

CONCEALED LEAK POLICY

NUMBER: S0050
ACT: *Local Government Act 2009*
POLICY TITLE: Concealed Leak Policy

POLICY

1 Purpose

1.1 To provide guidelines by which applications can be considered and processed to allow financial relief from water consumption charges that have arisen as a result of a proven concealed leak.

2 Commencement of Policy

2.1 Commencement date of this policy will be 11 July 2013.

3 Application of Policy

- 3.1 Maintenance of a property's infrastructure is the responsibility of Property Owner. However, Charters Towers Regional Council recognises that a Property Owner may require assistance to reduce the water consumption costs incurred in the circumstance of a concealed leak.
- 3.2 Concealed leaks can remain undetected for lengthy periods of time if the property's water meter is not monitored by the Property Owner. Concealed leaks can significantly increase water consumption charges on the water account, particularly if the leak is not repaired promptly.
- 3.3 Where Council becomes aware of an increase in a property's normal water consumption through our regular meter reading cycle, we will try to notify the Property Owner.
- 3.4 Property Owner must not rely on Council to provide this information, as this is provided, where possible, as a courtesy only.
- 3.5 The Property Owner owns and is responsible for their internal water infrastructure and is such is encouraged to actively monitor their water usage by taking regular readings of their water meter. This will assist the Property Owner to promptly detect any unusual increases in water consumption.
- 3.6 A concealed water leak adjustment will not be provided if a water leak adjustment has already been provided to that Property Owner at that property within the previous three (3) year period.
- 3.7 This policy applies to concealed leaks only and does not apply to water loss from circumstances that are considered accessible and able to be actively monitored by the Property Owner.
- 3.8 It is reasonable to expect that the Property Owner regularly maintains their water appliances and related fittings, and therefore these items are not likely to result in a large unexpected leak.

4 Definitions

TERM	DEFINITION
Concealed Leak	Water escaping from the main internal property water supply, where an occupant could not reasonably be expected to know of its immediate existence, as the leak was difficult to locate with little or no visual evidence of the leak. The leak must be in the pipe work servicing the

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	property to the initial connection point of the dwelling or building.
Eligible concession card holder	A person who is an eligible pensioner, or an eligible senior who has reached a pensionable age but does not qualify for a pension from Centrelink or the Department of Veteran's Affairs.
Excess water	For the purposes of this policy, this is the difference in water consumed during the period of the water leak (or other high consumption period), compared to the average of the Property Owner's previous consumption history as recorded by the Council over the immediately preceding three (3) billing periods or other reasonable methodology as determined by the Director Corporate Services.
Financial adjustment	A sum of money that is credited to the Property Owner's account as relief for loss of water due to a concealed leak.
Internal water infrastructure	Water supply pipes on the Property Owner's side of the water meter for the purpose of carrying water from the water meter to the premises and/or property.
Normal water consumption	The daily average consumption used during a comparable consumption period when the leak or other unexplained water use was NOT occurring.
Not-for-Profit Organisation	A charity or other type of public service organisation that does not earn profits for its owners or members. Not-for-Profit organisations must present evidence of a Not-for-Profit status from the Australian Tax Office with the application. Approval for financial adjustment is at the discretion of Charters Towers Regional Council and will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.
Private Off Line Mains	The Property Owner's principal supply pipe in an arrangement of pipes for distributing water, which is not owned or serviced by Charters Towers Regional Council.
Property Water Supply	The underground pipe from the rear of Charters Towers Regional Council's water meter to the initial connection point of the dwelling or building. Where trickle feed or mixed demand plumbing configurations exist, the first point of connection to the water tank or designated on-demand line to the initial connection point of the dwelling or building.
Potable Water	Potable Water supplied by Charters Towers Regional Council
Property Owner	The party responsible for the payment of rates and charges associated with a property within the jurisdiction of Charters Towers Regional Council.

5 Policy

5.1 Charters Towers Regional Council may assist an eligible owner-occupied residential Property Owner:

- a) By providing a reduction of fifty per cent (50%) of the difference between the consumption for the billing period and the average of the Property Owner's previous consumption history as recorded by the Council over the immediately preceding three (3) billing periods; or
- b) Where this method is not practicable (e.g. new property and/or new owner), a reduction of fifty per cent (50%) of the difference between the consumption for the billing period and the consumption that would have occurred for the period if there had been no leak, calculated by the Council taking the average reading for a set period after the leak has been repaired.

- c) With a further twenty-five per cent (25%) reduction in the water lost to the leakage where the Property Owner of the subject property is an Eligible Concession Card Holder
- 5.2 Charters Towers Regional Council may, at its absolute discretion, assist a non-owner-occupied residential and eligible small business Property Owner:
- a) With a minimum financial adjustment of fifteen per cent (15%) of the difference between the consumption for the billing period and the average of the non-owner-occupied residential and eligible small business Property Owner's previous consumption history as recorded by the Council over the immediately preceding three (3) billing periods lost.
- b) With additional assistance on a case-by-case basis including where a tenant is liable for water consumption charges.
- 5.3 Charters Towers Regional Council may assist a genuine Not-for-Profit non-residential Property Owner:
- a) With a minimum financial adjustment of fifty per cent (50%) of the difference between the consumption for the billing period and the average of the not-for profit non-residential Property Owner's previous consumption history as recorded by the Council over the immediately preceding three (3) billing periods lost.
- b) With additional assistance on a case-by-case basis including where a tenant is liable for water consumption charges.
- 5.4 Charters Towers Regional Council will consider one claim from the same Property Owner for the same property no more than once every three (3) years.
- 5.5 Charters Towers Regional Council will provide information to assist the Property Owner to detect concealed leaks through active monitoring of their water meter.
- 5.6 Charters Towers Regional Council requires the Property Owner to lodge their application in writing in the approved Concealed Leak Financial Adjustment Application Form (F0220), outlining how they meet the criteria under this policy and to provide evidence that the leak was repaired by a qualified and appropriately licensed plumber.
- 5.7 Application of this policy is at the discretion of Charters Towers Regional Council, and Property Owner's requests for financial adjustment will be assessed against the eligibility criteria.

6 Specific exclusions

- 6.1 This policy applies to concealed leaks only and does not apply to water loss from the following circumstances, as these are considered accessible and able to be actively monitored by the Property Owner:
- leaks in internal water fittings and appliances including taps, toilet cisterns, hot water systems and other water appliances; or
 - leaks from faulty plumbing or human error resulting in the filling of a rainwater tank, or
 - leaks in property sprinkler or other irrigation systems,
 - leaks in swimming pools, spas, ponds and other outdoor water features, or their related fittings or the pipe work supplying them;
 - leaks caused due to construction, excavation, building, renovation or other similar activity on the property;
 - leaks in hoses, hose pipes, external taps and fittings; or
 - leaks in solar panels or the pipe work supplying them.
- 6.2 Assistance will NOT be provided for:

- leaks or water lost due to vandalism
- leaks in Private Off Line Mains.

6.3 It is reasonable to expect that Property Owners regularly maintain their water appliances and related fittings, and therefore these items are not likely to result in a large unexpected leak.

7 Eligible Property Owners

The assistance outlined in this policy applies in circumstances of concealed leaks of potable water to:

7.1 Residential Property Owners

7.1.1 Owner occupied -

- The property is owned by a Property Owner and used for residential purposes.
- The residential property where the leak occurred must be registered as the principal place of residence of the owner of the property.

7.1.2 Non-owner-occupied -

- The property is owned by a Property Owner but is not occupied by the Property Owner and it is leased to a residential tenant.
- Where the water consumption charges are paid by the tenant of the property, any financial adjustment must be passed onto the tenant.

7.2 Small business Property Owners

7.2.1 Owner occupied -

- The property is used by a Property Owner and used for the purposes of conducting a small business.
- A small business Property Owner is one who uses, or would use no more than 100 kilolitres of drinking water per annum.

7.3 Non-owner occupied -

- The property is owned by a Property Owner but is not occupied by the Property Owner as it is leased to a non-residential tenant who will use the property for the purposes of conducting a small business.
- A small business is one who uses, or would use no more than 100 kilolitres of drinking water per annum.
- Where the water consumption charges are paid by the tenant of the property, any financial adjustment must be passed onto the tenant.

7.4 Other non-residential Property Owners

7.4.1 Not-for-Profit organisations -

- Where a Not-for-Profit organisation requests a financial adjustment for a concealed leak, evidence of the Not-for-Profit status must be provided with the application.

8 Eligibility Criteria

All of the following criteria must be met for a claim for a financial adjustment due to a concealed leak to be considered:

8.1 For the water leak to be considered concealed it must be difficult to locate and there must be little or no visual evidence of the leak. The leak must be in the pipe work servicing the property to the initial connection point of the dwelling or building.

- 8.2 The property on which the leak has occurred must not have been subject to development excavation or construction within the previous six (6) months.
- 8.3 The leak must not be within a dwelling or building on the property.
- 8.4 The leak must be repaired within one (1) month of identification/notification of the leak.
- 8.5 An application must be made in writing by the Property Owner in the approved form (F0220), within three (3) months of identification/notification of the leak.
- 8.6 Original documented evidence such as a plumber's invoice or report showing that the leak has been repaired must be provided from a licensed plumber and must accompany the request.
- 8.7 The owner of the property must not have received a financial adjustment on an account for that property due to a concealed leak within the last three (3) years.
- 8.8 Where a residential property owner is an Eligible Concession Card Holder, additional assistance may be considered.
- 8.9 Where a non-residential Property Owner requests a financial adjustment due to a concealed leak on the basis that they are a Not-for-Profit organisation, evidence of the 'not-for profit' status is required.

9 General conditions

- 9.1 Financial adjustments will apply to potable water consumption.
- 9.2 Before applying for a financial adjustment, the Property Owner must pay the water account in full prior to the close of discount period to be afforded the discount. If the Property Owner is unable to finalise the payment prior to the close of discount, they may seek assistance due to financial hardship. A determination of financial hardship is at the discretion of Director Corporate Services.
- 9.3 Following the granting of an adjustment for a concealed leak, Charters Towers Regional Council will expect that Property Owner will initiate regular monitoring of consumption to ensure that any future leaks are detected early.

10 Responsibility of Charter Towers Regional Council

- 10.1 Charters Towers Regional Council is responsible for the water infrastructure including pipes and water meter up to the property connection point.
- 10.2 If a leak is detected in these pipes, it is Charters Towers Regional Council's responsibility to repair it and Property Owners are requested to contact Council immediately to advise of the leak.

11 Responsibility of the Property Owner

- 11.1 Property Owners are responsible for the installation, repair, maintenance and replacement of all the pipes, fixtures, fittings, and mains connected water tanks on their property up to the water meter.
- 11.2 If a leak is detected in this private infrastructure, it is the Property Owner's responsibility to repair it. Property Owners should contact a qualified and appropriately licensed plumber to repair the leak as soon as possible.

11.3 Property Owners are responsible for monitoring their water meter on a regular basis. This will assist in early identification of any leaks on the property

12 Variations

CTRC reserves the right to vary, replace or terminate this Policy from time to time.

13 Associated Documents

- *Local Government Act 2009*
- *Local Government Regulation 2012*
- S0002 Revenue Policy
- S0003 Revenue Statement
- F0220- Concealed Leak Financial Adjustment Application

14 Policy Version and Revision Information

Policy Authorised by: Mark Crawley
Title: Chief Executive Officer
Policy Maintained by: Mark Crawley
Title: Chief Executive Officer
Review date: July 2015

Original issue: 11 July 2013

Current version: [1]

CEO Signature:

MP CRAWLEY

CONCEALED LEAK FINANCIAL ADJUSTMENT APPLICATION

Important - Eligibility to be considered for a concealed leak remission requires all criteria listed below to be met:

- The leak occurred in the pipe work servicing the property to the initial connection point of the dwelling or building.
- The Property Owner had no reasonable knowledge of the leak's immediate existence, as the leak was difficult to locate with little or no visual evidence of the leak.
- The Property Owner has actively monitored their water metre with monthly readings.
- The leak was not within a dwelling or building on the property, or the result of vandalism or a leak in a private Offline Water Main.
- The property on which the leak has occurred has not been subject to development excavation or construction within the previous six (6) months.
- The leak was repaired within one month of identification/notification of the leak.
- Original documented evidence from a plumber is attached i.e. plumber's invoice or plumber's report showing that the leak has been repaired.
- A financial adjustment for the property has not been given in the previous three (3) years.
- This application has been made within three (3) months of the leak being repaired by a licensed plumber.

Section 1 - Applicant Details

Name: _____

Date: ___ / ___ / ___

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

Telephone: _____

Mobile: _____

Email: _____

Tick appropriate box:

Eligible Concession Card Holder

Not-For-Profit Organisation

(Please provide documentation supporting Not-for-Profit Status)

The information collected on this form will be used by the Charters Towers Regional Council for the purpose of processing and assessment of your application/request. Your personal details will not be disclosed for a purpose outside of Council protocol, except where required by legislation (including the Right to Information Act 2009 and Information Privacy Act 2009). This information will be stored on Council's database. The information collected will be retained as required by the Public Records Act 2002.

CONCEALED LEAK FINANCIAL ADJUSTMENT APPLICATION

Section 2- Details of the Leak (please include additional pages as required)

Section 3 - Location of property - where leak occurred

Rate Assessment Number: _____ - _____ - _____

Is this property part of a Community Title Scheme?

Yes No

Is the leak at the same address as above? Yes

No *If No, please complete the following address details.*

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

Date Leak Repaired: ___ / ___ / ___

Meter Reading on Date of Repair: _____

Refer over the page for instructions on how to locate and read your water meter.

Section 4 - Plumber Details

Business / Plumber's Name: _____

Plumber's License Number: _____ Contact Number: _____

Description of the work performed:

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CONCEALED LEAK FINANCIAL ADJUSTMENT APPLICATION

Section 5- Declaration

I/We _____ believe that the above information is correct.

Signature of Applicant _____

Date: ___ / ___ / ___

Section 6 - Water Meters

The location and type of water meter differs across the Charters Towers Regional Council area.

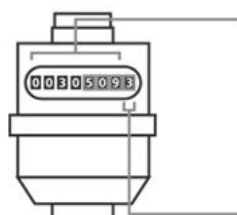
Water meters are above, at, or below ground level with a plastic or metal lid marked 'water meter'. Your water meter is usually located towards the front of your property, near either the left or right boundary.

If you are unable to locate your water meter, please contact Council on 4761 5300 or email mail@charters Towers.qld.gov.au.

Every house has its own individual water meter. In duplexes, group or strata titled properties, there may be only one meter servicing some or all of the dwellings. Your water meter registers all water used at your property and is read by Charters Towers Regional Council. The water you use is shown as water consumption on your water account or summary.

How to read your water meter

There are a range of different meters in use, but with each model the black numbers register kilolitres (kL) (these are used for billing) and the red numbers register litres.

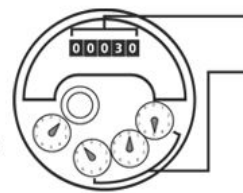


Numbers only meter

- 1 Day one, record all numbers that you see here. Note the time of day.
- 2 Day two, repeat step 1. Conduct this reading at the same time as you did reading on day one.
- 3 Subtract the numbers recorded on day one from day two. This is your household's daily water usage.

Please note, if there are four red digits on the water meter, the last digit (on the far right) is a tenth of a litre. In these instances, do not record the last red digit.

or



Numbers and clock meter

- 1 Day one, record all numbers that you see here. Secondly, record numbers found here. Record the first three red dial numbers in a clockwise direction, that is, right to left. Note the time of day. Both steps should provide you with a number similar to the diagram example 00030509.
- 2 Day two, repeat step one. Conduct this reading at the same time as you did reading on day one.
- 3 Subtract the numbers recorded on day one from day two. This is your household's daily water usage.

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