HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY PUBLIC UTILITIES DEPARTMENT

REFUND POLICY/PROCEDURES

Purpose:

Establish a guideline for determination of payment refunds to customers of the Public Utilities Department.

Authority:

Board of County Commissioners Policy #03.04.01.01

Procedures:

A. The Department Director or his/her designee is authorized to approve refunds under the following circumstances:

Capacity Fees and Meter Installation Charges Paid Twice

Customer pays water capacity fees, wastewater capacity fees and meter installation charges and through oversight pays fees a second time on the same property. This may occur when a developer pays fees for an entire subdivision and the builder subsequently pays fees for one or more of the lots in the subdivision in order to pull building permits.

A refund shall be made to the most recent payor unless both payor agree in writing to a different receiver of the refund. The refund request must be in writing and must include fully documented proof of the duplicate payment.

Capacity Fees Are Paid But Service is Not Available

Customer pays capacity fees based on a statement from the County that service is available. The County determines upon field investigation that service is not available or is available only with additional costs for the extension of water and/or wastewater mains.

A refund of all fees paid may be made without written request from the customer.

Capacity or User Fees Due are Calculated in Error By the Department and The Customer Overpays

Customer overpays fees as a result of the Department's error in calculating fees due.

A refund of any overpayment of fees may be made to the customer without a written request from the customer.

Connection To The County's Water and/or Wastewater System Is Not Possible After Capacity Fees Have Been Paid

A refund of all fees paid, less any costs incurred by the County, will be made upon written request by the customer if the fees were paid as a pre-condition to purchase and a purchase agreement could not be consummated, or if the land for which the capacity fee was paid is not developable. Refunds under this section may be subject to a reasonable service charge to be determined by the Director.
A refund will not be granted if the request is based is based upon development delays, voluntary land use changes, property disputes or voluntary use of an alternate system such as a well or septic tank.

Developer Deposit after Capacity Fee Payment are Made

Developer paid the required Developer deposit based on the prevailing water and/or wastewater capacity fees applicable to the project, but has not applied all or part of the deposit to capacity fee payments.

A refund will be made upon written request of the Developer who made the deposit if capacity fees paid for the project equal or exceed the Developer deposit. The refund will be made only to the deposit payor.

Customer Overpays Account Through Error and Causes a Credit Balance on The Account

Customer erroneously overpays his account by making a payment to the Public Utilities Department in an amount that exceeds the balance due on his account. This overpayment causes a credit balance on the customer's account.

A refund of an erroneous overpayment of fees and charges may be made to the customer upon receipt of a written request and when the credit balance exceeds $25.00. If a refund is not requested, or the refund requested is less than $25.00, the credit will be applied to the customer's next water and wastewater bill.

A refund request may be denied if overpayment was caused by an unprocessed stop payment request. Extenuating circumstances will be considered by the Department Director or his designated representative.

Closing An Account With a Credit Balance

Customer requests discontinuance of service and the application of deposit against the balance due results in a credit balance on the account.

A refund will be made to the customer when a credit balance exceeds the customer billing charge. Refunds less than or equal to the customer billing charge will be made upon specific request of the customer.

B. The Accounting Department is authorized to refund monies paid to the Public utilities Department upon receipt of a written request from the Department Director or his/her designee. The request for refund will indicate under which of the above circumstances the refund is being approved, state the reason for the refund, and include auditable documentation of payments, double payments and overpayments.

C. All refund requests involving circumstances other than those cited above must be acted upon by the Board of County Commissioners. The Accounting Department is not authorized to refund monies in those situations without specific Board approval.

D. Refund requests in excess of $7,500 must be approved by the Board of County Commissioners even if the refund in based upon one or more of the circumstances described within this Policy.

Implementation:

Section procedures will be developed to ensure requirements of these procedures are met. The procedures will be reviewed at least annually by the Customer Accounting Section and revised. Written dissemination of required changes is the responsibility of the Administrative Support Section.