



MUNICIPALITY OF LAMBTON SHORES
CORPORATE POLICY
Water Leak Forgiveness Policy

POLICY NO.:
CP-PW-POL-001

Responsible Dept.: Public Works	Effective Date: <i>September 15, 2026</i>
Approval Authority: Council	Next Review: <i>September 15, 2031</i>

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this program is to provide financial assistance to residential homeowners who have experienced an unintentional water leak or unknown usage that has created a utility bill greater than three (3) times their normal billing. Homeowners are responsible for ensuring private plumbing is in good working condition however this program provides relief to those persons who meet the eligibility requirements that unexpectedly register high consumption on a utility bill.

2 OBJECTIVE

- 2.1 This policy will provide the rules and regulations for Municipality staff to administer a water leak forgiveness program.

3 DEFINITIONS

- 3.1 “Account Holder” means the registrant and holder of a Customer Account, which shall be the Owner of Land or another Person with written authorization from the Owner of Land in accordance with the Utility Billing and Collections Customer Account By-law.
- 3.2 “Credit” means an amount approved under the Water Leak Forgiveness Policy to offset excess water and wastewater charges resulting from a Leak or Unexplained and Unintended Water Usage and is applied to balance of the Utility Account
- 3.3 “Good Standing” means a utility account that is current and has no outstanding balance that is overdue, is not subject to collection action, and for which the account holder has complied with all applicable payment requirements and arrangements with the Municipality.
- 3.4 “Leak” – means an identified accidental water loss caused by broken and/or malfunctioning plumbing and/or pipes within a residence or building. A leak occurs when there is a failure of the plumbing system to do what it was designed to do.
- 3.5 “Municipality” - the Corporation of the Municipality of Lambton Shores, and/or its directors, officers, employees, agents and contractors.
- 3.6 “Residential Property” - Exclusive use as a domicile, designed for living, sleeping, and food preparation.
- 3.7 “Property” – is a parcel of land that may include buildings, structures, and uses governed by zoning designations.

- 3.8 “Unexplained and Unintended Water Usage” means water consumption that is significantly greater than the property’s normal or expected consumption and that results from an unforeseen and unintended leak or failure of the property’s water system or plumbing, where the increased consumption was not reasonably detectable by the property owner or occupant through normal observation or ordinary monitoring, and may be undetermined.
- 3.9 “Utility Account” – means an account established and maintained by the Municipality for the billing and collection of water and wastewater charges associated with a property, including all applicable consumption charges, service charges, fees, adjustments, credits, and other amounts owing to the Municipality in relation to the provision of utility services.
- 3.10 “Water Supply System” – means water supply and distribution system operated by Municipality, consisting of various water sources, including, fire hydrants and water filling stations, and all infrastructure necessary to collect, treat and distribute water, including water meters, meter wires and remotes.

4 ELIGIBILITY

- 4.1 The water utility account must be connected to the Lambton Shores water system and be an active Lambton Shores Utility account
- 4.2 Consumption billed must be at least 3 times the previous 12 months average usage. In cases where there is less than 12 months of consumption history and equivalent comparator may be used at the discretion of the Director of Public Works.
- 4.3 The requested relief must be from a Utility bill after January 1, 2026.
- 4.4 The Utility Account must be in Good Standing at the time of the bill requesting relief.
- 4.5 The Utility Account must be a residential unit served by a single water meter
- 4.6 The water meter must be available for inspection by Lambton Shores contracted Water Operator and must have no evidence of tampering
- 4.7 The cause of the requested relief must be a leak or unexplained usage and cannot be:
- Outdoor usage (filling a pool, landscaping, irrigation)
 - Neglect or lack of maintenance
 - Absence of more than 72 hours
 - Vacant or unoccupied residences
 - New construction
 - Fraud or meter tampering
- 4.8 Relief may only be provided to a single property owner per qualifying account once every five (5) years.

5 RELIEF AMOUNT

- 5.1 Customers may be eligible for a **75%** reduction to the portion of the consumptions charges that apply to both water and wastewater (if applicable) portions of their bill above the average consumption for the previous 12 months to a maximum of **\$5000.00** relief water charges plus **\$5000.00** relief on wastewater charges. Relief will be limited to a single billing period. For clarity, the following example is provided where a customer normally incurs an average monthly water consumption charge of \$200.00 but due to a Leak, receives a \$1800.00 consumption charge.

Average water monthly bill:	\$200.00
Bill issued due to leak:	<u>\$1800.00</u>
Amount above monthly average:	<u>\$1600.00</u>
75% reduction:	<u>\$1200.00</u>
Final consumption charge (\$1800 - \$1200):	\$600.00

6 APPLICATION

- 6.1 A complete application form must be submitted to the Municipality within One (1) month from the date of the utility bill in question to apply for relief under this program.

The applicant will be required to attest that the high consumption is either a result of a Leak (and provide proof of repairs) or an Unexplained and Unintended Water Use (and to agree monitor consumption and be responsible for future consumption).

Eligibility for relief will be determined by the Director of Public Works. A Credit representing the amount eligible for relief per this policy will be applied to the Utility account if the relief is approved.

7 FUNDING SOURCE

- 7.1 This program will be funded through the Water and Wastewater operating budgets.

8 APPROVAL

Council	<i>DPW 26-2026</i>	<i>Resolution 26-0915-18</i>
Authority	<i>Director of Public Works</i>	Date <i>September 15, 2026</i>
Amended/Modified/Replaced	Date: <i>NA</i>	