

# CITY OF GALENA, ILLINOIS



## Excessive Water Use Adjustment Policy

### Policy:

The City of Galena owns and operates a water treatment and distribution system. The City is responsible for the maintenance of the system, including the water mains that supply water to the individual service pipes to each building. Each property owner is responsible for the installation, maintenance and repair of the water service pipe from the main to their building and all plumbing inside and outside of their building.

This policy is intended to address water pipe breaks, leaks, and other unpredictable events that occur inside or outside of a building and that cause an excessive use of water by the property owner or tenant in the case of rental property. As further defined hereafter, this policy addresses only those leaks and other uses of water that are excessive in nature and beyond the control of the customer. When such a leak or other use of water occurs, and proper documentation of the event is provided to the City by the customer, a once in a lifetime per customer adjustment or credit shall be applied to the account. The adjustment or credit shall equal 50% of the water charges caused by the event and exceeding the monthly average (based on the previous 12 months) of water use. An additional adjustment or credit shall be applied equal to 100% of the sewer charges exceeding the monthly average (based on the previous 12 months) and resulting from the event. All penalties resulting from the event shall also be credited. If there is less than 12 months of customer history, an average of 2,000 gallons per person per month shall be used to calculate the "monthly average use" for residential customers. A 12-month average of three similar businesses shall be used in the case of business customers with less than 12 months use history.

### Applicability:

Excessive water use is defined as total monthly use that is more than 500% of the average monthly use for the previous 12-month period. For example, if a resident used 3,000 gallons per month for the past 12 months, excessive use would be more than 15,000 gallons in one month. Excessive use may result from cracked or broken water pipes inside of the building, a leaking toilet, a leaking water softener, a leaking hot water heater, a leaking outdoor faucet, a faulty humidifier or furnace, or accidental use such as an outdoor hose accidentally left on overnight.

High water use resulting from planned or routine activities of the property owner or tenant, such as filling a swimming pool or watering a lawn are not covered by this policy and are not eligible for any reimbursement.

In the experience of the City, water meters have not been found to measure water use inaccurately high. However, if a customer suspects the water meter may be faulty, the customer has the option of having the water meter professionally tested. If the customer requests testing of the meter, a City representative shall disconnect the meter and mail the meter to a third party firm designated by the City for testing services. A new meter shall be installed by the City. If the meter is determined to be accurate, the customer shall be responsible for the testing fee, but may apply for the once in a lifetime credit as applicable. If the meter is

found to be faulty, the excessive use shall be credited to his or her account and all related penalties removed. In any case, the replacement meter shall remain in place during and after testing.

Application Process:

A customer that has experienced excessive water use may apply for a one time credit by filing an application in accordance with this policy.

**Applicant Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Property Owner** (if different from applicant): \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone #:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Phone #:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address** (where the water usage occurred): \_\_\_\_\_

**Status of Property:**  **Occupied by Owner**  **Rented**

**Was the property occupied at the time the excessive use occurred?**  **Yes**  **No**

**Date the customer became aware of the excessive usage:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date the leak was repaired/problem was resolved:** \_\_\_\_\_

Please Note: You must also include the following: (This can be on a separate sheet or the back side of this application)

1. Copies of repair invoices or receipts
2. Letter of explanation if repairs made by customer
3. Written description of how the leak or other excessive use occurred
4. Sketch of the exact location of any leak
5. Photographs of the leaking pipe or faulty fixture (as applicable and if available)
6. Authorization for a City representative to inspect the property where the excessive water use occurred

Application Review Process:

A committee consisting of the City Administrator, Office Manager and Water and Sewer Manager shall review Excessive Water Use Adjustment Applications on a monthly basis. As part of the review process, the committee may request an inspection by the Water and Sewer Department of the property where the excessive water use occurred.

If the application is complete and the water use is determined to be eligible for a one time adjustment or credit, the committee shall make written findings, not more than 60 days from the date of application, directing the Utility Billing Department to adjust or credit the account accordingly during the next billing cycle. The customer must pay all outstanding charges, minus the credit, before the credit will be issued. A written record of all adjustments or credits shall be forwarded to and maintained by the Finance Director.

If the application is incomplete or the excessive water use is determined not to be eligible for an adjustment or credit, the committee shall make written findings explaining the rationale for the decision. The written findings shall be forwarded to the applicant within 60 days of the date of application. The decision of the committee shall be final unless the applicant chooses to appeal to the City Council. In the case of appeal,

the City Council shall consider the application within 30 days of the date of appeal and issue a final decision within 60 days of the date of appeal.

Contact:

Questions about this policy should be directed to:

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