochrane, Ontario P0L 1C0  
(705) 272-4231 (billing office)  
[www.cochranewatersewer.com](http://www.cochranewatersewer.com)

## Application for Water leak Adjustment

The Water & Wastewater Services department of the Town of Cochrane allows a **ONE-TIME-ALLOWANCE** on customer bills for qualifying water leaks. To be eligible for an adjustment, **you must**:

1. NOT have received a previous
2. No adjustment for an irrigation water leak (any water leaks associated with irrigation system is not eligible)
3. No adjustment for builders for new construction
4. The bill exceeds the customer's "average bill" by two times; and
5. Immediate steps were taken, after detection of the water leak, to prevent further loss of water; and
6. No water from the water leak has entered the sanitary sewer system (toilets, etc)
7. Provide proof of the repair (receipts for any materials or services related to that repair). Adjustments must be requested within 30 days of the date of the water bill suspected of indicating a water leak, or within 30 days of when the Town of Cochrane's Water & Wastewater Services department is notified you of the suspected problem, whichever came first.

**IMPORTANT:** Please be aware that a large water leak may result in a water bill that could total SEVERAL THOUSAND DOLLARS! Small water leaks are typically less, but many small water leaks are often a sign of a problem water line and indicate that larger and more expensive water leaks are likely to happen in the future. Since the Water leak Adjustment is a one-time-only benefit, if you request and receive an adjustment for a water leak, large or small, you will NOT be eligible for another water leak adjustment if you have a second or larger water leak in the future. If a service line is prone to future water leaks, the best way to reduce the risk of a second water leak is not to patch or "spot-fix" the break, but to replace the entire line. Because each



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circumstance is unique, we strongly suggest that you contact your repair provider for professional advice given your particular circumstance.

If you determine you qualify and wish to apply for a Water leak Adjustment, please complete this form and return it to the Water & Wastewater billing office as soon as possible with the necessary receipts or support documentation. **NO ACTION CAN BE TAKEN TO PROCESS YOUR ADJUSTMENT UNTIL INFORMATION ON THE COMPLETED APPLICATION FORM IS RECEIVED AND ADJUSTMENT IS APPROVED BY CFO for the Water & Wastewater Services Department of the Corporation of the Town of Cochrane.**

**APPLICATION FOR WATER LEAK ADJUSTMENT CREDIT**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Service Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Customer Account Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Date you first noticed your water leak: \_\_\_\_\_ Date the water leak was repaired: \_\_\_\_\_

Where was the water leak located? (Please indicate below)

Inside the building  Between the building and the water meter

Have you ever received a previous water leak adjustment?

NO  YES, approximate year \_\_\_\_\_

Have you attached a receipt/documentation for the water leak repairs?  YES  NO\*\*

\*\*If "No", please complete the "No Repair Receipt/Documentation" form enclosed with this application. Note: Copies of receipts documenting the repair or a "No Repair Receipt/Documentation" form MUST be returned with your completed application, or the application will be returned to you. \*\*

Please describe how your water leak was identified or provide any additional facts you think might be helpful (or attach an extra page) \_\_\_\_\_

How much is your total water bill? \_\_\_\_\_

We suggest that you pay at least the amount of your "average" bill at this time, and pay the current amount for any future bills until the adjustment has been processed including the administrative fee. The balance due after your Water leak Adjustment will typically be higher than your usual bill amount.

By signing this request, I certify that I understand the terms and conditions of the Water & Wastewater Services Department of the Corporation of the Town of Cochrane's Water leak Adjustment Policy.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Customer Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name



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**Note:**

- If you haven't received a water bill through the date your water leak was repaired, we will process your claim after your next bill. It takes an average of 30 days to process customer Water leak Adjustment claims. Your patience during this process will be appreciated. If you qualify, you will not receive any delinquency charges while we process your claim. However you may still receive a notice as the system generates them automatically.
- If you pay by automatic bank draft or electronic payment and cannot pay the full payment immediately, you may call (705) 272-4232 to request to be temporarily removed from our automatic debit file. We require notice at least 2 weeks before your payment due date. You may reapply after your claim has been processed.

**Methods for Adjustments:**

- Adjustments would be based on the customer's "average bill."
- The customer would pay the amount of their "average bill" plus all water used over their average usage calculated at the prevailing bulk purchase rate. If the usage crossed two months of billings, two minimums would be paid.

**No Repair Receipt/ Documentation Form**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Town/Province/Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_

Customer Account Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Please explain where your water line broke (attach additional pages if necessary)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Briefly describe repair \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

If repair parts were used for this repair or a commercial establishment performed the repair why are receipts not available?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Customer Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



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**REQUEST FOR BILLING ADJUSTMENT CREDIT**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Service Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Customer Account Number: \_\_\_\_\_

**REASON FOR REQUESTING BILLING ADJUSTMENT:**

Clerical Billing Error  Suspected Meter Malfunction\*  Water leak\*\*

Other (Please Explain): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\* For Suspected Meter Malfunction, Water Department will contact you regarding testing and/or replacement.

\*\*For Water leak, Please complete an **Application for Water leak Adjustment** Form

Have you ever received a previous billing adjustment?

NO

YES, approximate year \_\_\_\_\_

**For Water leaks:**



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Have you attached a receipt/documentation for the water leak repairs?  YES  NO\*\*

\*\*If "No", please complete the "No Repair Receipt/Documentation" form and "Application for Water leak Adjustment" form and submit with this application. Note: Copies of receipts documenting the repair or a "No Repair Receipt/Documentation" form MUST be returned with your completed application, or the application will be returned to you. \*\*

**Water Leak Adjustment Credit Worksheet 2011**

This water leak credit should adjust for approximately 1/2 the water overage for one billing period of water leak occurrence.

**Account Information:**

Account Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Service Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Owner's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Owner since (year): \_\_\_\_\_

Billing Period of Water leak: \_\_\_\_\_ Recalculation Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Credit Calculation:**

1 Water consumption, in gallons, during billing period of water leak occurrence:

\_\_\_\_\_

2 Non-water leak water volume\*: \_\_\_\_\_

\* - If owner has occupied for at least 12 months, insert water consumption volume for the average of the last 12 months  
- If owner has occupied for less than 12 months, insert volume of highest water consumption within owner's occupancy  
- If this is the owner's very first bill, insert previous owners' annual average should it be the same type of business (i.e.: hair salon, motel)

3 Water leak Volume (line 1 - line 2): =

\_\_\_\_\_



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4	Adjusted Water leak Volume (line 3 x .50):		_____
5	Credit (line 4 x . \$ per gallon):		_____

<b>Water Bill Calculation:</b>	
Customer's original TOTAL bill during billing period of water leak occurrence:	_____
Minus Credit:	_____
Minus any late charge which accrued corresponding to the billing period of water leak occurrence:	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> applied and reversed from next billing cycle	
New adjusted bill:	_____

Form completed by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Clerk's Signature

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
CFO's Signature

This form was created on April 4, 2011 approved for use with the Water leak Detection Policy and related forms approved by council with resolution # \_\_\_\_\_