

# **Leak Adjustment Policy**

Please read the following before submitting a request for an adjustment to your bill for a leak. The Adjustment Request form is available for download via a link at the bottom of this page.

1. The need to adjust a utility bill may be evident by a customer complaint of excessive billing or evidence of leakage on the customer side of the meter. To qualify for a leak adjustment, the water usage must be at least 100 percent above the average quarterly usage and has not entered the municipal sanitary sewer system (i.e. leaking commode/toilet). Average usage is defined as the average normal consumption for the prior three months.
2. It is the customer's responsibility to keep their plumbing system in good working order.
3. Only one leak adjustment per customer per year (12 months of the customer's payment history) is allowed, unless otherwise waived by action of the City Council.
4. The Water 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 utility bill in question, plus a testing fee at a rate to be set by the City from time to time. The Water 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 City'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 City shall collect the average water bill and 50 percent of the excess water charges.
8. To be adjusted, the leak must be readily evident to a reasonable person (such as leaks that are underground, within walls, or under floors) or the 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, 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.
  - g. Homes under Construction/Major Renovation
10. The City 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 leak extends into a second billing period, the higher bill of the two can be adjusted.
11. The City 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 City Offices during regular business hours. A written form must be completed for each adjustment stating the necessary information about the leak and verifying the leak repair. Form letters are furnished by the City.

The City Superintendent or his designee shall file a written report of the customer billing adjustment and the action of the staff regarding the adjustment.

## **Policy on Sewer Stoppages**

If a sewer stoppage or backup occurs, the customer should first call a licensed plumber. To minimize the backup, it is also strongly recommended that the customer refrain from using any facilities or appliances that discharge to the sanitary sewer until a plumber has determined the cause of the stoppage. If the stoppage is determined to be in the City sewer main, the plumber should report this to the City immediately. The City is responsible only for the portion of Municipal owned sanitary sewer system. Individual sewer leads onto the property from point of connection to the municipal main are the responsibility of the property owner.

# **Billing Adjustments**

The City of St Clair may consider utility adjustments for the following reasons **ONLY**:

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

## **If you Suspect a leak**

If you determine that your utility bill has gradually been getting larger and does not decrease throughout several meter reading cycles, you may have a water leak. The City of St Clair has a leak adjustment policy that may give you a break on your utility bill, depending upon the nature of the leak and if no water has flowed into the sanitary sewer system.

If the **leak** is determined to be your responsibility, you should repair the leak and submit documentation of the repair (including receipts for labor, supplies and equipment) to the City Offices along with the completed Billing **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 leak. Any request for leak adjustments must be made within 30 days of the leak repair. If you have any questions, call City Hall at 810-329-7121

## **Leaks in the Municipal Water System may be from the following sources:**

- At fire hydrants
- At water meters
- In interior waterlines (homeowner is responsible for any leaks found after the meter connection)
- In the waterlines from the meter to the house where meter pits are installed (City is responsible from curb stop/exterior shut-off to meter pit, homeowner is responsible from meter pit to the home and home interior)
- In distribution lines from the curb stop/exterior shut-off to the meter (also known as water lead these repairs are the homeowner's responsibility)
- In transmission lines (these repairs are the City's responsibility)

## **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 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.**

City of St Clair  
547 N. Carney Drive  
St Clair, MI 48079  
(810) 329-7121 (main) (810) 397-7997 (fax)  
[www.cityofstclair.com](http://www.cityofstclair.com)

### Application for Leak Adjustment

The City of St Clair offers a **ONE-TIME-ALLOWANCE PER YEAR FROM LAST ADJUSTMENT** on customer bills for qualifying water leaks.

To be eligible for an adjustment, **you must**:

1. NOT have received a previous adjustment -one undetected leak per year from last adjustment (for example -received adjustment on 2/28/10 will not receive another until after 2/28/11).
2. No adjustment for an irrigation leak (any 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 three times; and
5. Immediate steps were taken, after detection of the leak, to prevent further loss of water; and
6. No water from the 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 City of St Clair notified you of the suspected problem, whichever came first.

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

APPLICATON FOR LEAK ADJUSTMENT CREDIT

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

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

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

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

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

Where was the leak located? (Please indicate below)

Inside the house     Between the house and the water meter     In the irrigation system

Have you ever received a previous leak adjustment?     NO  
 YES, approximate year \_\_\_\_\_

Have you attached a receipt/documentation for the 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. \*\*

Are you a tenant at this property?     NO     YES

Landlord's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Landlord's mailing address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Please describe how your 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 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 City of St Clair Leak Adjustment Policy.

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Customer Signature

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Print Name

**Note:**

- If you haven't received a water bill through the date your leak was repaired, we will process your claim after your next bill. It takes an average of 30 days to process customer Leak Adjustment claims. Your patience during this process will be appreciated. If you qualify, a pay delay will be put on your account so you will not receive any delinquency notices while we process your claim.
- If you pay by automatic bank draft or electronic payment and cannot pay the full payment immediately, you may call (810) 329-7121 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.
- Questions? Call - (810) 329-7121

**No Repair Receipt/ Documentation Form**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip 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

