



TOWN OF THREE HILLS

POLICY # 940

DOMESTIC UTILITY RELIEF PROGRAM

Adopted by Council on: December 11, 2023
Resolution No.: 283-2023

1. POLICY STATEMENT

- 1.1. The Three Hills Domestic Utility Relief Program provides metered residential and not-for-profit customers an opportunity to request financial assistance in the form of a leak adjustment for unusually high water/wastewater bills resulting from leaks in their plumbing system, provided such leak has been repaired.
- 1.2. Though the customer is responsible to repair leaks in their plumbing system, it is recognized that a high water/wastewater bill resulting from an unintentional water leak can present financial hardship to a customer.

2. PURPOSE

- 2.1. To outline the circumstances under which a residential or not-for-profit customer can apply for a water/wastewater billing adjustment due to a leak, and to outline how the leak adjustment credit will be calculated.

3. AUTHORITY

- 3.1. The authority for this policy is by resolution of the Council of the Town of Three Hills.
- 3.2. The Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) is accountable and responsible for the development, evaluation and implementation of this policy.
- 3.3. The CAO is authorized to exercise appropriate managerial judgement to take such actions as may be necessary to achieve the intent of this policy.

4. DEFINITIONS

- 4.1. Whenever the singular masculine gender is used in this policy, the same shall include the feminine and neutral gender whenever context requires.
- 4.2. In this policy, unless the context otherwise requires:
 - 4.2.1. "Average Monthly Consumption" means the one-year's total water consumption preceding the high utility bill for the subject premises, divided by twelve (12) months.

- 4.2.2. "Credit" means the leak forgiveness credit on this property. Credits are applied to utility accounts and not refunded to customers.
- 4.2.3. "Customer" means the owner or occupant of a premises to which utility services are provided.
- 4.2.4. "Leak" means an unintentional water loss caused by a broken or otherwise malfunctioning plumbing system of fixture.
- 4.2.5. "Not-for-profit" means a provincially registered, at the time of the leak, not-for-profit organization.
- 4.2.6. "Residential" means properties assessed as residential property by assessment property classification.
- 4.2.7. "Utility" means water or wastewater services or charges.

5. SCOPE

- 5.1. This policy applies to residential utility customers and provincially registered not-for-profit organizations located within the Town of Three Hills.
- 5.2. Commercial, industrial and institutional utility customers (as identified by assessment property classification) and income producing residential rental property owners are not eligible under the policy.
- 5.3. This policy does not cover unexplainable water losses.
- 5.4. This policy does not cover disputes involving water readings or water meter accuracy. For more information on these, refer to the Town's Water and Wastewater Services Bylaw.

6. POLICY

- 6.1. To be considered for a utility bill adjustment:
 - 6.1.1. The customer must complete and submit a Water Bill Adjustment Request Form to the Town within twenty (20) days of utility bills being issued and increased water usage being identified.
 - 6.1.2. The customer must make a reasonable effort to locate the leak and initiate repairs within ten (10) calendar days of notification of increased water usage. To participate in the program, the customer must, at its own sole cost:
 - 6.1.2.1. Carry out all actions required by Town staff for compliance with the policy,
 - 6.1.2.2. Pay all costs for repairing the leak, such as parts and labour, and
 - 6.1.2.3. Pay the portion of all fees and charges owing but not eliminated by the credit.

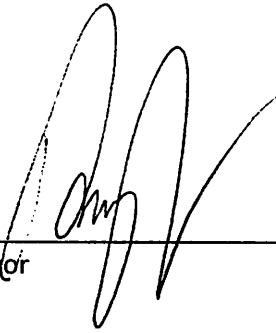
- 6.1.3. The customer shall notify the Town of completion of repairs within ten (10) calendar days after the date of the final repair(s). The customer shall retain any receipts for the repairs and, if requested, provide copies of the same to the Town.
- 6.1.4. The customer's utility billing account must be in good standing at the time of submission of a Water Bill Adjustment Request Form.
- 6.1.5. The customer must be able to explain the increased water usage.
- 6.1.6. Water consumption for the billing period must exceed three (3) times the customer's average monthly consumption for the previous twelve (12) months and be greater than forty (40) cubic metres.
- 6.1.7. The customer must not have had a leak adjustment credit applied to the account in the five (5) years immediately preceding the current request. If a credit is granted by the Town, the customer will not be eligible for another leak adjustment credit for a five (5) year period.
- 6.1.8. If a water/wastewater bill adjustment is granted by the Town, a credit will be applied to the customer's utility account for future billings.
- 6.1.9. The credit will be calculated as 50% of the actual metered water usage in excess of the average monthly consumption for the preceding twelve (12) months. The credit will apply to both water and wastewater charges for the billing period, as applicable.

Example 1		
<u>Period</u>	<u>Consumption (m3)</u>	<u>Bill Amount</u>
Previous 12 months	18	\$85.50
High volume bill	100	\$475.00
Does month with high volume bill consumption exceed the previous 12 month average by more than 300%.		Yes
Adjustment Calculation		
Accidental usage		\$475.00
Normal usage – previous 12 months		\$85.50
Amount exceeding normal usage		\$389.50
Adjustment amount (50% of amount exceeding normal usage)		\$194.75
Customer will receive a credit of \$194.75 on their utility account.		

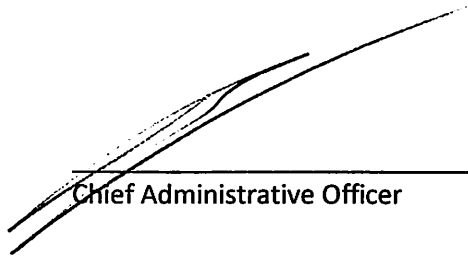
Example 2		
<u>Period</u>	<u>Consumption (m3)</u>	<u>Bill Amount</u>
Previous 12 months	30	\$142.50
High volume bill	400	\$1,900.00
Does month with high volume bill consumption exceed the previous 12 month average by more than 300%.		Yes
Adjustment Calculation		
Accidental usage		\$1,900.00
Normal usage – previous 12 months		\$142.50
Amount exceeding normal usage		\$1,757.50
Adjustment amount (50% of amount exceeding normal usage)		\$878.75
<i>Customer will receive a credit of \$750.00 (policy maximum) on their utility account.</i>		

- 6.1.10. The maximum total credit amount for water and wastewater charges available per application is \$750.
- 6.1.11. Credits shall only be issued after repairs have been completed and Town staff have verified that water usage at the premises has returned to normal.
- 6.1.12. There is no extension of the due date or the time for paying water/wastewater bills because of a pending water/wastewater bill adjustment request. Customers are advised to pay the entire bill amount due within the normal payment period or enter into payment arrangements for the excessive amount in order to remain in good standing on all current billings.
- 6.1.13. Staff shall deny a credit to any customer who has:
 - 6.1.13.1. Usage above the customer’s average monthly consumption is due to activities including watering of sod, gardening, filling swimming pools or whirlpools and washing vehicles are ineligible, as this represents water knowingly used by the customer.
 - 6.1.13.2. Leaks in unoccupied and/or vacant premises (for 72 hours or more). For extended absences, customers should consider shutting off the water supply (with the exception where water is used for heating purposes) and draining all the pipes and appliances.
 - 6.1.13.3. Water loss due to theft, vandalism or construction damage will not be covered under this policy. Resolving these issues is the responsibility of the customer.

6.1.13.4. Engaged in or taken advantage of fraudulent or misleading behavior relating to the program, such as tampering with a meter or supplying misinformation.



Mayor



Chief Administrative Officer

Effective On:	January 1, 2024	283-2023
Review Date:	January 1, 2027	