# Water Meters Policy

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| **Related Documents** | *Nil* |

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| *1* | *06/05/2009* | *Ordinary Meeting of Council* |
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*This policy may not be current as Council regularly reviews and updates its policies. The latest controlled version can be found in the policies section of Council's intranet or Website.* ___*A hard copy of this electronic document is uncontrolled.*___

## 1.    PURPOSE

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

## 2.    SCOPE

This policy is in addition to and does not derogate from the relevant provisions of the *Water Act 2000 and the Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008* and unless the context otherwise indicates, terms not defined in the policy shall have the meanings assigned to them by these laws.

## 3.    POLICY

Within this legislative framework, Council's water meters policy is:

**Testing of water meters**

(1)    A person may request the Council to test a water meter.

(2)    A request made under subsection (1) must be made in a form approved by the chief executive officer 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 6(3))

(3)    The Council may at any time test a water meter in accordance with the prescribed standard. (Refer section 6(3))

(4)    The Council may at any reasonable time disconnect any water meter for the purpose of testing the water meter.

(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.

(6)    Subsection (5) does not prevent the Council shutting of its water supply, without notice, if there is:-

   a.  a serious risk to public health; or
   b.  a likelihood of serious injury to person or damage to property; or
   c.  another emergency.

(7)    Where a person who has made a request under section 3(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.

(8)    The Council may install another water meter which is registering accurately while testing the original water meter.

**Water meters not registering accurately**

(1)    Where a request is made pursuant to section 3(1) and the request is made on the approved form and accompanied by the prescribed fee, the Council must determine whether the water meter is registering accurately in accordance with the prescribed standard.

(2)     Where the Council determines pursuant to subsection (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.

(3)     Where the Council determines pursuant to section 3(1) 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.

**Replacement of water meters**

Should any person refuse to allow or delay in allowing any water meter on their premises to be repaired and/or tested, the Council may replace the water meter on that premises with another water meter which is registering accurately.

**Charge when water meter is not registering accurately**

(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.

(2)     The process for calculating the actual charge for water consumption where:-

    a.    the water meter ceased to register 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.

*For example[1] - A person has been charged $88.20 for a year's water consumption. However, the Council has determined that the water meter was not registering for an estimated period of 6 months. The last reading taken of the water meter relevant to this charge was taken at the end of the first 6 months and showed water consumption of 72.8KL.*

*A = B + C*
*A = B + (Deemed water consumption x $0.49/KL)*
*A = (72.8KL x $0.49) + ((182 days x ((1.1KL/day + 1.0KL/day + 1.2KL/day)/3)) x $0.49/KL)*
*A = 35.67 + ((182 x (3.3 / 3)) x 0.49)*
*A = 35.67 + ((182 x 1.1) x 0.49)*
*A = 35.67 + (200.2 x 0.49)*
*A = 35.67 + 98.10*
*A = $133.77*

[1]This is an example only and is not intended to reflect the current water consumption charges.

b.  the water meter was not registering accurately is:-

A = (D - E) + F
Where A = the actual charge;
D = the total of the water charges actually levied for the relevant consumption period;
E = the amount charged for the estimated period when the water meter was not registering accurately;
F = the amount which would have been charged for the estimated period for when the water meter was not registering accurately if the actual consumption for that period had been the deemed water consumption.

*For example[2] - A person has been charged $96.90 for 6 months water consumption. However, the Council has determined that the water
meter was not registering accurately for an estimated period of 6 months. The Council charges water consumption at $0.49 per KL.*

*A = (D - E)+ F*
*A = ($96.90 - $96.90) + (deemed water consumption x $0.49/KL)*
*A= 0 + ((182 days x ((0.7KL/day + 0.9KL/day + 0.7KL/day) / 3)) x 0.49)*
*A= 182 x (2.3 / 3) x 0.49*
*A= 182 x 0.77 x 0.49*
*A = $68.65*

[2]This is an example only and is not intended to reflect the current water consumption charges.

(3)  For the purposes of section 1 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 the run one hundred (100) 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.

**Charge when unapparent plumbing failure**

(1)  Where it is clearly established that:-

a.  the quantum of the water consumption charge levied was as a consequence of abnormally high water consumption which, upon investigation, was found to result from an unapparent plumbing failure; and

b.  when the owner of the relevant property became aware of the unusually high water consumption on the property, all reasonable steps were taken to locate and repair that failure without delay; and

c.  the repair was carried out promptly by a licensed plumber (or other suitable person if no licensed plumber is available in the community)_where reasonable in the circumstances; and

d.  The failure occurred in plumbing installed by a licensed plumber (or other suitable person if no licensed plumber is available in the community) to standards set in the *Plumbing and Drainage Code*,

- the Council may grant partial relief from payment of the water consumption charges levied

(2) An owner must apply to the Council for relief under subsection (1) before the due date for payment of the relevant water consumption charge.

(3) The Council may estimate the period during which such unapparent plumbing failure occurred and the amount of water lost due to the unapparent plumbing failure using all reasonable information available to the Council.

(4) Relief will not be granted when the unapparent plumbing failure occurred in sub standard plumbing (for example: low pressure poly pipe installations).

(5) The Council may specify the process for calculating the amount of relief from payment of the water consumption charges levied where unapparent plumbing failure has occurred. (Refer section 8).

(6) The process for calculating the amount of relief from payment of the water consumption charges levied where an unapparent plumbing failure has occurred is as prescribed following:-

    a. For the purposes of section 1 of this policy, the "deemed water consumption, that is, the amount of water consumed where either a water meter is not registering accurately or an unapparent plumbing failure has occurred, will be calculated as follows:-

        i. where the owner of the relevant property has owned that property for the whole of the three (3) years immediately preceding the consumption period in which either the inaccurate water meter reading or unapparent plumbing failure occurred - the number of days in the consumption period in which either the inaccurate water meter reading or unapparent plumbing failure occurred multiplied by the average daily consumption for the previous three (3) years; or

*For example - As the Council takes water meter readings every 6 months, it estimated the water meter was not reading accurately for approximately 6 months. The three previous years average daily consumption were 1.5 KLs/day, 1.8 KLs/day and 1.65 KLs/day. Therefore the "deemed water consumption" is:-*

*182 days x ((1.5 + 1.8 + 1.65) / 3) = 182 x 1.65 = 300.3 KLs for the 6 months.*

        ii. where water consumption records do not cover the three (3) years immediately preceding the consumption period in which either the inaccurate water meter reading or unapparent plumbing failure occurred - the number of days in the consumption period in which either the inaccurate water meter reading or unapparent plumbing failure occurred multiplied by the average daily consumption for the period for which water consumption records are available; or

*For example - The water meter was not reading accurately for approximately 6 months.. The previous year's average daily consumption was 1.2 KLs/day. Therefore the "deemed water consumption" is:-*

*182 x 1.2 = 218.4 KLs for the 6 months*

        iii. where the owner of the relevant property has owned that property for less than three (3) years immediately preceding the consumption period in which either the inaccurate water meter reading or unapparent plumbing failure occurred - the number of days in the consumption period in which either the inaccurate water meter reading or unapparent plumbing failure occurred multiplied by the average daily consumption for the period of ownership; or

*For example - The water meter was not reading accurately for approximately 6 months.. The period of ownership has been 240 days and the average daily consumption taken at the last water meter reading during the time of ownership was 1.25KLs/day. Therefore the "deemed water consumption" is:-*

*182 x 1.25= 227.5 KLs for the 6 months.*

iv.   where circumstances other than those specified in subsections (1)(a), (b) or (c) apply, the "deemed water consumption" will be determined by the Council.

**Charges Relief for Unapparent Plumbing Failure**

(1)   For the purposes of section 7(4) of this policy, the amount of relief from payment of the water consumption charges levied where an unapparent plumbing failure has occurred is as follows:-

$G = D - (H + I)$
Where G = the amount of relief to be granted;
D = the total of the water charges actually levied for the relevant consumption period;
H = the amount which would have been charged if the relevant property's actual consumption for the consumption period had been the deemed water consumption;
I = the amount calculated by multiplying the deemed volume of water lost due to an unapparent plumbing failure by the first tier consumption charge.
However, the amount of relief cannot be more than 25 % of the consumption charge actually levied for the relevant consumption period.

*For example[3] - A person has been charged $202 for a year's water consumption. However, the Council has determined that there was an unapparent plumbing failure for an estimated period of 120 days, during which time the Council estimates 35KL of water were lost. The Council charges water consumption at $0.49 per KL.*

*G = D - (H + I)*
*G = $202 - ((365 days x ((0.6KL + 0.45KL + 0.8KL)/3 years) x $0.49) + (35KL x $0.49))*
*G = 202 - ((365 x (1.85 / 3) x 0.49) + 17.15)*
*G = 202 - ((365 x 0.62 x 0.49) + 17.15)*
*G = 202 - (110.89 + 17.15)*
*G = 202 - 128.04*
*G = $73.96*

*However, the amount of $73.96 is more than 25% of the actual charge levied of $202. Therefore, the amount of relief to be given will be 25% of $202, which is $50.50.*

[3]This is an example only and is not intended to reflect the current water consumption charges.

**DEFINITIONS:**

**"deemed water consumption"** is the process as specified in this policy for determining the amount of water consumed where a water meter ceases to register or a water meter is not registering accurately or an unapparent plumbing failure has occurred;

**"prescribed standard"** is the process of determining the accuracy of a water meter as specified in this policy;

**"unapparent plumbing failure"** means the structural failure of a supply pipe, the water loss resulting from which is not readily evident upon any exposed surface;

**REVIEW TRIGGER:**

Periodic review - every three (3) years unless otherwise required due to changes in legislation.