Winnipeg

CITY OF WINNIPEG POLICY NO. WW-004

POLICY TITLE	**ADOPTED BY**	**EFFECTIVE DATE**
Water Leak Credit Policy	City Council	August 1, 2017
ORIGIN / AUTHORITY	**CITY POLICY NO**	**MOST RECENT CONSOLIDATION**
Standing Policy Committee on Water, Waste and Environment	WW-004	

1. Purpose:

The purpose of the Water Leak Credit Policy is to provide financial assistance to single-family residential and non-profit customers who receive a high utility bill for water and sewer services, as a result of a water leak within their house or building.

The policy does not cover:

A. water loss from theft or vandalism

B. unexplained water use, or

C. intentional water use (e.g., lawn/garden watering, landscaping, building construction, swimming pools).

2. Definitions:

2.1 "water leak" means unintentional water loss caused by broken and/or malfunctioning plumbing fixtures and/or pipes (within the building, at any point downstream of the water meter).

3. Water Leak Credit Policy

To be eligible for the credit, the applicant must meet all of the following conditions:

3.1 Applicant/property type

A. The applicant:

i. must be responsible for the utility account

ii. must be a residential customer or a non-profit customer (i.e. incorporated without share capital, does not seek profit and does not distribute excess income to its members, in the form of dividends or otherwise), and

iii. must not have received a credit in the past under other policies related to high water bills (e.g., this Policy, the Adjustment Policy for High Bills for Water and Sewer Services, Financial Hardship Adjustments).

iv. must not have been convicted of a violation under Part 9 or 10 of the Water By-law or under Part 12 of the Sewer By-law

v. must not have failed to respond to a request for a water meter reading for more than 12 months during the period the leak occurred

B. The property:

i. must not have been unoccupied and/or vacant for more than seven days, without the water being shut off at the internal shut-off valve during the period the leak occurred.

ii. must not have had an unmetered water line or open by-pass line in the past five years

3.2 Water use/leak

A. The leak must have caused water use to be greater than two times the customer's normal water use for a similar period from the previous year.

B. The applicant must have the leak repaired and provide proof of repair (e.g., plumber's invoice with explanation of repair, receipts for parts along with photos showing completed repairs).

C. If the City requests access to the property to conduct an inspection, the applicant must comply within 30 days of the date of the request. The City has the right to inspect the repairs.

3.3 Application

A. The City must receive the application within 120 calendar days after the applicant was initially notified of increased water use. The applicant will not qualify for this policy for water use recorded after the notification date. Notification may include:

i. receipt of a bill based on an actual meter reading

ii. a phone call or answering machine message left by the utility indicating that water use has increased or a water meter reading is high, or

iii. a leak notification notice left on-site or mailed by a designated employee

3.4 Credit calculation

The applicant will be required to pay:

A. two times (2x) their normal water use, and

B. two times (2x) their normal water use for all periods where meter readings were not received.

4. Notice to Applicants

A. The Water and Waste Department shall mail a decision letter which shall indicate the amount of approved credit (if any) or an explanation why no credit has been approved.

5. Appeal Process

A. Applicants who are not approved for a Water Leak Credit or who feel the approved Credit is not consistent with this Policy, may appeal this decision. The appeal process is two tiered.

5.1 Internal Review

A. Upon receipt of an approval or denial letter, applicants who feel the approved credit is not consistent with this Policy may request their application be reviewed by the Supervisor responsible for this Policy.

B. The applicant must indicate the criteria under which they feel their application was not correctly evaluated. Any other criteria shall not be reviewed or considered. The applicant may provide any additional documentation that they feel is necessary to support their application.

C. Upon completion of the Internal Review, the Supervisor shall mail a decision letter which must advise applicants they may appeal the decision to the Utility Credit Review Committee within 30 days by mailing an appeal to:

Utility Credit Review Committee
Water and Waste Department
510 Main St
Winnipeg, MB R3B 3M1

D. A non-refundable appeal fee established by Council must accompany all appeals.

E. Applicants who feel their needs will not be adequately met by a written appeal may request their appeal be made in person to the Committee.

5.2 Utility Credit Review Committee

A. The Utility Credit Review Committee includes three members as follows:

i. Manager, Finance and Administration, Water and Waste Department

ii. Manager, Customer Service, Water and Waste Department

iii. Third manager appointed by the Director, Water and Waste Department. This member may be appointed for a single meeting or for a set period of time determined by the Director.

B. The Utility Credit Review Committee must meet at least quarterly. Appeals must be received two weeks prior to a scheduled meeting to give the administration time to prepare information for review by the Committee. Any requests received outside of this time frame would be reviewed at the following meeting.

5.3 Committee Decisions

A. The Committee must send a formal letter to the applicant within 30 days of the Committee meeting outlining the Committee's decision.

B. If the Committee decides that a credit is warranted based on the review of information, the approved credit amount must be consistent with the criteria as outlined in this Policy.

6. Responsibilities

6.1 Responsibility of the Director, Water and Waste Department

A. The Director must:

i. Ensure that completed Water Leak Credit applications are received and reviewed.

ii. If applications meet all eligibility criteria, ensure that customer utility accounts are credited with approved Water Leak Credit.

iii. Ensure that applicants are properly notified of decisions in respect of their applications for the Water Leak Credit and advised of their rights to appeal.

iv. Appoint the chair and members of the Utility Review Committee and ensure that appeals are conducted according to this Policy.

6.2 Responsibility of the Applicant

In order to receive a Water Leak Credit, the applicant must:

A. Submit a completed application form along with all required documentation

B. Make arrangements for the City to inspect the property if requested

7. Appendices

7.1 Appendix A – Sample Credit Calculation

Appendix A – Sample Credit Calculation (*m^3 = cubic metres)*

The following information is provided for illustration purposes only and assumes the prior bill was based on an actual meter reading. Following the sample calculation is no guarantee of the amount of credit you may receive.

Based on the following information:

	Meter Reading Dates	**Number of Days in Bill Period**	**Total Water Use (cubic metres)**	**Average Daily Water Use Calculation (cubic metres)**
Normal Bill	January 2 - March 31, 2015	88 days	43.7 m^3	0.50/day [(a)] (43.7 / 88 days)
Leak Bill	January 3 - April 2, 2016	89 days [(c)]	98.1 m^3	1.10/day [(b)] (98.1 / 89 days)

Perform the following calculations:

Take Average Daily Water Use Calculation for Leak Bill	1.10 m^3 [(b)]
Subtract Two times (2X) Average Daily Water Use Calculation for the Normal Bill (0.50 m^3 [(a)] X 2)	1.0 m^3
The difference is the daily amount eligible for the Water Leak Credit	0.10 m^3
Multiply by Number of Days in Bill Period for the Leak Bill	89
Total Water Use eligible for Water Leak Credit	8.9 m^3
Multiply by current water and sewer rates (2016 rates)	$4.03
Total Eligible Water Leak Credit	**$35.87**