

OP8127 - Concealed Leaks Policy

Policy Owner	Executive Manager Customer and Community
Policy Author	Manager Revenue Assurance
Supporting Legislation & Documents	<i>Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008</i> <i>Plumbing and Drainage Act 2002</i> Water and Sewerage Services Code for Small Customers in South East Queensland, Department of Energy & Water Supply
Documents Directly Related	Pr9097 Calculate and Process Leak Rebate

1. Policy Statement

This Policy is to provide property owners with an adjustment to their water and sewerage account, in circumstances where water has passed through the water meter and been lost due to a proven concealed (undetected) leak on the customers property, resulting in abnormally high consumption charges (water and/or sewerage volumetric charges).

It is Unitywater's intention to support customers in these circumstances and manage a proactive program of identification of high water usage and to contact customers, where possible, to inform customers of significant increases in consumption which may be the result of a water leak. Unitywater will also actively promote to customers to monitor water use and read the water meter located at the subject property.

Customers, however, should not solely rely on Unitywater to advise of water leaks, but should monitor their water consumption using their water meter to check for water leaks. The property owner/s has primary responsibility for water leaks and associated losses on their property and/or from the meter.

2. Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this Policy is to outline how Unitywater will apply water and sewerage account adjustments for concealed leaks in relation to water or sewerage volumetric charges.

3. Policy Scope/Coverage

Unitywater will apply an adjustment to the customer's water and sewerage account in accordance with the criteria and rules set out in this policy and related documentation. Unitywater will only provide a leak rebate for concealed leaks that resulted in an increased water and/or sewerage volumetric charge.

This Policy applies to customers as per Appendix A where a concealed leak has occurred on the property, resulting in excessive water use and/or an increased sewerage volumetric charge for the customer.

A concealed water leak adjustment will not be provided if a water leak adjustment has already been provided to that property owner at that property by either the Moreton Bay Regional Council or the Sunshine Coast Regional Council since 1 March 2008 or Unitywater since 1 July 2010. This adjustment process is considered an educational activity and the customer, by receiving an adjustment the first time, should then be aware to regularly check for leaks and maintain plumbing.

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This Policy applies to concealed leaks only and does not apply to water loss from:

- Leaking taps, toilet cisterns, hot water systems or other water appliances;
- Faulty plumbing or human error resulting in the filling of a rainwater tank;
- Property sprinkler or other irrigation systems; or
- Swimming pools, spas, ponds and other outdoor water features, or their related fittings.

Unless expressly stated otherwise in the eligibility criteria outlined in this policy, any customer seeking an adjustment to a water or sewerage account must apply in writing to Unitywater and must be the Unitywater account holder for that property.

All adjustments will be applied to the Unitywater water and sewerage account for the property where the matter occurred.

The adjustment is on the account only; EFT refunds and cheques will not be issued.

3.1. Eligibility Criteria

In the case of a water leak on the property, a customer will be eligible for an adjustment to their water and sewerage account charges if they meet all of the following criteria:

1. The leak was concealed as per definition and applicability criteria above;
2. The customer took action to permanently repair the leak within 30 calendar days of being made aware of the leak, or as otherwise approved on a case-by-case basis by the Manager Revenue Assurance;
3. The Unitywater Account holder completes the Account Adjustment form and submits this together with a licensed plumber's invoice to support the application. Where the work was not performed by a licensed plumber, a statutory declaration must be submitted with the application, along with supporting evidence to confirm that the leak has been satisfactorily repaired. It should be noted that all pipe work repair, under the *Plumbing and Drainage Act 2002*, should be completed by a licensed plumber. Where the customer completes the repair, they should arrange for a licensed plumber to check the repair to ensure compliance with relevant legislation and plumbing standards.

The above also applies for sewerage volumetric charge rebate application assessment where a concealed leak has contributed to an increased sewerage volumetric charge.

Where the leak has occurred within a community title scheme (CTS) the application for an adjustment must be submitted as follows:

- Where the CTS is individually sub-metered and the sub-meters have been approved to be read and billed by Unitywater, and the leak occurred on private property, i.e. the leak consumption registered on the individual sub-meter, the property owner must submit the required documentation.
- Where the CTS is individually sub-metered, and the sub-meters have been approved to be read and billed by Unitywater, and the leak occurred on common land, the body corporate must submit the required documentation.
- Where the CTS is not individually sub-metered, or the sub-meters have not been approved to be read and billed by Unitywater, the body corporate acting on behalf of all property owners must submit the required documentation.

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The rebate amount will be provided as per Appendix A, the amount rebated will also be determined by the policy in place at the date of rebate application.

Appendix A details the maximum period/s for when an account can be adjusted and the periods should include the period in which the leak was repaired and if the leak was not repaired within 30 calendar days, then the period in which the customer was notified of a potential water leak or high water consumption.

3.2. Not-for-profit organisations and associations

Where the leak occurred on not-for-profit property, the application must be made by the appropriate administrator for that not-for-profit organisation or association.

Not-for-profit organisations or associations may be requested to provide evidence of a not-for-profit status with a rebate application. Approval for a rebate is at the discretion of the Manager Revenue Assurance and will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Not-for-profit organisations or associations with a liquor or gaming licence will not receive a rebate.

3.3. Replacement leakage rebate

In exceptional circumstances an eligible customer may apply for a “replacement” leakage rebate for a major leak if a previous leakage rebate has been provided, provided the customer forgoes the previous (minor) leakage rebated amount. This is administered by providing a rebate equal to the difference between the “replacement” leak and the previous rebated amount. This is subject to assessment and approval by the Executive Manager Retail Services on a case-by-case basis.

3.4. Conditions of Adjustment

The adjustment only applies until the date that the customer was made aware of the potential leak or in the case that they were not advised by Unitywater of the leak, the date of the repair.

Where the property is tenanted and a Unitywater officer advises the tenant of a potential water leak or high water consumption, it is considered that the property owner or their agent will be informed by the tenant.

The leak must have been repaired as a permanent repair, (e.g. running a temporary water service is not considered a permanent repair). The leak should be repaired by a licensed plumber in accordance with the *Plumbing and Drainage Act 2002* and related plumbing standards.

4. Roles and Responsibility

The Manager Revenue Assurance and Metering Services Manager are responsible for ensuring the implementation of this Policy.

When extenuating circumstances exist, and following a report from the Manager Revenue Assurance, the Executive Manager Retail Services is authorised to vary the application of policy.

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5. Definitions

Term	Meaning
Concealed leak	Water escaping on the customer's side of the water meter, which is hidden from view, be it underground or within concrete, or underneath a building, and where an owner or occupant could not reasonably be expected to know of its existence, as determined by Unitywater.
Pensioner	A person receiving a State Government pensioner concession at the time of the leakage.
Excess water	For the purposes of this policy, this is the difference in water consumed during the period of the water leak (or other high consumption period), compared to the normal consumption by the property occupants.
Financial hardship customer	A residential customer who is experiencing financial hardship as per Unitywater's Credit Management Policy.
Gaming licence	A licence issued under the <i>Gaming Machine Act 1991</i> .
Increased sewerage volumetric charge	The difference between the sewerage volumetric charge during the period of the water leak (or other high consumption period), and the average sewerage volumetric charge.
Liquor licence	A licence issued under the <i>Liquor Act 1992</i> .
Not-for-profit	An organisation or association that does not earn profits for its owners or members, and is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An incorporated 'not-for-profit' organisation or association; or • A company limited by guarantee that has been endorsed by the Australian Taxation Office as a charity, tax exempt fund or deductible gift recipient
Property owner	The owner or owners of the subject property. The organisation or person/s registered to be the owner of the connected premises. An owner is the registered proprietor of land under the provisions of the <i>Land Title Act 1994</i> ; the lessee or licensee of the land under the <i>Land Act 1994</i> ; a person who has lawful control of the land; or a person who is entitled to receive rents and profits from the land. Includes the occupier of the land, i.e. a person who is in charge of the land, but not a tenant occupier, e.g. an occupier of residential or commercial premises under a tenancy or similar agreement.

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Appendix A – Concealed Leak Rebates

Table 1 – Concealed Leak Rebates by Customer Type

Customer Type	Unitywater water usage rebate % offered above average use	State Government bulk water usage rebate % offered above average use	Sewerage volumetric/usage rebate % offered above average use	Maximum period for which a rebate can be applied for	Frequency at which rebate can be applied for by property owner/s at the subject property for the water usage component of the rebate	Frequency at which rebate can be applied for by property owner/s at the subject property for the sewerage volumetric/usage
Residential including retirement villages	50%	50%	100%	Two billing quarters	Once	Once
Not-for-profit [^]	50%	50%	100%	Two billing quarters	Once	Once
Pensioners	50%	50%	100%	Two billing quarters	Once	Once
Residential - Financial Hardship	50%	50%	100%	Two billing quarters	Once	Once
Non-residential including small customers*	0%	0%	100%	Two billing quarters	Once	Once
All other customers	0%	0%	100%	Two billing quarters	Once	Once

[^]Exclusions apply, reviewed on a case-by-case basis

*Non-residential small customers are those customers consuming no more than 100kL per annum

The average daily consumption for approved dialysis and medical condition customers shall include annual allowances as per Unitywater policy.