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DEPARTMENTAL OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS

 CITY OF RALEIGH, N.C.	MANUAL Departmental Operating Instructions			
SUBJECT Customer Leak Adjustment	NUMBER 100-1109	REV 7.0	EFFECTIVE DATE 6/16/2020	PAGE OF 1 4
	SUPERSEDES N/A	PREPARED BY Customer Care and Billing Division		APPROVED BY Robert Massengill

1.0 PURPOSE:

1.1 To provide an opportunity for water 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 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

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6/16/20	7.0	Made updates to leak adjustment types, values, definitions and procedures	All
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3.0 ORGANIZATIONS AFFECTED

3.1 Raleigh Water Meters Division and Customer Care and Billing Division

4.0 DEFINITIONS

- 4.1 **Leak Adjustment** – Leak adjustments are financial adjustments to water and/or waste water usage charges on a customer’s utility bill caused by a leak on the customer’s side of the meters or exceptional, unexplained usage that has been verified by a plumber and/or Meter Operations staff.
- 4.2 **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.
- 4.3 **Explained/non-accessible leaks** – Examples of non-accessible leaks include but are not limited to underground lines, pipes within walls, water heaters, etc.
- 4.4 **Exceptional, unexplained usage** – Water 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, the cause cannot be determined, and the usage returns to the monthly average.
- 4.5 **Consumption or usage** – These terms are synonymous and mean the amount of water or waste water volumetric use during a billing period.
- 4.6 **Appeals Officer** – Director or Assistant Director within the Raleigh Water Department who have subject matter expertise in meter and billing operations and are designated to review and provide sound decisions for exceptional, unexplained usage and determination of the leak adjustment
- 4.7 **Excessive Water Bill** – A water bill in which the amount of water usage exceeds by at least 100% the average water usage by the customer at that location during the twelve-month period immediately preceding the complaint.
- 4.8 **Monthly Average** – Calculated by taking the prior 12 months of bills for a customer at the same location, adding them together and dividing by 12 for usage prior to the high bill; if the customer has resided at the location for fewer than 12 months, the average citywide customer water usage will be used.

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5.0 POLICY

- 5.1 When a customer notifies the City of Raleigh about a higher than usual water 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 caused by a leak that occurred on the customer's side of the meter. In order to be eligible for the relief provided by this policy, the customer's water usage, in a single billing cycle, must exceed the monthly average by at least twice. Leak adjustment will be based on the type of leak and all additional requirements of this policy must be met.
- 5.2 If a leak occurs on a preventable/accessible water pipe (toilet leak, leaking faucet, 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 monthly average. There will be no adjustments made for waste water charges.
- 5.3 If a leak occurs in a non-accessible area such as underground lines, pipes within walls, water heaters, the water and wastewater consumption charges will be adjusted to double the monthly average.
- 5.4 If hoses are left on over a period, or if water is stolen from a hose bib, the wastewater charges may be adjusted to the monthly average and all water consumption will be billed at tier one for residential customers.
- 5.5 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, the customer may request a financial adjustment with the City of Raleigh in writing.
- 5.6 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.)
- 5.7 Financial adjustments associated to billed usage will be allowed one (1) time per year for the two highest billing cycles per customer's Account/Premise.
 - 5.7.1 Should a customer have two leaks within a one-year period, they may elect to have the greater of the two adjustments applied to their account.
 - 5.7.2 Leak adjustments will not exceed \$1,000 for residential customers without the approval of the Appeals Officer.
 - 5.7.3 Base, watershed and infrastructure replacement fees will not be adjusted in any case.
- 5.8 Swimming pools that are filled one time between the months of March and October may receive a one-time only adjustment of their wastewater consumption back to their monthly average. Customers must submit a leak adjustment request with the date of the pool filling. (Community pools are excluded from this)
- 5.9 If a leak was caused by a third party, and is reimbursable or is covered by insurance, then no adjustment will be made by the City of Raleigh.
- 5.10 For single family residential customers who are not on tiered rates and have an accessible leak, an adjustment will be made to water only for double the monthly average.
- 5.11 No adjustments will be granted where the following situations exist:
 - 5.11.1 Usage above the customer's monthly average is due to seasonal usage such as watering of sod, gardening, washing vehicles, etc.
 - 5.11.2 City of Raleigh staff have notified customer of high-water usage and repair is not made within two (2) billing cycles.

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6.0 PROCEDURES

- 6.1 Water leak adjustments must be requested by contacting the Customer Care and Billing Division and must be accompanied by a plumber's receipt or other proof of the repair unless related to hose bib or theft.
- 6.2 After all documentation has been received by the Customer Care and Billing Division, a determination is made regarding what type of leak this is/is not and if the leak is adjustable or not. A notification in writing will be sent to the account holder stating approval or denial of the leak along with relevant details.
- 6.3 The determination may require contact with repair company/plumber. If the appropriate information is not provided for verification, the leak adjustment may be denied.
- 6.4 Except for a hose bib or theft, 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 Meters Division.
- 6.5 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.
 - 6.5.1 If payment is not received on time, the customer is subject to all current and applicable collection processes, and procedures, including but not limited to disconnection of service.