



**Central  
Tablelands  
Water**

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**Concealed Leaks Policy**

## DOCUMENT CONTROL

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## Purpose

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The purpose of this Policy is to outline how Central Tablelands Water (CTW) will apply water account adjustments in relation to higher than usual water consumption caused by undetected water leakages.

## Policy Statement

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Council provides potable water to the boundary of a property; water that has subsequently passed through a meter service connection becomes the responsibility of that property owner. The property owner is fully responsible for maintaining water plumbing located on their property.

This policy is not intended to provide full compensation to customers for water charges as a consequence of an undetected water leak on their property. As an act of good faith and the interest of good public relations, CTW provides a means by which an adjustment to their water account can be obtained, subject to the provisions of this policy being met.

This policy is only available for residential service connections, no relief under this policy will be provided to non-residential consumers.

Customers should not rely on CTW to notify of water leaks, but should monitor their water consumption by actively monitoring their water meter and undertake visual inspections where possible of their water supply plumbing.

## Policy Objectives

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The property owner (as listed on the water account) is responsible for the reticulation, use and payment of all water which passes through their water meter. The property owner, whether residential or non-residential, is responsible for the maintenance and repair of their internal plumbing.

If a property is rented, it is the owner's responsibility to make an application under the policy, not the tenant. Any payment arrangements between the tenant and owner in respect of water charges has no bearing upon the assessment of the application. Failure by the tenant to notify the owner of a concealed leak is a matter between the owner and the tenant.

CTW has no obligation to grant an allowance on water accounts affected by leaks in private plumbing. It will only consider, at its absolute discretion, applications for water account adjustments due to undetected water leakage which are made in writing.

The Director of Finance and Corporate Services is responsible for the administration of this policy. The General Manager will ultimately determine and approve all allowances relating to applications for adjustments up to 1,000 kilolitres (kL). Any adjustments over 1,000 kL will be directed to Council for determination. The General Manager will determine and approve all allowances relating to applications from CTW staff and councillors in accordance with the eligibility criteria of this policy.

## Policy Scope

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CTW will apply an adjustment to the customer's water account in accordance with the criteria and rules set out in this policy and related documentation.

This policy applies to customers as per Appendix A where a concealed leak has occurred on the property, resulting in excessive water use. (excessive water use is determined by looking at consumption for the same quarterly period for the 3 preceding years)

This policy applies to concealed leaks only and does not apply to water loss from:

- Leaking taps, toilet cisterns, hot water systems or other water appliances;
- Faulty plumbing or human error resulting in the filling of a rainwater tank;
- Property sprinkler or other irrigation systems; or
- Swimming pools, spas, ponds and other outdoor water features, or their related fittings.

A leak is considered to be concealed if it is in a place where a reasonable person would not have been able to observe that water loss was occurring. This includes but is not limited to pipes located under slabs of concrete or in any remote location where it would be not possible to observe evidence of the leak.

Unless expressly stated otherwise in the eligibility criteria outlined in this policy, any customer seeking an adjustment to a water account must apply in writing to CTW and must be the water account holder for that property.

Should an application for relief under the concealed leaks policy be unsuccessful, Council will consider requests for a payment arrangement including extended time for payment or waiving interest charges. Interest will not be charged for any time period spent by Council in assessing the application.

All approved adjustments will be applied to the water account for the property where the concealed leak occurred; monetary refunds will not be issued.

## Eligibility Criteria

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In the case of a water leak on the property, a customer will be eligible for an adjustment to their water account charges if they meet **all** of the following criteria:

1. The leak was concealed as per definition and applicability criteria above;
2. The water service connection is classified as a residential service.
3. The customer took action to permanently repair the leak within 7 calendar days of becoming made aware of the leak.
4. The CTW account holder completes the Concealed Water Leakage Allowance Application form (Annex B) and submits this together with a licenced plumber's invoice to support the application. It should be noted that all pipe work repair, in accordance with the *Plumbing and Drainage Act 2002* and related plumbing standard AS/NZS 3500, should be completed by a licenced plumber. Where the customer

completes the repair, they should arrange for a licenced plumber to check the repair to ensure compliance with relevant legislation and plumbing standards.

5. Applications will not be considered in respect of any property that has been vacant for more than 6 months.
6. Applications will not be considered where the owner has had a previous approved application with respect to the current property
7. Any applications where the leak occurred more than 30 days prior to the application will not be considered.
8. If an account is in arrears for over 6 months, without an approved payment arrangement in place, no relief is available under this policy.
9. Non-residential connections and government agencies are not eligible for relief under this policy.

Where the leak has occurred within a community title scheme (CTS) the application for an adjustment must be submitted as follows:

- Where the CTS is individually sub-metered and the sub-meters have been approved to be read and billed by CTW, and the leak occurred on private property, i.e. the leak consumption registered on the individual sub-meter, the property owner must submit the required documentation.
- Where the CTS is individually sub-metered, and the sub-meters have been approved to be read and billed by CTW, and the leak occurred on common land, the body corporate must submit the required documentation.
- Where the CTS is not individually sub-metered, or the sub-meters have not been approved to be read and billed by CTW, the body corporate acting on behalf of all property owners must submit the required documentation.

In relation Strata title arrangements, the Body Corporate would be expected to apply for relief under this policy in respect of concealed leaks in common areas. Individual owners within the Strata complex would be expected to apply in respect of concealed leaks affecting their individual properties.

The rebate amount will be provided as per Appendix A, the amount rebated will also be determined by the policy in place at the date of rebate application. The amount of the rebate applied will be at the usage rate at the time the leak was identified.

Appendix A details the maximum period/s for when an account can be adjusted and the period/s should include the period in which the leak was repaired and if the leak was not repaired within 7 calendar days, then the period in which the customer was notified of a potential water leak or high water consumption.

## **Not-for-profit Organisations and Associations**

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Where the leak occurred on not-for-profit property, the application must be made by the appropriate administrator for that not-for-profit organisation or association.

Not-for-profit organisations or associations may be requested to provide evidence of a not-for-profit status with a rebate application. Approval for a rebate is at the discretion of the General Manager and will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

It is important to note that only residential connections operated by a Not for Profit Organisation are eligible for relief under this policy.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

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The General Manager and Director of Finance and Corporate Services are responsible for ensuring the implementation of this Policy.

## Annex A – Concealed Leak Rebate

Customer Type	CTW water usage rebate % offered above average usage*	Maximum period for which a rebate can be applied	Frequency at which rebate can be applied for by property owner/s at the subject property for the water usage component of the rebate
Residential properties only^	50%	Two billing quarters	Once

^ Residential properties include rural residential connections but not rural connections.

\* 50% of the difference between the average 3 corresponding periods and the actual water used. Where prior period usage data is not available for 3 previous corresponding periods then the most recent available usage data will be used.

The average daily consumption for approved dialysis and medical customers shall include annual allowances as per CTW policy.

## Annex B – Concealed Leak Allowance Application

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### Concealed water leakage allowance application

#### Owner Details:

Owners Surname/s:	
Owners <b>full</b> Given Names:	
Phone Number - Business Hours:	Home:

#### Property Details:

Customer Account Number:
Property Address:

#### Leakage Details:

Where did the leak occur? (provide an explanation; underground, was it visible?)		
What caused the leakage? (corrosion, faulty installation, tree roots etc.)		
Date leakage detected:		
How was the leakage detected? (notified by CTW, found it when driving past etc.)		
Please attach any further information that will assist us with the application (application for hardship etc.)		
Information Attached?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Have you applied for a leakage allowance previously?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

#### Repair Details:

Date repaired:
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Did a licensed plumber repair the leak?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
If yes, please attach a copy of the plumbers invoice, along with an explanation from the plumber regarding the concealed leakage and return with your application		

## Declaration

By signing this application, I declare that the information is true and correct. I confirm that I have read the criteria for applying for a concealed leakage concession.

Signature: _____	Date: _____
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## Criteria for Financial Relief Due to Concealed Water Leaks

1. CTW has no obligation to adjust water accounts affected by leakage in private plumbing. It will consider applications for water leakage allowances due to undetected water leaks in the following circumstances:
  - i. The undetected water leak was in a location that was not readily visible or apparent (e.g. below ground, under a concrete slab, in a wall cavity etc.)
  - ii. The undetected leak was repaired by a licenced plumber in a timely and effective manner to minimise water loss. Repairs must be completed within 7 days of a water account being issued or the customer becoming aware of a possible leak via notification by CTW or otherwise.

A customer is deemed to be notified by CTW of a possible water leak:

  - On the day a customer receives a “Higher Than Normal Usage” card via mail or similar notification by a CTW representative
  - On the day a CTW staff member telephones the property owner (or managing agent).
2. This policy applies to concealed leaks upon residential property only and does not apply to water loss from:
  - Leaking taps, toilet cisterns, hot water systems or other water appliances;
  - Faulty plumbing or human error resulting in the filling of a rainwater tank;
  - Property sprinkler or other irrigation systems; or
  - Swimming pools, spas, ponds and other outdoor water features, or their related fittings.
3. All requests for undetected water leakage allowance must be in writing and provide the following information:
  - i. A statement from the property owner clearly outlining:
    - the date and circumstances leading to the leak being detected;
    - the date the leakage was repaired by a licenced plumber;
    - the cause of the leakage;
    - the reason why the leakage was not readily visible or apparent; and
  - ii. A statement signed by the licenced plumber who repaired the leak, clearly explaining why the leak was undetected by the customer and certifying that the repairs comply with AS/NZS 3500
4. An application for undetected water leakage allowance may be declined if it is found that:
  - i. the customer failed or neglected any visible or obvious defects in their private water service;

- ii. the customer ignored or failed to investigate any visible signs of leakage including soaking or dampness in walls, consistently wet grass or damp patches in lawns or running toilets;
  - iii. the customer failed to repair and or renew the faulty pipework, fittings and fixtures for which they are responsible;
  - iv. any documentation or statements received are found to be misleading or false;
  - v. the undetected leakage was caused by wilful, accidental or negligent damage to the customers internal plumbing
5. If an application for water leakage allowance is not approved, the customer will be advised in writing and granted a further 28 days from the date of the advice to either pay the account in full or enter into a suitable payment arrangement.
  6. If an application for a leakage allowance is approved, the customer will be advised in writing that payment of the adjusted account will be due 28 days from the date of the advice.
  7. A water leakage allowance will be granted on a "one off" basis. However, the allowance can be applied over two consecutive billing periods where there is evidence that the leak may have affected the consumption charges over more than one billing cycle. Requests for reduction in water charges for subsequent water leaks will not be considered.
  8. Where a leakage allowance is granted, the following will apply:
    - i. the water account for the period will be adjusted based on the average consumption for the period that the undetected leakage occurred
    - ii. the average consumption will be calculated by averaging three (3) previous corresponding billing periods (i.e. if the water account in question was issued in May, the three (3) previous corresponding May water accounts will be averaged)
    - iii. the leakage allowance is applied to the billing period/s in which the undetected leakage occurred up to a maximum of two (2) consecutive billing periods.

**Office Use Only**

**Date received -**

Account Number:		Letter received from Plumber:	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Pensioner:	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>		
Approved:	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Signed General Manager:	
Total Credit:			Journal Number:	
Customer Notified:	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Date Journal Processed:	