City of Mercer Island
Leak Adjustment Policy

A leak between the water meter and the house is the homeowner’s responsibility. The City of Mercer Island allows for a credit adjustment on a customer’s utility bill due to a leak for which the homeowner is responsible.

If the leak occurred on the City’s side of the meter or due to malfunction of the water meter, the customer will not be responsible for any excess water charges beyond the average consumption for the same billing period from the previous 3 years.

When a leak happens:

The first step is to find the leak. The leak could be as simple as a faucet dripping or running toilet. Upon request the City can furnish you with leak-detection tablets to check your home’s toilet.

If your faucets and toilets are not the source of the leak, the leak may be outside in your supply line, a water feature, or irrigation system.

Once you have identified the leak, it is important to get the leak fixed promptly. Failure to do so may mean you will not qualify for a billing credit.

How to qualify for an adjustment:

A billing credit for a leak will be granted when all of the following conditions are met:

- The leak must be repaired and the repairs must be permanent.
- No more than thirty (30) days have elapsed since the confirmation of the leak.
- The customer has informed Utility Billing staff that the leak has been repaired by sending in a copy of the repair invoice and a letter stating what type of leak they repaired and what day it was repaired.
- Water consumption for the billing period in question must be at least 120% of the average consumption for the same billing period during the prior three (3) years.

How the leak adjustment is calculated:

Once these conditions are met, the City Finance Department will calculate a leak adjustment. The City does not reimburse for any parts or repair costs that were incurred because of the leak. Customers will be notified if their request for a leak adjustment is not approved or if additional information is required.

If the leak was the cause of vandalism or an oversight by the customer, the City will issue a onetime adjustment during ownership. To qualify for a onetime adjustment, the
documented use must be at least 120% of the average consumption for the same bill period during the prior three (3) years.

The average consumption will be calculated using the same billing period for the prior three (3) years. If there is insufficient history, it may be necessary to establish a typical consumption amount for the period before an adjustment can be made. The customer will be billed for the average consumption at the current rate structure, plus the monthly meter fee. Additionally, the lost water will be charged to the customer at the seasonal wholesale rate charged to the City of Mercer Island by the Seattle Public Utility plus 10 percent. (This additional cost is meant to recapture some of the operations and maintenance impact that the water leak had on system storage, treatment, and delivery, as well as some of the administrative costs).

The difference between this total and the original cost of the water billed will be applied to the customer's account as a credit on the next billing.

The credit will be calculated on no more than two (2) consecutive billing periods for any one leak repair. The customer will be sent a corrected billing statement in the mail.

The customer shall have the right to appeal any disputed portion of the credit calculation to the Utility Billing Supervisor. A call must be made to (206) 275-7784 during regular business hours to begin the appeal process.

Sewer Accounts

Single family accounts which have a leak during the period when average winter water use is calculated (December-March or January-April), will also have their average winter water use adjusted, so that sewer line maintenance charges will not be skewed by the leak.

Multi-family and Commercial/Public accounts may also qualify for an adjustment to City of Mercer Island sewer line maintenance and King County wastewater treatment charges because they are based on actual water consumption. An adjustment can only be made if the water did not enter the sewer system. For instance, a toilet leak would not be eligible.