

1.1. WATER – STOPPED OR INACCURATE WATER METERS

OBJECTIVE: To ensure that Council applies a consistent approach when considering water meters that have been found to be reading inaccurately or to have stopped.

POLICY:

New water meter test fees were introduced in the 2009-2010 financial year to give consumers a choice should they feel that the water meter serving their property is not recording accurately. This policy details the procedure to be followed to request a meter test and what Council will do if it is found that the meter is reading inaccurately or has stopped.

1. Customer Requests for Meter Testing

A customer can request to have a water meter test undertaken through Customer Services and will be given 2 options in relation to testing a standard 20mm residential meter.

1.1 Option A – Council Meter Test for 20mm Sized Meters Only

Option A is for the customer to pay the necessary fee or charge to allow an on-site Council water meter test that Water Enterprises maintenance staff can undertake using a calibrated 20mm water meter. The calibrated meter used is tested in a meter testing laboratory to ensure its accuracy every 12 months.

It should be noted that this test is not a certified test and will only provide an indication of meter accuracy. A volume of 100 litres will be run through the calibrated meter and the property meter and the readings on the existing property meter will be recorded and compared to the readings on the calibrated meter. Costs associated with water used during the test will be charged to the customer.

If the test indicates that the water meter is found to be reading more than 4% over or under the calibrated water meter reading, Council will replace the meter and refund the test fee to the customer.

If the test indicates that the water meter is reading less than 4% over or under the calibrated water meter reading, Council will not replace the property meter and will not refund the test fee of \$30 to the customer.

The customer may choose to undertake Option B if they are not satisfied with the result of the Council water meter test by paying the appropriate fee for a certified test.

1.2 Option B – Certified Meter Test for 20mm and Larger Sized Meters

Option B is for the customer to pay the necessary fee or charge to allow a meter test that is undertaken by a quality controlled (NATA) accredited testing laboratory to AS 3565.4 - 2007 for Water Supply – In Service Compliance Testing - 20mm meters only. As there are no laboratories in Tamworth capable of undertaking these tests the meters for testing must be sent away. The fee for a certified 20mm meter test is as set down in the annual management plan. For tests on larger water meters the appropriate fee/charge will be provided by Council. Tests on larger meters will also be undertaken by a NATA registered laboratory and will be performed in accordance with AS 3565.1 - 2004 (Cold Water Meters).

Once the appropriate fee/charge has been paid the water meter to be tested will be temporarily replaced with another meter, and sent for testing.

If the test indicates that the accuracy of the water meter is more than 4% over or under the maximum percentage error for a specified flow rate range, Council will refund the test fee and replace the property water meter.

If the test indicates that the water meter is reading less than 4% over or under the maximum percentage error, Council will replace the temporary water meter at the customer's property with the returned meter. Council will not refund the test fee.

1.3 Calculation of Meter Error

The calculation of the meter error based on the Council meter test results will be undertaken as follows:

$$\{[(\text{Reading A}) \text{ minus } (\text{Reading B})] \div [\text{Reading B}]\} \times 100\% = \% \text{ Meter Error } (\% M_e)$$

Where: *Reading A is the number of litres that pass through the property meter.*

Reading B is the number of litres that pass through the calibrated meter.

The meter error based on the certified test result will be indicated as the maximum error determined for a particular flow rate on a NATA certified test report.

1.4 Billing Adjustments

If the meter is shown to be reading in favour of the property owner/consumer, i.e. the meter reading is less than that shown on the calibrated reading then the consumer has benefited and Council will take no further action in relation to billing.

If the test results determined from the Council field test or the certified test, indicate that the meter is reading more than 4% over the calibrated water meter, in the case of the Council test, or the percentage of inaccuracy as given by the certified test, then the property owner/customer will be credited an amount for consumption as follows.

$$[(Y + (L-P)) \times (100 \div (100 + \% M_e))] = V_w$$

Where *Y = consumption in the billing period which prompted the inquiry.*

L = consumption reading on the day the meter was replaced

P = consumption reading on the day the meter was last read

Me = % Meter Error (refer Section 1.3 above)

V_w = Adjusted volume of water that should have been attributed to the owner/customer account.

The consumer is to have their consumption records adjusted to V_w for the billing period queried plus the consumption up until the meter was replaced.

For example:

Value Y = 100 kL

Period Queried = 1 January to 30 March

Consumption amount billed = 100 kilolitres

Value (L-P) = 20 kL

Meter Changed Date = 20 April

Consumption amount billed between 30 March & 20 April = 20 kilolitres

Value (Y + (L-P)) = 120 kL

Total Consumption prior to Adjustment = 100 + 20 = 120 kL

% M_e

Percent meter is found to be in error (over reading) = 5%

Calculation

$$120 \times (100/(100+5)) = V_w = 114.3 \text{ kL}$$

Consumption of 120 kL for the period 1 January to 20 April shall be adjusted to 114.3 kL.

The property owners/customers account will be credited with an amount that equates to the reduced consumption as shown above multiplied by the appropriate usage charges.

If the property owner/customer elects to have the meter sent away for testing as per Option B above then the results from this certified test will negate any results from the Council test as detailed in Option A. This includes if the certified test finds that the meter is accurate, contrary to the Council test, and/or the percentage that the meter is found to be inaccurate is different to that determined by the Council test.

2. Meter stopped – Billing adjustments

If a meter is found to have stopped then the meter will be replaced and the customer/property owner will be charged for water consumed during the period the meter was stopped based on the following:

2.1 Residential

The average of average annual daily consumption for a similar period in the preceding three years if available (regardless of ownership of the property), multiplied by the number of days since the meter was last read, multiplied by the appropriate charge.

If less than three years previous history is available then charges associated with consumption during the period since the meter was last read will be waived.

If an automatic meter reading device was fitted onto the water meter assembly, then the current daily usage can be applied for the number of days for the period between when the meter was last read and when the meter stopped from the readout provided by the device. The average of average annual daily consumption adjustment described above will also apply for the number of days from when the meter stopped to the date of the failed meter read.

2.2 Non - Residential

The average of average annual daily consumption for the preceding period (regardless of ownership of the property) multiplied by the number of days since the meter was last read, multiplied by the appropriate charge.

If an automatic meter reading device was fitted onto the water meter assembly, then the current daily usage can be applied for the number of days for the period between when the meter was last read and when the meter stopped from the readout provided by the device. The average of average annual daily consumption will also apply for the number of days from when the meter stopped to the date of the failed meter read.

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