

Finance Policy and Procedure Manual

City of Bristol, Tennessee

Subject	Number
Billing Adjustments	E - 330

Effective Date	Revision	Page	of
June 27, 2018	2	1	6

1.0 POLICY STATEMENT: The following policy is established to create specified guidelines to assist employees in the adjustment of customer accounts related to the provision of utility services.

2.0 PROCEDURES: The following procedures shall be followed:

2.1 The City of Bristol, Tennessee will adjust a residential customer's account for a water leak in the service line that runs between the meter and the customer's residence. Each adjustment total must be a minimum amount of at least \$5.00. An adjustment will be calculated in the following manner:

2.1.1 The customer must submit copies of the bill and receipt or canceled check paid to repair the leak in order to qualify for an adjustment.

Customers who repair the leak themselves shall provide a signed written statement that details the nature of the leak, type of repair made, and the repair date. The serviceman will be sent to confirm that the indicator is no longer turning and that the repair appears to have been performed, if a more current reading has not been obtained.

2.1.2 Each customer is typically allowed one billing adjustment per 12 month period that a Customer Service Representative (CSR) is allowed to authorize. Total adjustment amount cannot exceed \$100.00 without further approval. The Customer Service Manager or Finance Director must authorize any adjustment exceeding \$100.00. Additional adjustments can be authorized by the Customer Service Manager or Finance Director.

2.1.3 An adjustment can be made for the highest month of water charges and for up to two consecutive months of sewer charges.

Number	Revision	Page	of
E - 330	2	2	6

2.1.4 An adjustment will be calculated based upon the average monthly meter reading for the twelve months prior to the month being adjusted. If utility services have been in place < 3 months, adjustment will be made after 3 months of normal usage has been established. If utility services have been in place > 3 months and < 12 months, readings will be averaged for the total months of service available for use in the adjustment calculation.

2.2 The City of Bristol, Tennessee may adjust a residential customer's account due to the loss of water directly associated with a leak inside the residence that does not enter into the sewer system. Examples of this type of incident are the breakage of internal water lines, water heater leaks, outside spigot leaks, and faulty washing machine hoses. An adjustment will not be provided for usage resulting from instances such as irrigation, pressure washing, running commode, or water left on in error. Each adjustment total must be a minimum amount of at least \$5.00. An adjustment will be calculated in the following manner:

2.2.1 No adjustment will be made for any water usage that enters into the sewer system.

Customers who repair the leak themselves shall provide a signed written statement that details the nature of the leak, type of repair made, and the repair date. The serviceman will be sent to confirm that the indicator is no longer turning and that the repair appears to have been performed, if a more current reading has not been obtained.

2.2.2 Each customer is typically allowed one billing adjustment per 12 month period that a Customer Service Representative (CSR) is allowed to authorize. Total adjustment amount cannot exceed \$100.00 without further approval. The Customer Service Manager or Finance Director must authorize any adjustment exceeding \$100.00. Additional adjustments can be authorized by the Customer Service Manager or Finance Director.

2.2.3 An adjustment can be made for up to two consecutive months of sewer charges.

Number	Revision	Page	of
E - 330	2	3	6

- 2.2.4 An adjustment will be calculated based upon the average monthly meter reading for the twelve months prior to the month being adjusted. If utility services have been in place < 3 months, adjustment will be made after 3 months of normal usage has been established. If utility services have been in place > 3 months and < 12 months, readings will be averaged for the total months of service available for use in the adjustment calculation.
- 2.3 The City of Bristol, Tennessee will typically allow one adjustment annually to the sewer charge for filling a residential swimming pool or outdoor pond and to maintain foundation systems per professional analysis. Each adjustment total must be a minimum amount of at least \$5.00. An adjustment will be calculated in the following manner:
- 2.3.1 A Meter Reader must verify a pool or pond is at the residence prior to any adjustments being made. The CSR shall note verification date and person performing verification on the account for future reference.
- 2.3.2 Each customer is typically allowed one billing adjustment per 12 month period that a Customer Service Representative (CSR) is allowed to authorize. Total adjustment amount cannot exceed \$100.00 without further approval. The Customer Service Manager or Finance Director must authorize any adjustment exceeding \$100.00. Additional adjustments can be authorized by the Customer Service Manager or Finance Director.
- 2.3.3 An adjustment can be made for up to two consecutive months of sewer charges.
- 2.3.4 An adjustment will be calculated based upon the average monthly meter reading for the twelve months prior to the month being adjusted. If utility services have been in place < 3 months, adjustment will be made after 3 months of normal usage has been established. If utility services have been in place > 3 months and < 12 months, readings will be averaged for the total months of service available for use in the adjustment calculation.

Number	Revision	Page	of
E - 330	2	4	6

2.3.5 One additional adjustment may be made due to the repair of leaks and related pool problems. The customer must supply a copy of the bill and receipt or a cancelled check paid to repair the leak in order to qualify for an additional adjustment.

2.4 The City of Bristol, Tennessee will not adjust water charges for a commercial account. An adjustment is available for sewer charges of a commercial account for a water leak in either the service line that runs between the meter and the place of business or a leak inside the business dwelling that does not enter into the sewer system. For purposes of policy application, mobile home parks are defined as commercial accounts and shall be treated as such.

2.4.1 The customer must submit copies of the bill and receipt or canceled check paid to repair the leak in order to qualify for an adjustment.

Customers who repair the leak themselves shall provide a signed written statement that details the nature of the leak, type of repair made, and the repair date. The serviceman will be sent to confirm that the indicator is no longer turning and that the repair appears to have been performed, if a more current reading has not been obtained.

2.4.2 Each customer is typically allowed one billing adjustment per 12 month period that a Customer Service Representative (CSR) is allowed to authorize. Total adjustment amount cannot exceed \$100.00 without further approval. The Customer Service Manager or Finance Director must authorize any adjustment exceeding \$100.00. Additional adjustments can be authorized by the Customer Service Manager or Finance Director. Mobile home parks are allowed two billing adjustments per 12 month period and account, if the number of dwellings exceeds 10 homes per account.

2.4.3 An adjustment can be made for up to two consecutive months of sewer charges.

Number	Revision	Page	of
E - 330	2	5	6

- 2.4.4 An adjustment will be calculated based upon the average monthly meter reading for the twelve months prior to the month being adjusted. If utility services have been in place < 3 months, adjustment will be made after 3 months of normal usage has been established. If utility services have been in place > 3 months and < 12 months, readings will be averaged for the total months of service available for use in the adjustment calculation.
- 2.5 The City of Bristol, Tennessee will evaluate requests for an adjustment of solid waste charges and determine eligibility. An adjustment will be calculated in the following manner:
- 2.5.1 The customer shall contact a CSR and request an adjustment for charges that are unsubstantiated, such as a trash cart that was previously returned to Public Works or a bulk item billing that was not for the correct location.
- 2.5.2 A CSR shall contact Public Works and obtain verification of the customer's data and determine if any adjustment is warranted. A CSR is allowed to authorize adjustment amounts for a single billing period or for a bulk item billing. The Customer Service Manager or Finance Director must authorize any adjustment related to more than one billing period. Each City resident is required to pay the monthly solid waste charge. A charge cannot be removed if refuse services are not being utilized since the residence has accessible brush and curbside collection services.
- 2.6 The City of Bristol, Tennessee will evaluate requests for an adjustment of stormwater charges and determine eligibility. An adjustment will be calculated in the following manner:
- 2.6.1 The customer shall contact a CSR and request an adjustment for charges that are either believed to be unsubstantiated or in need of a revision, such as being charged a stormwater charge for a garage that no longer exists.
- 2.6.2 A CSR shall contact Public Works and obtain verification of the customer's data and determine if any adjustment is warranted. A CSR is allowed to authorize adjustment amounts for a single billing period. The Customer Service Manager or Finance Director must authorize any adjustment related to more than one billing period.

Number	Revision	Page	of
E - 330	2	6	6

2.6.3 Each City resident is required to pay the monthly stormwater charge. A charge cannot be removed as long as the basis for the assessment remains.

2.7 The City of Bristol, Tennessee may adjust an account for charges previously not billed correctly for various reasons, such as a result of inaccurate rates, customer provided data, or reading data changes. Adjustments may be calculated and billed for a period not in excess of thirty-six months. Identification of accounts with billing discrepancies shall be brought to the attention of the Customer Service Manager who will recommend the corrective plan of action for each situation. Upon approval of the recommendation by either the Customer Service Manager or Finance Director, the corrective plan of action shall be implemented by staff.

3.0 RESPONSIBILITY: It is the responsibility of the Customer Service Representatives to follow the directives of this policy. The Customer Service Manager is responsible for ensuring that this policy is followed.

APPROVED:



Tara Musick
Finance Director