

# BUDGET & FINANCE DEPARTMENT ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE

## PROCEDURE NO. 503

## UTILITY FEES ADJUSTMENT/WAIVERS PROCEDURE

Effective: January 1, 2020

Revised: August 3, 2020

Section: 33-10

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### **City Code Reference:**

The Budget and Finance Department may adjust charges and/or fees on a customer's account that occurred or may occur as a result of errors, omissions, unusual usage or other extraordinary circumstances. Glendale City Code Sec. 33-10 authorizes the City to adopt administrative procedures setting forth the criteria for adjusting charges and/or fees.

### **Purpose:**

The Miscellaneous Customer Service Fees are established by a resolution of the City Council. This administrative procedure establishes the process the Budget and Finance Department uses to adjust charges and/or fees on a customer's account.

### **Definitions:**

"City" shall mean the City of Glendale, its employees or other authorized representatives performing certain governmental functions and duties.

### **Procedure:**

#### **Miscellaneous Fee Adjustments**

1. Miscellaneous Customer Service Fees (such as Unauthorized Usage, After Hours Reconnect, Delinquent Disconnect, Broken Meter Lock, Non-Sufficient Funds, Same Day/Special Trip, Door Tag, Letter/Notice and Late Penalties) are charged based on a service that is performed and are designed to recover costs associated with the service.
2. Fees will be waived upon determination that the fee was the result of City error.
3. Fees may be adjusted or waived on a case-by-case basis upon determination that the fee was charged due to an omission, usage discrepancy or other extraordinary circumstances. See Waiver/Adjustment Authority levels listed below.
4. Customer Service/Billing employees are prohibited from starting/stopping service, accessing, taking payments, or processing transactions of any kind on their own personal account(s), accounts of relatives, and the accounts of anyone with whom they have or have had a personal or financial relationship.
5. Account adjustments in excess of \$100 must be requested in writing to the Customer Service Manager.
6. If requested adjustments are not granted, disputes may be made pursuant to City Code Section 33-11(F)

## Utility Rate Adjustment/Waiver Procedure

### **Leaks, Usage Discrepancy or Other Extraordinary Circumstances**

1. Property owners are responsible for all leaks or damages that result from leaks from any equipment on the owner's side of the meter to the property.
2. Leak adjustments may be granted upon a customer's written request when unusual usage (such as leaks, theft, or other unknown consumption) results in high water bill. See Waiver/Adjustment Authority levels listed below.
3. All other applicable charges and taxes will be applied after the adjustment is given.
4. Any failure of Glendale to render a complete monthly bill shall not be a waiver of the City's right to payment for services supplied by Glendale.
5. Leak adjustments in excess of \$100 must be requested in writing to the Customer Service Manager.

### **Leaks and Unexplained Usage Adjustments**

Customer Service adjustments are calculated by charging a residential/commercial customer their average consumption as a base and all excess water charges are adjusted and charged at the lowest water tiered rate as indicated in Chapter 33-Appendix 1.

Adjustments will be considered when all of the following conditions are met:

- Proof that the leak has been repaired; and
- Water use by the customer has returned to normal levels; and
- The use in question was more than 3 times the normal use; and
- An adjustment has not been applied on the account within the past three (3) years; and
- The water use in question occurred within the past six (6) months.

No adjustments are made available for construction water accounts.

### **Meter Read Adjustments**

Glendale may compute, re-compute or adjust bills for customer accounts based on a reasonable usage estimate made by the City if any of the following conditions apply:

- The meter fails to register accurately;
- The meter reader is unable to obtain a meter reading because of locked gates, safety concerns, weather conditions, or other deterrent;
- Service is temporarily supplied without a meter; or
- A device has been used to circumvent the accurate registration of metering equipment.

### **Sewer Adjustments**

Sewer charges are recalculated each May based on the average water consumption during the months of December, January, February and March. New accounts established during the averaging period will not have a full three-month winter average; therefore, sewer charges for those accounts will be based on a typical average for similar property types.

## Utility Rate Adjustment/Waiver Procedure

Adjustments will be considered for Residential and Commercial customers who use a large percentage of their domestic water usage for landscaping purposes or who experienced a leak during the months of December through March.

- Data provided by the customer will be used to determine the eligibility for a reduction in monthly sewer charges.
- Once the sewer appeal has been approved the adjusted average will be in effect for a three-year period.
- Sewer Appeal forms are available annually and due ninety (90) days after the May billing.

### **Billing Adjustments**

When an error is found in the billing to a customer, or if service is discovered in use at the property that had not previously been charged, the City will correct such errors to recover or refund the difference between the original billing and the corrected billing.

- Such adjusted billings will not be rendered for periods in excess of thirty-six (36) months from the date the error is discovered.
- If a billing adjustment results in a balance due from the customer, upon request the customer may be placed on an installment payment plan for up to 36 months without late fee penalties, unless there is evidence of meter tampering or theft. This installment payment plan will become null and void if payments are not received by each bill's stated due date; normal collection procedures and late fees will then apply.
- Adjustment authority levels for residential, commercial, and solid waste accounts are:

\$1-\$499 CSR Sr. will prepare the adjustment for review by a second CSR Sr. If approved by the second CSR Sr., the account will be logged with the "Adjustment Approval" call in the Billing Section Non-SO Calls folder. The call notes should include a brief reason for the adjustment and how the customer was notified. Once approved by the approval biller, the preparer will process the adjustment. All supporting documentation will be saved in the required places.

\$500-\$999 CSR Sr. will prepare the adjustment for review by a second CSR Sr. and the billing supervisor. If approved by the second CSR Sr. and the supervisor, the supervisor will log the account with the "Adjustment Approval" call in the Billing Section Non-S.O. Calls folder. The call notes should include a brief reason for the adjustment and how the customer was notified. Once approved by the supervisor, the initial CSR Sr. or the second will process the adjustment. All supporting documentation will be saved in the required places.

\$1,000+ CSR Sr. will prepare the adjustment for review by the billing supervisor. If approved by the supervisor, the supervisor will seek final approval from the manager. After approval from the manager, the billing supervisor will log the account with the "Adjustment Approval" call in the Billing Section Non-S.O. Calls folder. The call notes should include a detailed reason for the adjustment and how the customer was notified. Once approved by the supervisor, the CSR Sr. will process the adjustment. All supporting documentation will be saved in the required places.

## Utility Rate Adjustment/Waiver Procedure

### Waiver Authority Levels

- On a case-by-case basis, a Customer Service Representative has the authority to waive one transaction, in an amount not to exceed \$60, per account in a 12-month rolling calendar.
- On a case-by-case basis, a Supervisor has the authority to waive not more than three transactions, in an amount not to exceed \$999.99, per transaction per account in a 24-month rolling calendar
- On a case-by-case basis, Two Supervisors combined have the authority to waive not more than three transactions, in an amount not to exceed \$9,999.99, per transaction per account in a 24-month rolling calendar
- On a case-by case basis, a Manager has the authority to waive not more than four transactions, in an amount not to exceed \$24,999, per transaction per account in a 36-month rolling calendar.
- On a case-by-case basis, the Director has the authority to waive a transaction, in an amount not to exceed \$49,999, with no restrictions on the number of transactions per account or the timeframe.

The Finance Director or his/her designee reserves the right to make exceptions to this policy.



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Lisette Camacho, Budget & Finance Director

### **City of Glendale, AZ Customer Service**

**Phone:** 623-930-3190

**Fax:** 623-930-2186

**Address:** 5850 West Glendale Avenue, Suite 104, Glendale, Arizona 85301

**Call Center Hours:** 7:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

**In-Person/Lobby Hours:** 7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Monday through Friday (excluding City observed holidays)

**Customer Service E-mail:** [Custrel@glendaleaz.com](mailto:Custrel@glendaleaz.com)