

CITY OF THOROLD POLICY AND PROCEDURE MANUAL

FINANCE		
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WATER-SEWER BACK-BILL ADJUSTMENTS

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish the parameters for determining the amounts owed by customers of all Customer Classes for the use of Water and Sewer services from the City of Thorold not previously charged.

2. Information

Under the City's Waterworks By-law, the water customer is held responsible for full payment for all water that passes through their water meter. The City's Wastewater By-law) provides the authority to levy a sewer charge, based on water consumption for sewer services provided to a property.

The City of Thorold is dedicated to ensuring the proper billing of approved water and sewer charges, in an equitable and fair manner.

3. Definitions

Back-Billing

A "back-bill", often referred to as a "catch-up" bill, is that portion of a bill which represents charges not previously billed for service that was actually delivered to the Customer during a period before the current billing cycle where the original billings are discovered to be too low (underbilled). The cause of the billing error may include any of the following reasons or combination thereof:

- (a) stopped meter;
- (b) metering equipment failure;
- (c) missing meter now found;
- (d) switched meters;
- (e) double metering;
- (f) incorrect meter connections;
- (g) incorrect use of any prescribed apparatus respecting the registration of a meter;
- (h) incorrect meter multiplier;

- (i) the omission/application of an incorrect rate;
- (j) incorrect reading of meters or data processing; and
- (k) connected to sewer system, but not charged for sewer
- (l) water bypass, tampering, fraud, theft or any other criminal act.

Customer:

Per the City bylaws: Water and sewer charges shall be charged and billed to the owner of the premises, regardless of who occupies the property. As a courtesy only, and without limiting the owner's liability, the Corporation will, at the request of the owner, mail or deliver to tenants of the premises a copy of the bill rendered to the owner.

Therefore, "Customer" shall be defined as the owner, and/or occupant and/or tenant, with the ultimate responsibility for any payments under this policy being that of the owner's.

4. Limitations on Rendering a Back-Bill

The City, on a majority of occasions, will limit bills for services rendered to no more than twenty-four months before the City became aware of the circumstance, error or condition that caused the underbilling.

4.1 At the discretion of the Director of Finance, (or designated delegate), this limitation may not apply in the following situations where there is evidence of'

- 1) fraud, meter by pass, and/or theft of service situations;
- 2) that, despite notification from the City of a problem causing potential underbilling, the Customer refuses access to the property to allow for maintenance to metering equipment; and
- 3) the Customer was aware of the cause of the underbilling and knowingly failed to notify the City of the problem.

4.2 For residential Customers, the back-bill will also be limited if there has been a change in property ownership to reflect when the current owner (not tenant or other occupant) takes over the account.

5. Payment Period for a Back-Bill

The City will offer the majority of Customers (ie. Owners) an optional payment arrangement to pay a back-bill. If requested by the Customer (ie. Owner), the repayment term will be equivalent, in length, to the lesser of the back-billing period, or nine months. The repayment will be interest free and in equal instalments corresponding to the normal billing cycle. However, delinquency in payment of such instalments will be subject to the usual late payment charges.

In the case of issues identified in Section 4.1, the bill shall become immediately due and payable within 30 days. Delinquency in payment of such circumstances will be subject to the usual late payment charges, and collection recourses.