

City of Mercer Island Leak Adjustment Policy

A leak between the water meter and the house is the property owner's responsibility. The City of Mercer Island allows for one credit adjustment, every five years during the term of home ownership, on a customer's utility bill due to a leak for which the property owner is responsible.***

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

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 a running toilet. Upon request the City can furnish 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 the following conditions are met:

- The leak must be repaired, and the repairs must be permanent.
- The leak adjustment request must be made by the property owner within 30 days of discovering the leak and notifying the City, or the date notice is sent from the City. *
- The customer has informed Utility Billing staff that the leak has been repaired and shares a copy of the repair invoice and a letter stating what type of leak and date it was repaired. Failure to provide repair receipts will result in an automatic denial of this leak adjustment request. **
- 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. The three years of usage is specific to the property for which the leak is being requested.
- All customers requesting a billing adjustment are required to pay their bill in full or make payment arrangements while this adjustment is being processed. Call utility billing customer service at 206-275-7602 to establish a payment arrangement.

How the leak adjustment is calculated:

Once these conditions are met, the 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.

The average consumption will be calculated using the same billing period for the prior three (3) years for the specific property. If there is insufficient history, staff may 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, the monthly meter fee, plus a 10 percent administrative fee based on the original invoice. The administrative fee covers a portion of the costs associated with water storage, treatment, and delivery as well as staff time to operate and maintain the water distribution system.

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. The difference between this lost water subtotal and the original invoice 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 within the 5-year eligibility period. The customer will be sent a corrected billing statement in the mail.

In the event of a dispute over an adjustment a utility customer may request a meeting with a city staff empowered to resolve the billing dispute. A call must be made to (206) 275-7784 during regular business hours to begin the dispute 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. *

If the 30-day timeline is not followed and a standard leak adjustment is not granted, the sewer line maintenance will **not** be adjusted separately at a later date. (e.g., a leak occurs in January and the City contacts customer notifying them of high usage indicative of a leak and the customer does not respond but then reaches out after the 30-day timeline noting the sewer line maintenance has increased and requests an adjustment on the sewer line maintenance, an adjustment will not be granted.)

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 for a sewer adjustment.

** In the case that a leak is discovered in an irrigation system during the winterization process or the time of year when winterization would be happening and the property owner is not able to find a company that will repair an irrigation leak due to the time of year, they must procure a notice of intent to complete the repair in a timely manner. There is no exception to the 30-day timeline for an adjustment to be granted for reasons other than a situation where a company/ contractor is not willing to perform the work to repair the leak and the property owner is not able to perform the work themselves.*

*** If a repair is done by the property owner themselves, ex: repairing or replacing toilet parts, all new parts must be purchased and proof of purchase in the form of receipts included to meet the threshold for adjustment qualification.*

**** If there is a tenant residing in the property there is no change as far as application of this policy. Whether a tenant handles the repair of a leak and request of an adjustment or a property owner/landlord there is no change in the City's administration or role in the process. If there is a dispute over interpretation of responsibility regarding an increased billing due to a leak, that falls on the landlord and tenant to sort between themselves.*



CITY OF MERCER ISLAND - FINANCE DEPARTMENT
 9611 SE 36th Street
 Mercer Island, WA 98040
mifinance@mercerisland.gov

Leak Adjustment Request Form

Customer Information:

Property Owner Name: _____

Account #: _____

Service Address: _____ City: _____ State: __ Zip: _____

Mailing Address: _____ City: _____ State: __ Zip: _____

E-mail: _____ Phone #: _____

Leak Repair Information:

Exact location of leak: _____

Approximate date leak noticed: _____ Date leak repaired: _____

Leak repaired by: _____

Description of the leak and repair:

Above sections fully completed Repair receipt included

PLEASE NOTE: Completion of this form does not guarantee an adjustment will be made on your account, if any of the required documents are missing the request will be immediately denied. I have read, understood and agree with the leak adjustment requirements.

Property Owner Signature: _____ Date: _____

