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**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY  
TAMPA, FLORIDA 33601**

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**BOARD POLICY - SECTION NUMBER: 09.07.06.00**

**SUBJECT:** ADJUSTMENT TO WATER/WASTEWATER BILLS  
DUE TO LEAKS IN CUSTOMER'S PLUMBING OR UNEXPLAINED HIGH  
USAGE WATER/WASTEWATER BILL

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** JUNE 27, 2000

**SUPERSEDES:** June 21, 1989

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**Purpose:**

To establish a policy for adjusting water/Wastewater bills due to leaks in customer's plumbing or an unexplained high usage Water/Wastewater bill.

**Policy:**

The Board of County Commissioners approves and adopts by resolution a policy providing for adjustment of Water/Wastewater bills due to leaks in customer's plumbing or an unexplained high usage Water/Wastewater Bill effective June 27, 2000.

**Responsibilities:**

It is the responsibility of the Water Department to put into effect the policy of the Board of County Commissioners providing for adjustment to Water/Wastewater bills due to leaks on the customer's side of the meter or an unexplained high usage Water/Wastewater Bill.

**Attachment:**

Resolution No. R00-128

**Approved by:** Board of County Commissioners  
**Approval Date:** June 27, 2000

RESOLUTION No. R00-128

RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING A POICY FOR THE PURPOSE OF  
ADJUSTING WATER AND WASTEWATER BILLS DUE TO LEAKS IN  
THE CUSTOMER'S PLUMBING OR AN UNEXPLAINED HIGH USAGE  
WATER/WASTEWATER BILL.

UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER Platt SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER Norman THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED BY A VOTE OF 6 TO 0: COMMISSIONER (S) none VOTING "NO".

"WHEREAS, the Hillsborough County Board of County Commissioners on 6/27/00 passed a resolution implementing a leak adjustment policy.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY AT ITS REGULAR MEETING ASSEMBLED THIS 27<sup>th</sup> day of June, 2000".

THAT leak adjustments to water bills of residential and commercial/industrial customers may be considered with proof of a leak where the gallons consumed amounts to an increase of 100% or more over the average consumption per month. Average consumption per month is defined as the total number of days in the period of normal consumption, multiplied by the total number of days of the leak period,

THAT all leaks must be repaired before credit is given.

THAT a leak adjustment must be submitted along with proof of repair. Proof of the repair is required in the form of either: 1) a plumber's bill on letterhead detailing materials and labor (if the plumber's bill is not on letterhead, it must have the plumber's state certification number on it; 2) receipt(s) for the purchase of repair parts; or 3) verification of repair by the Water Department.

THAT leak adjustments will not be considered in cases:

- a) Where metered water usage is not consistent with the type or time of leak.
- b) Where water loss was caused by equipment, which was improperly installed, malfunctioned due to manufacturer's defect, or is covered under any written warranty;
- c) Where timers on an irrigation system are found stuck in the open position, or activate at the wrong times;
- d) Where a customer received a previous leak adjustment in the preceding 12 months or more than three in a five year period.

THAT where high water usage continues for more than 2 months, before the leak is repaired, only the two highest months' usage will be considered for an adjustment.

THAT adjustments for leaks at the coupling to the meter on the customer's side will be granted at 100% credit for water lost due to the leak.

THAT water consumed in excess of the customer's average usage as the result of a leak shall be subject to a charge to recover the variable cost of production and distribution.

THAT the variable cost for water is composed of the following factors:

- a) Chemicals
- b) Electricity
- c) Bulk Water Purchased

THAT the variable cost for wastewater is composed of the following factors:

- A. Plant
  - 1. Chemicals
  - 2. Electricity
  - 3. Sludge Removal
  - 4. Bulk Waste Water Treatment
- B. Collection System
  - 1. Chemicals
  - 2. Electricity

THAT the Water Department Director shall adjust the variable cost of water and/or waste water from time to time, to reflect actual expenses.

THAT leak adjustments to residential, master metered residential and commercial wastewater accounts shall be based on water consumption determined to be caused by a leak. One hundred percent (100%) credit per 1,000 gallons will be applied to commercial accounts provided it can be determined that none of the water lost as a result of the leak entered the sewer system. If that determination cannot be made, the credit for commercial/industrial accounts will not exceed the difference between the leak amount consumed and the average consumption per month of wastewater for that account. For residential and master metered residential accounts, the credit will not exceed the difference between the average consumption per month of wastewater for that account and the wastewater billing cap for that account.

THAT the total amount of water consumed, less the average consumption per month, equals the amount of water lost due to the leak and for which an adjustment should be considered. The amount of water lost due to the leak, multiplied by the variable costs, equals the amount of the usage to be paid. The credit to be given shall be calculated thus by: the total charges for the amount of water lost minus the variable cost portion of such charges.

THAT the Water Department may deny a leak adjustment when a customer has repetitive water system leaks, and in the opinion of the Water Department the leaks were caused by the customer's failure to maintain service lines within the boundaries of the premises in a serviceable condition.

THAT adjustments to water bills of residential, master metered residential, and commercial customers may be considered where the gallons billed in any single billing period amount to an increase of 100% or more over the average gallons billed for the proceeding six (6) months or greater billing periods and there is no rational explanation for the high usage.

THAT bill adjustments to accounts will require at least six months of history before this policy is applicable.

THAT bill adjustments shall not be considered unless:

- 1) The customer has submitted a detailed letter and/or a plumber's statement to the Water Department indicating that the number of gallons billed were not used by the customer after the customer conducted a reasonable investigation regarding the customer's water consumption for the billing period in question.
- 2) The Water Department has inspected and tested the customer's water meter and has determined the water meter to be operating properly.
- 3) The Water Department has interviewed the customer and inspected the premises, and determined that there is no reasonable explanation to account for the number of gallons billed.

THAT unexplained water usage adjustments to an account may be reconsidered for review after 12 months of history is available, and must be requested in writing.

THAT only one (1) adjustment for unexplained high consumption will be made during any five-(5) year period of an account.

THAT County investigation and tests show no signs of meter malfunctioning or excessive use of water in yard or landscape maintenance.

THAT no unexplained water adjustments will be considered in cases:

- 1) Where there is a cross connection with a well or other water source on property;
- 2) Where water loss was caused by equipment which was improperly installed, malfunctioned due to manufacturer's defect, or is covered under any written warranty;
- 3) Where customer has had previous water service with the County and had history of erratic monthly consumption;
- 4) When a waiver has been granted to the customer at other addresses, and
- 5) When a leak adjustment has been applied for and approved within the prior 12 months.

THAT account will be adjusted to the average usage of the two highest months not including the disputed month in the 12-month prior period.

THAT customer must execute acknowledgement this adjustment may only be used once during any five-(5) year period they are receiving County water service. Water Department shall develop appropriate form for customer acknowledgement.

THIS policy shall not apply to requests for adjustments of water bills previously acted upon by the Board of County Commissioners.

THAT the Water Department shall not suspend or terminate the water service of any customer during the time that the Department is determining whether this policy is applicable to a particular dispute, provided that the customer continues to timely submit payment for all water bills rendered after the disputed water bill, and pays an average amount for the bill being reviewed. Completion of the adjustment review shall be timely and in the event approval is required by the Department Director, that decision will be final.

Approved by: Board of County Commissioners  
Approval Date: June 27, 2000

STATE OF FLORIDA  
COUNTY OF HILLSBOROUGH

I, RICHARD AKE, CLERK OF THE CIRCUIT COURT AND EX OFFICIO CLERK OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS, DO HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THE ABOVE AND FOREGOING RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY, FLORIDA, IN ITS REGULAR MEETING OF June 27, 2000, AS THE SAME APPEARS OF RECORD IN MINUTE BOOK 289 OF PUBLIC RECORD OF HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY, FLORIDA.

Witness my hand and official seal this 31<sup>st</sup> day of July 2000.