



Water Billing Adjustment Program Policy

POLICY NUMBER: 243-FN-25

Approval Date: April 8, 2025

Revise Date:

Motion Number: CRM20250408.1009

Repeal Date:

Supersedes:

Review Date:

1.0 **Policy Intent**

The City of Cold Lake recognizes that exceptionally high water consumption can cause devastating financial burden on a property owner, additional costs to the City of Cold Lake, and the waste of water resources. Property owners within the City that experience unusual high water consumption may seek to dispute their utility bill requesting forgiveness of a portion of their bill. Establishing a program that defines the circumstances where water bills can be adjusted balances consideration of financial impacts and compassion for property owners with the importance of fiscal prudence, resource management, and environmental responsibility.

2.0 **Purpose**

The purpose of the Program is to establish a standardized program to assist City of Cold Lake property owners facing financial hardship associated with an exceptionally high City utility bill resulting from specific circumstances beyond their control (Water Leak, or Unintentional water consumption). Limiting the circumstances which qualify for the program promotes consumer responsibility, due diligence, and conveys the importance of water resource management.

3.0 **Policy Statement**

- 3.1 The City of Cold Lake shall establish the Water Billing Adjustment Program to assist owners with forgiveness of a portion of their City utility bill where they have experienced Exceptional Water Bill resulting from a Water Leak or Unintentional water consumption.
- 3.2 A standardized application process and guidelines to ensure transparent and consistent administration of the program.

4.0 **Managerial Guidelines**

Definitions

- 4.1 “Exceptional Water Bill” means a City of Cold Lake utility bill that has water consumption more than three times the property owner’s annual average water consumption.
- 4.2 “Residential Dwelling” means a City utility account for a single dwelling that has a designated water meter to measure consumption specifically within that self-contained residence intended for permanent habitation.
- 4.3 “Unintentional” water consumption means any increase in water use resulting from accidental or unexpected loss of water in circumstances where no water consumption was

intended. This does not include circumstances where there was intentional use of water for irrigation, pool or pond filling, vehicle or house washing, garden or lawn watering, or other intentional uses of water, whether or not the full consumption and cost of the water use was intentional.

- 4.4 “Water Leak” means water loss through a crack, hole, or break in a pipe, faucet or fixture or water loss through a faulty faucet, fixture or appliance.

Eligibility

- 4.5 In order for the property to be deemed eligible for the program, the property must be:

- 4.5.1 be located within the City of Cold Lake;
- 4.5.2 be a Residential Dwelling;
- 4.5.3 have a water meter;

- 4.6 The applicant may be either:

- 4.6.1 the current property owner; or
- 4.6.2 the tenant of the property, with property owner acknowledgement.

- 4.7 All taxes owing to the City must be paid in full prior to a rebate being issued.

Application Requirements

- 4.8 A property owner who has been subject to an Exceptional Water Bill is responsible for initiating the request process for an adjustment.

- 4.9 Applications for the program must include:

- 4.9.1 a completed application form submitted on or before the due date of the Exceptional Water Bill in question;
- 4.9.2 acknowledgement that no person at the property knowingly utilized water resulting in the Exceptional Water Bill;
- 4.9.3 where a Water Leak occurred, proof of repair.

- 4.10 Completed applications shall be submitted to the General Manager of Corporate Services or their designate.

- 4.11 At the City’s discretion, the City may investigate the application including but not limited to attendance at the property, review of any records held by the City, and testing of the water meter.

- 4.12 The decision on whether a utility bill adjustment is warranted will be in the sole discretion of the City of Cold Lake, having regard to the totality of circumstances surrounding the Exceptional Water Bill and this policy.

Utility Bill Adjustment

- 4.13 The utility bill adjustment shall be:

- 4.13.1 A one-time credit applied to the utility account equal to up to 50% of the total owing on the Exceptional Water Bill less the fixed fees on the Exceptional Water Bill (including but not limited to: organics, recycling, garbage, stormwater, or administrative charges);

- 4.13.2 There may be circumstances where a one-time credit may be considered on up to two consecutive Exceptional Water Bills where a single situation results in the Exceptional Water Bills.
- 4.13.3 Issuance of the credit is subject to all application requirements being met.
- 4.14 Utility bill adjustment(s) credit may only be issued once per Residential Property, every three years.
- 4.15 Where an application for a utility bill adjustment is denied, the property owner remains responsible to pay the Exceptional Water Bill and any applicable penalties. All collection methods may be utilized.
- 4.16 Where an application for a utility bill adjustment is granted, the property owner remains responsible to pay the remaining balance of the Exceptional Water Bill and any applicable penalties. All collection methods may be utilized for the outstanding balance.

Utility Bill Adjustment Appeal

- 4.17 Where an application for a utility bill adjustment is denied, the property owner may appeal the decision to the City of Cold Lake Chief Administrative Officer.

5.0 References

6.0 Persons Affected

Members of the Public

7.0 Revision/Review History

April 11, 2025

Date

April 11, 2025

Date



Chief Administrative Officer



Mayor