

# Brooklyn Policy and Procedure Manual

## Sewer Use Adjustment Policy

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- I Purpose:** It is the intent and purpose of the Village of Brooklyn to provide a policy and procedures for obtaining a sewer use adjustment.
- II Policy:** The Brooklyn Water and Sewer Utility are responsible for maintenance and operation of water and wastewater treatment and distribution systems. Each property owner is responsible for installation, maintenance and repair of water piping from curb stop to the main building and wastewater piping from the connection to the service lateral to the main building and all plumbing inside the building.

This policy is intended to address high sewer usage charges caused by water pipe breaks (leaks) or appliance failures that develop inside a building. If the sewer usage is from an outside faucet and can be proved what portion of the use did not go down the sanitary sewer, those gallons could be adjusted on the sewer portion of the billing. This policy only addresses usage that is catastrophic in nature and most of the time beyond the control of the customer.

An adjustment may be considered if usage is at least 150% above the customer's average usage determined by the previous twelve billing cycles. Where a customer has not occupied or owned the property for at least twelve cycles, an average of any cycles available will be used.

- III Scope:** A sewer charge adjustment will be considered if the high usage is a result of:
- A cracked or broken water pipe inside of a building. Such a leak would typically result from a frozen pipe during the winter, a deteriorated pipe or pipe fitting.
  - A defect or malfunction in appliances or plumbing fixtures such as toilets, faucets, water softeners, water heaters, boilers, or furnace humidifiers located in a building or an area where the leak or failure may go unnoticed until a high bill occurs.
  - An outside faucet not used for watering and it can be proven what portion of the gallons used did not go down the sanitary sewer.
  - When the utility informs you to keep your water running so the pipes do not freeze. When this occurs, the water and sewer bill will be adjusted.
  - An error in the meter reading.

A sewer charge adjustment will not be considered in the following cases:

- Customer failed to make repairs to a pipe, appliance or fixture known to have defects or be in need of repair.

- High usage occurred more than 30 days after customer received a high bill or high usage notice.
- Customer is unwilling to allow the Utility staff access or entry to inspect the reported leak/or repairs made.
- High usage is because of watering of lawns, trees or gardens.
- High usage is because of failure to turn off sprinklers, hoses, or sprinkler systems.
- High usage is due to negligent water use or other incident within the customer's control.
- The customer has an outstanding delinquent balance. The customer must submit payment for the outstanding delinquent balance or sign a deferred payment agreement prior to requesting adjustment.

#### IV Procedure:

**Application Process:** In order for any adjustment to be made, a customer must apply for a billing adjustment by completing a Request for Sewer Use Adjustment. Customers must submit the request to the Village Clerk's office with 20 days of the billing date where the excessive use was included. Customers must pay at least the amount of the previous 12 month's average bill and continue to pay subsequent bills during the time the application is under review.

**Application Review:** The Clerk's office and Department of Public Works (DPW) shall review the Request for Sewer Use Adjustment. As part of the review process, the DPW may request an inspection by staff of the property where the usage occurred.

The Clerk's office will notify the applicant of the determination whether or not the case is eligible for an adjustment within 30 days of receiving the request. If the case is determined to be eligible for an adjustment, the Clerk's office will apply the adjustment to the next billing cycle or a revised bill will be sent.

Applicants may appeal the decision to the Village Board. If the customer appeals to the Village Board, the Board shall consider the application within 30 days of the date of appeal and issue a decision within 30 days of hearing the appeal.

#### V Adjustment Terms:

**Sewer Usage Charges:** In cases where a customer shows sufficient evidence that water usage was not discharged to the sanitary sewer system, full credit of sewer usage charges above the customer's previous 12 months average usage will be considered.

In cases where water usage was discharged to the sanitary sewer system, an adjustment of sewer usage charges above the customer's previous 12 months average usage will be considered with limitation to the number of adjustments allowed during the customer's tenancy and/or ownership of the property during a five-year period as follows:

- First occurrence is eligible for an adjustment of 100% of sewer amount above the monthly average of the previous 12 months.

- Second occurrence is eligible for adjustment of 75% of sewer usage amount above the monthly average of the previous 12 months.
- Third occurrence is eligible for adjustment of 50% of sewer usage amount above the monthly average of the previous 12 months.
- Fourth and subsequent occurrences are not eligible for an adjustment.

**Water Usage Charges:** The State of Wisconsin Public Service Commission regulations require customers to pay for water usage. Water charges will not be reduced in the event of a leak. The Utility will only adjust the customer's water charges if it requires them to run water for some reason or if the meter is found to be defective.

## **VI Seasonal Notice to Run Water (See Frozen Lateral Policy)**

If the customer is requested to run their water in winter due to the Frozen Lateral Policy, a sewer and water adjustment will be given using the following formula:

- Base month usage will be determined from the usage of the last month before asked to run water
- During period of running water, monthly usage will be subtracted from the base month usage
- Overage will be credited to both the water and sewer usage charges of customer

Once the customer is informed there is no need to run water, the sewer and water adjustments will stop.

## **VII Temporary Lawn Meters**

After Department of Public Works gives their approval in the spring, customers may rent temporary lawn meters for the season.

- Each temporary meter is rented at a cost of \$7.50 per month to be assessed upon return of the temporary meter.
- A \$100 deposit is required, which will be refunded when the temporary meter is returned. Temporary meters need to be returned before September 30 to avoid damage due to freezing.
- The customer may call the reading in to the clerk's office monthly for a sewer adjustment only, or the customer may wait until the temporary meter is returned at the end of the season for a sewer adjustment. (Pursuant to the PSC, water adjustments cannot be made for temporary water meters.)