

CITY OF PATASKALA UTILITY DEPARTMENT SEWER USAGE ADJUSTMENT POLICY

The purpose of this policy is to provide a basis for the City of Pataskala Utility Department to adjust high bills caused by unexpected leaks, leaking equipment, vandalism, malicious acts or extraordinary conditions on the users' property under normal due diligence. The reason for providing a policy for reducing these bills is to relieve possible financial hardship on residents and businesses. The intent is to provide some relief for catastrophic losses of water but not high uses caused by lack of maintenance or a change in activity at the home or business. Adjustments or modifications to account balances shall be determined based upon the facts and circumstances provided and will be at the discretion of City of Pataskala management. The City will not authorize account adjustments for excessive water usage.

The City of Pataskala Utility Department will repair meters and the cost of such repairs caused by ordinary wear and tear will be borne by the City of Pataskala. Repair of any damage to a meter resulting from the carelessness of the owner of the premises, owner's agent, or tenant, or from the negligence of any one of them to properly secure and protect same, including any damage that may result from allowing a water meter to become frozen or to be injured from the presence of hot water or steam in the meter, shall be paid for by the customer or the owner of the premises.

The service line from the main to the curb stop will be maintained and kept in repair and when worn out be replaced at the expense of the City of Pataskala. The property owner shall maintain the service line from the discharge side curb stop to the point of use. If a consumer fails to repair a leaking or broken service line from curb to point of metering or use within such time (as may appear reasonable to the City of Pataskala Utility Department after notification has been served on the consumer by the City of Pataskala Utility Department) the water will be shut off and will not be turned on again until the repairs have been completed.

The customer is responsible from the discharge side to the house including plumbing inside of the house as well as outside water faucets and irrigation systems and the shut-off valve inside the dwelling. It is the customer's responsibility to keep the meter accessible for meter reading and repair.

A. LEAK ADJUSTMENTS FOR LOSS TO SEWER BILLS

Threshold Considerations

Leak adjustments for the sewer portion of a water and sewer bills will be considered when all of the following threshold conditions have been met:

An excessive use of water has been detected due to a possible leak at a Resident's property.

Water use volume is over the previous 12 month average or the previous full billing period if no history exists.

The City of Pataskala Utility Department requires the following application process in the event excessive usages have been identified.

Application Process

Account holders may apply for a sewer usage adjustment by fully completing a "City of Pataskala Utility Department Sewer Consumer Adjustment Form" and return to the City of Pataskala Utility Department. The City of Pataskala Utility Supervisor will review the sewer usage form, account, history, and provided documentation with the Utility Director. Approvals/Disapprovals will be determined within 30 days of receipt of completed form and documentation.

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A copy of the approval/denial by the City of Pataskala Utility Department will be mailed to the Account Holder. All adjustments must be approved by the Utilities Director acting Utility Director or his/her designee.

The Customer is responsible for payment until adjustment is processed. Late fees and penalties will be applicable until balance is paid and will not be credited back when/if approved. The following items listed on the "City of Pataskala Utility Department Sewer Consumer Adjustment Form" must be completed in their entirety or the Account Holder request will be denied:

1. Name of customer (and property owner if different)
2. Phone number of customer (and property owner if different)
3. Address of property where leak occurred
4. Owner occupied or rental?
5. Was property occupied at the time the leak occurred?
6. Date customer became aware of leak
7. Date leak was repaired
8. Copies of repair invoices or receipts
9. Letter of explanation of how the leak occurred
10. Sketch of the exact location of the leak
11. Photographs of the leaking pipe (if available)
12. Authorization for a Utility representative to inspect the property where the leak occurred

In order to avoid a late penalty while the water and sewer bill review is pending, the Account Holder must pay the bill by the due date. If the City of Pataskala Utility Department deems a sewer adjustment is appropriate, the City of Pataskala Utility Department may then be directed to make the adjustment during the next billing cycle. The Account Holder must not be delinquent (only the current month usage is owed). An approved payment plan agreed upon by Account Holder and the City of Pataskala Utility Department does not constitute delinquency.

A field check by a City of Pataskala Utility Department Technician will be made **if deemed necessary** to verify that the water/sewer leak was repaired and to obtain the current meter reading. High water use resulting from any other incident is not eligible for any sewer adjustment. Examples of water usage not eligible for a sewer adjustment due to the City of Pataskala still treating all water usage at the wastewater treatment plant are as follows:

- Leaking toilets and faucets
- Leaking water softener
- Leaking hot water heater
- Faulty humidifier on furnace
- Accidental water use
- Any other plumbing inside or outside the house
- The installation of updated or new City of Pataskala Meters

In order for the City of Pataskala Utility Department to consider a sewer adjustment a field technician must verify the water/sewer leak if deemed necessary and the Account Holder (or third party such as renter, contractor, utility company, etc) must provide written documentation in the form of a bill with a detailed and itemized statement of repairs from a licensed plumber or from the customer requesting the adjustment that provides documentation that leak has been repaired (if leak identified).

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If homeowner fixes leak, *itemized* receipts or invoices for all materials used is required. Failure to provide itemized receipts may not constitute an allowable adjustment.

The City of Pataskala Utility Department will not consider lack of proper maintenance or negligence by Account Holder (or third party such as renter, contractor, utility company, etc) which culminates in a water loss as being appropriate for approving a sewer adjustment in the bill.

Potential Sewer Adjustment Opportunities

The City of Pataskala Utility Department assumes no responsibility for damage, repairs, or inspections necessitated by leaks or excessive water usage. If all thresholds items have been met, leak adjustments will be issued as follows:

The City of Pataskala Utility Department will calculate the customer's most recent twelve month average water usage. If the leak is corrected immediately after notification but results in high usage within two consecutive months, the City of Pataskala Utility Department will have the ability to adjust sewer usage only up to the determined excessive usage amount not exceeding the two month cumulative billing period. No adjustments to excessive water usage will be authorized or granted.

Sewer Charges Adjustment Policy

If the leak is shown to not have entered the sewer system, the Account Holder has the following option for sewer adjustments:

The excessive sewer usage above the average will be adjusted off after all threshold considerations have been met and approved by the Director of Utilities or his/her designee. As a result, the Account Holder will be billed for the entire usage amount and is responsible for payment until the requested adjustment has been approved and/or denied by the City. One adjustment is allowed per year if authorized by the City of Pataskala Utility Department. However, under extraordinary conditions it is at the discretion of the Utility Director ~~and~~ or his/her designee to approve or deny more than one allowable adjustment per year, if all threshold considerations are met. Property owner signature is required.

If a property experiences multiple water usage issues over a period of time, the Utility Director reserves the right to bill the utility account the full sewer use charges for the metered water usage thus superseding the **Threshold Considerations** described earlier within this policy.

B. SEWER ADJUSTMENT ON SWIMMING POOL FILL

Private swimming pools meeting the requirement of at least 24 inches deep, a surface area of at least 100 square feet, and a permanently equipped re-circulating system shall be eligible for a manual sewer adjustment. An adjustment is allowable for sewer only. One adjustment for one bill per calendar year will be allowed (January 1 – December 31st). The sewer usage will be adjusted to the beginning and ending meter readings associated with filling the swimming pool.

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C. UTILITY ACCOUNT CREDIT POLICY

The Utility Department may be required to adjust customer accounts based on unintended inaccuracies or errors incurred during normal business operations. The Utility Department Supervisor shall have the discretion to credit customer accounts if an inaccuracy has been determined. At the end of each month, the Utility Department Supervisor shall generate a computerized listing of all credits to customer accounts for review and approval by the Utility Director or his/her designee.