

# CITY OF SONOMA

RESOLUTION NO. 38 - 2013

## RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SONOMA ADOPTING A RESIDENTIAL WATER LEAK ADJUSTMENT POLICY

WHEREAS, Sonoma's City water is a valuable commodity that must be protected;

WHEREAS, on rare occasions, it would be reasonable to grant residential water customers a water leak adjustment to their water bill, when a water leak occurred not due to their own negligence;

WHEREAS, the City's existing water leak adjustment policy is ambiguous and resulted in frequent leak adjustments to water bills;

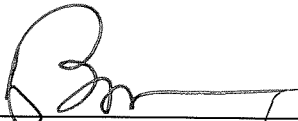
WHEREAS, excessive water leak adjustments resulted in lost water revenue and wasted water where there is less urgency to repair water leaks; and

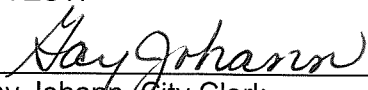
WHEREAS, the City Council desires to update City policies and urge water conservation as part of its 2013/2014 Council Goals.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by this City Council that the Residential Water Leak Adjustment Policy set forth in Exhibit "A" attached hereto is hereby approved.

PASSED AND ADOPTED this 21st day of October 2013 by the following vote:

AYES:	Barbose, Rouse, Gallian, Cook, Brown
NOES:	None
ABSENT:	None
ABSTAIN:	None

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Ken Brown, Mayor

ATTEST:  
  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Gay Johann, City Clerk



## RESIDENTIAL CUSTOMER WATER LEAK ADJUSTMENT POLICY

It is the policy of operation of the water system of the City that the fees and charges imposed or to be imposed in the operation of the water system be designed to defray all cost of operation, to provide for normal replacement of physical facilities, and to provide for system improvement and expansion where needed. (Sonoma Municipal Code §13.04.020)

Notwithstanding this policy, on rare occasions, a leak may occur as a result of a crack, breach, or flaw in the property owner's system and under certain conditions, the City will grant a limited leak credit as described below.

### General Guidelines:

- The water leak must not have occurred as a result of a willful or negligent act on the part of the customer.
- Residential customers must make a written request for a leak adjustment using the attached form and explain the cause of the leak, where the leak occurred, and all other relevant factors. Commercial customers are not eligible for the leak adjustment.
- Proof that the leak was fixed is required. Normally, this will be copies of receipts from the repair person or company, or supply receipts. The customer must be able to demonstrate that the repair was made within a reasonable time.
- Accounts must be paid in full.
- The water usage must be two hundred percent (200%) or more of the normal usage based on customer's consumption over the previous twelve (12) months.
- Water leak credits are limited to \$200.00 and only one (1) credit will be granted every three (3) years during the life of the account, with subsequent credits no sooner than 3 years since the most recent leak credit. The Finance Department Manager will determine how the credit shall be allocated over future water bills. The customer shall not be entitled to any monetary reimbursement or payment from the City. The objective of this Leak Adjustment Policy is to provide a limited credit that will be used to reduce future water bills. Up to two (2) billing cycles demonstrating unusual and substantial increase in usage (as described above) will be eligible for an adjustment. Leak credits will be computed at the tier one water rate.

- To determine normal usage, consumption will be averaged on a monthly basis using the previous twelve (12) months of water consumption. If the account is new and does not have a full year of history, the Finance Department staff will estimate average, monthly consumption based on available history on the property, or usage of similar residences in the neighborhood, and any other relevant factors.
- The decision to grant a leak adjustment shall rest solely with the Finance Department Manager whose decision is final.

#### **The Process:**

- Make the necessary repairs to fix the water leak on your customer side of the water meter.
- Ensure that your current water bill is paid in full.
- Once your leak is repaired and you believe you qualify for a leak adjustment, complete the attached form and submit it immediately to City Hall.
- Staff will review your request and determine whether you may be eligible for the credit. Staff will go to your property and read your meter. The results of the review will be used to verify your eligibility for the credit and determine water usage during the relevant period.
- Staff will calculate the adjustment and leak credit, if any, and will submit all required documentation to the Finance Department Manager for review.
- Once approved or denied, a copy of the Residential Leak Adjustment Request form will be mailed to you reflecting the decision of the Finance Department Manager and the revised amount due or credit on the account.
- Please submit the balance due [if any] immediately upon receipt to prevent the assessment of penalties.

If you believe your situation may qualify for a leak adjustment, complete the attached Residential Leak Adjustment Request form and return to City Hall at No.1 The Plaza, Sonoma, CA 95476.