

## 1. Policy Purpose

To regulate the use of water meters and to ensure water usage is measured accurately for charging purposes.

This policy describes processes for ensuring the accuracy of water meters, testing of meters, as well as the eligibility criteria and the administrative processes used to deal with applications for the granting of water charges remission.

The objective of this policy is to ensure:

- Clear processes for testing of water meters
- The same treatment for ratepayers with similar circumstances;
- Transparency by making clear the requirements necessary to receive concessions.

## 2. Policy Scope

This policy applies to all customers residential, commercial and industrial that receive water from Council through a metered water connection.

## 3. Definitions

Term	Definition
<b>Applicant</b>	The person in charge of lodging the application. Usually the ratepayer or a representative of the ratepayer (e.g. real estate agent).
<b>Deemed Water Consumption</b>	Water consumption level for the property if the water leak did not occur.
<b>Deemed Water Loss</b>	Water consumption over and above the average consumption for a property caused by an unapparent plumbing failure.
<b>Prescribed Standard</b>	This is the process of determining the accuracy of a water meter as specified in this policy
<b>Unapparent Plumbing Failure</b>	A leak either underground, under or within concrete or paving or underneath a structure or anywhere that the occupant could not reasonably be expected to know existence of.
<b>Water Meter</b>	Council owned equipment that records the property's water consumption.
<b>Private Ownership</b>	Council own all assets within the water connection from the water main up until the meter. All assets beyond the meter are private ownership.

## 4. Policy Details

### 4.1. Testing of water meters

4.1.1. A customer may request the Council to test a water meter.

- 4.1.2. A request must be made on a Water Meter Investigation form and be accompanied by the prescribed fee, which will be refunded should the meter be determined to be not registering accurately, in accordance with the prescribed standard. (Refer section 4.4).
- 4.1.3. The Council may at any time test a water meter in accordance with the prescribed standard. (Refer section 4.4).
- 4.1.4. The Council may at any reasonable time disconnect any water meter for the purpose of testing the water meter.
- 4.1.5. Before the Council disconnects the water supply for the purpose of testing a water meter, the Council must:-
  - a. give the occupier of the property at least 48 hours written notice of its intention to disconnect the water supply, advising of the reasons for shutting it off, and for how long it will be shut off; and
  - b. re-connect the water supply as soon as practicable after the water meter has been removed for testing.
- 4.1.6. Where the applicant who has made a request under section 4.1.1 of this policy is also the occupier of the property, the Council may disconnect the water supply for the purpose of testing a water meter without giving that person at least 48 hours written notice if that person waives the notice requirement.
- 4.1.7. The Council may install another water meter which is registering accurately while testing the original water meter.

## **4.2. Water meters not registering accurately**

- 4.2.1. Where a request is made pursuant to section 4.1, the Council must determine whether the water meter is registering accurately in accordance with the prescribed standard.
- 4.2.2. Where the Council determines pursuant to subsection (4.1.1) that a water meter is not registering accurately, the Council must refund the request fee and:-
  - a. carry out any necessary actions to ensure the water meter is registering accurately in accordance with the prescribed standard before reinstalling that water meter; or
  - b. install a replacement water meter which is registering accurately.
- 4.2.3. Where the Council determines pursuant to subsection (4.1.4) that a water meter is not registering accurately, the Council must:-
  - a. carry out any necessary actions to ensure the water meter is registering accurately in accordance with the prescribed standard before reinstalling that water meter; or
  - b. install a replacement water meter which is registering accurately.

## **4.3. Charge when water meter is not registering accurately**

- 4.3.1. If any water meter in use ceases to register or is determined by the Council to be not registering accurately, the Council may:-
  - a. estimate the period during which such water meter was not in working order; and
  - b. calculate the deemed water consumption, using all reasonable information available to the Council.
- 4.3.2. The process for calculating the actual charge for water consumption where:-
  - a. The water meter ceased to register or was not registering accurately is as follows:-

$$A = B + C$$

Where

A = the actual charge;

B = the total of the water charges which would have been levied at the last water meter reading (if not previously levied and paid under a previous water consumption charge);

C = the amount which would have been charged for the estimated period for when the water meter ceased to register if the actual consumption for that period had been the deemed water consumption.

However, the actual charge cannot be less than the consumption charge levied.

#### 4.4. Testing of water meter

For the purpose of this Policy, the “prescribed standard” for determining the accuracy of a water meter is as follows:

- a. The authorised person must ensure the occupier of the property does not consume water during the duration of the test.
- b. The authorised person must then take a reading of the water meter being tested (the “**property meter**”).
- c. The authorised person must then connect a water meter (the “**test meter**”) known to meet the manufacturer’s standard to a convenient tap and record the meter reading.
- d. The authorised person must then run one hundred litres of water as registered in the test meter through the tap which the test meter is connect to.
- e. The property meter should then be read again and if the readings from the property meter are within 5% of 100 litres, the property meter is taken to be registering accurately.

#### 4.5. Application for remission from excess water charges

Council may give partial remission from payment of the water consumption charges where it is clearly established that:-

- 4.5.1 The quantum of the water consumption charge levied was as a consequence of abnormally high water consumption which, upon investigation, was found to be caused by an unapparent plumbing failure; and
- 4.5.2 When the owner of the relevant property became aware of the unusually high water consumption on the property and/or the unapparent plumbing failure, all reasonable steps were taken to locate and repair that failure without delay; and
- 4.5.3 The repair was carried out promptly by a licensed plumber.

#### 4.6. Calculating amount of remission

- 4.6.1 Where the water loss was a direct result of an unapparent plumbing failure the amount of remission will be calculated in accordance with the following formula:-

$$X = (Y - Z) \times 50\%$$

Where

X = the amount of remission to be granted

Y = the total water charges levied for consumption

Z = the amount which would have been charged if the relevant property's actual consumption for the consumption period had been the deemed water consumption

Water remission may be applied over two consecutive billing periods where there is evidence that the unapparent plumbing failure affected the consumption charges over more than one billing period.

- 4.6.2** Irrespective of the amount of remission calculated under clause 4.6.1, the amount of remission granted will be such that the gross amount to be remitted for any single water loss event will not exceed the sum of the amount which would have been charged if the relevant property's actual consumption for the billing period had been the deemed water consumption plus \$500.00.

#### **4.7. Deemed water consumption**

- 4.6.1** Where the applicant was the owner of the relevant property for the whole of the three half yearly water billing periods immediately preceding the consumption period in which the water loss occurred, the deemed water consumption is the number of days in the consumption period in which the water loss occurred multiplied by the average daily consumption for the previous three half yearly water billing periods;
- 4.6.2** Where the applicant has owned the relevant property for less than three half yearly billing periods immediately preceding the consumption period in which the water loss occurred, the deemed water consumption is the number of days in the consumption period in which the water loss occurred multiplied by the average daily consumption for the period of ownership.
- 4.6.3** Where the applicant acquired the relevant property during the consumption period in which the loss occurred the deemed water consumption is the first tier consumption limit.

#### **4.8. Requirements for application**

The application must include the following:-

- Completed application form;
- Certification from the plumber who attended the work that the leak was unapparent;
- Copy of invoice from the licensed plumber (if applicable).

### **5. Special Provisions**

Nil

### **6. Related Policies and Legislation**

Local Government Act 2009  
Local Government Regulation 2012

### **7. Associated Documents**

Water Meter Investigation Form  
Application Form – Partial Discharge of Water Consumption Charges