



Town of Sparta

Leak Adjustment Policy

PURPOSE

The Town of Sparta is not required to provide an adjustment to water and sewer charges due to a leak. Under current common law, the Town may not do a leak adjustment (or make any other changes to a customer's bill) unless there is a valid, utility-based reason. Additionally, any adjustments must be based on a policy that applies equally to all customers.

CONDITIONS

It is the customer's responsibility to promptly identify and prevent water loss. Additionally, the customer is responsible for arranging the repair or replacement of the fixture or device causing the water loss. Although the town is not obligated to adjust an account when the water has been appropriately metered, the Town desires to encourage customers to make prompt and permanent repairs and show consideration for the unusual circumstance by sharing the cost of the excessive billing charges.

NON-ADJUSTABLE ITEMS

No adjustment will be provided where any of the following situations exist:

- High usage due to watering sod, gardening, washing vehicles, power washing etc.
- The leak was caused by a third party, from whom the customer can recover their costs. Examples include, but are not limited to, theft, vandalism, negligence, construction damage, and unoccupied or vacant properties.
- Water loss arising from carelessness, negligence, or lack of due diligence on the part of the customer, as it is the customer's responsibility to discover and stop the loss of water promptly. This includes toilet leaks/hand-ups, leaking faucets, ice makers, water hoses, spigots, leaks that should reasonably have been discovered, or any other water-using or consuming device that may be malfunctioning.
- A leak adjustment was issued within the past twelve (12) months for the same premise.

The items mentioned here are examples and do not represent a complete list of problems that are ineligible for a leak adjustment.

The Town of Sparta does not reimburse customers for any plumbing bills, property damage, or other expenses related to water leaks or sewer problems.

If you determine that you qualify and wish to apply for a leak adjustment, please complete the appropriate form and return it to our office as soon as possible, along with the necessary receipts. We cannot process your adjustment until we receive the completed application and approve the adjustment.

ADJUSTMENT PROCEDURES

- Customers may request an adjustment to their utility bill if they show that a break in a water line has resulted in extraordinary charges for a given billing period. In such cases, the customer will be charged an amount based on an average of the previous six months.

- Adjustments must be requested within sixty (60) days of the date of the water bill suspected of indicating a water leak, or within sixty (60) days of when the Town notified you of the suspected problem, whichever comes first.
- Customer must submit a completed and signed bill adjustment form.
- The customer must have an account in good standing, with all outstanding water and sewer bills paid before the unusually high water bill.
- Only one adjustment per twelve (12) month period will be allowed.

POOL FILLS

A sewer credit will be considered when filling a newly constructed pool or when refilling a pool that has been drained to facilitate a repair. For pool fills, your utility account may be credited for wastewater usage based on your average usage for the prior six billing cycles. Customers may receive one pool credit per twelve (12) month period. Credit is not available for adding makeup water due to routine maintenance (topping off), nor are credits provided for splasher pools (kiddie pools) or hot tubs/spas. The customer must complete the Pool Fill Adjustment Form and submit it with the required information before filling their pool to be considered for a sewer credit.

RESPONSIBILITY OF THE CUSTOMER

The customer retains control over water usage on their premises. As such, the customer is responsible for all water passing through the meter, including water that may be lost or wasted due to leaking pipes or fixtures on the premises. The customer is responsible for monitoring their water usage, as reflected on their bill, for any unusually high amounts. The customer must promptly investigate any unusually high water bills. A customer is required to promptly repair any water leak and is responsible for all associated repair costs.

IMPORTANT: Please be aware that a large leak may result in a water bill that could total several thousand dollars! Small leaks are typically less common, but many small leaks are often a sign of a problem with your water line. Small leaks also indicate that larger and more expensive leaks are likely to happen in the future. Since the leak adjustment is only a one-time benefit, if you request and receive an adjustment for a leak now, large or small, you will not be eligible for another leak adjustment should you have a second or larger leak. If a service line is prone to leaks, the best way to reduce the risk of a second leak is not to patch or "spot fix" the break, but to replace the entire line. Because each circumstance is unique, we strongly suggest that you contact your repair provider for professional advice given your particular circumstance.

PAYMENT ON THE ACCOUNT

While a leak adjustment request is being processed, the customer is responsible for paying the entire amount due on their utility bills within the normal payment period. The customer should also request to enter into an agreed-upon payment arrangement. If this does not occur, the customer is subject to all current and applicable collection activities and termination of service processes for delinquent accounts.