

Concealed Leak Remission Policy

Statutory

Council

Administrative

Policy Owner:	Director – Transport and Water Services
Effective Date:	19 October 2023
Strategic Alignment:	South East Queensland Customer Water and Wastewater Code

1. Purpose

To satisfy the requirement of section 19 of the *South East Queensland Customer Water and Wastewater Code* to have a concealed leaks policy for small customers.

To provide partial financial relief to customers who have experienced an increase in their water bill due to a concealed leak in their Property Water Supply, and outline the criteria for relief assessment.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all councillors, employees and contractors working for Council regardless of whether they are permanent, temporary, full-time, part-time or casual. For the purposes of this policy, the term contractor includes on-hired temporary labour services (agency staff) and sub-contractors.

This policy applies to all:

- i. owner-occupied residential properties and all non-owner-occupied residential properties with a Logan City Council metered water service
- ii. residential community title scheme properties with a Logan City Council metered water service
- iii. designated fire services within the Logan City Council network installed solely for purpose of firefighting,

where the owner has had a concealed leak repaired by a licensed plumber and all eligibility criteria has been met.

3. Policy statement

Council understands there may be times where concealed leaks occur underground in a customer's private plumbing. Because these leaks are often hidden under turf, concrete and driveways, there can be no visual or audible evidence. Council is committed to having a transparent process that allows customers to apply for a remission of water consumption charges in these circumstances.

4. Principles

Where Logan City Council becomes aware of an increase in a customer's consumption through the regular meter reading cycle or operational activities, we will advise you where possible.

Customers must not rely on Council to provide this information. This service is provided where possible as a courtesy only.

Customers are responsible for their own internal plumbing infrastructure and are encouraged to take regular readings of their water meter to understand and monitor their consumption.

5. Application of this policy

Eligibility criteria

(a) The applicant must be:

- i. a customer
- ii. either:
 - i. a residential property owner-occupier;
 - ii. a residential property non-owner-occupier (landlord);
 - iii. where the concealed leak occurred on the common property of a residential community titles scheme, the water consumption charges have been billed to the body corporate account or apportioned to multiple properties within the residential community titles scheme (who are directly billed a percentage of the overall water consumption charges) - the chairperson or secretary of the body corporate for a residential community titles scheme.
 - iv. where the concealed fire leak has occurred on a designated fire service – a commercial property owner.

No other property owners are eligible to receive financial assistance under this policy.

- (b) The property must be a residential property, except where a concealed leak has occurred on a designated fire service.
- (c) There must be a concealed leak.

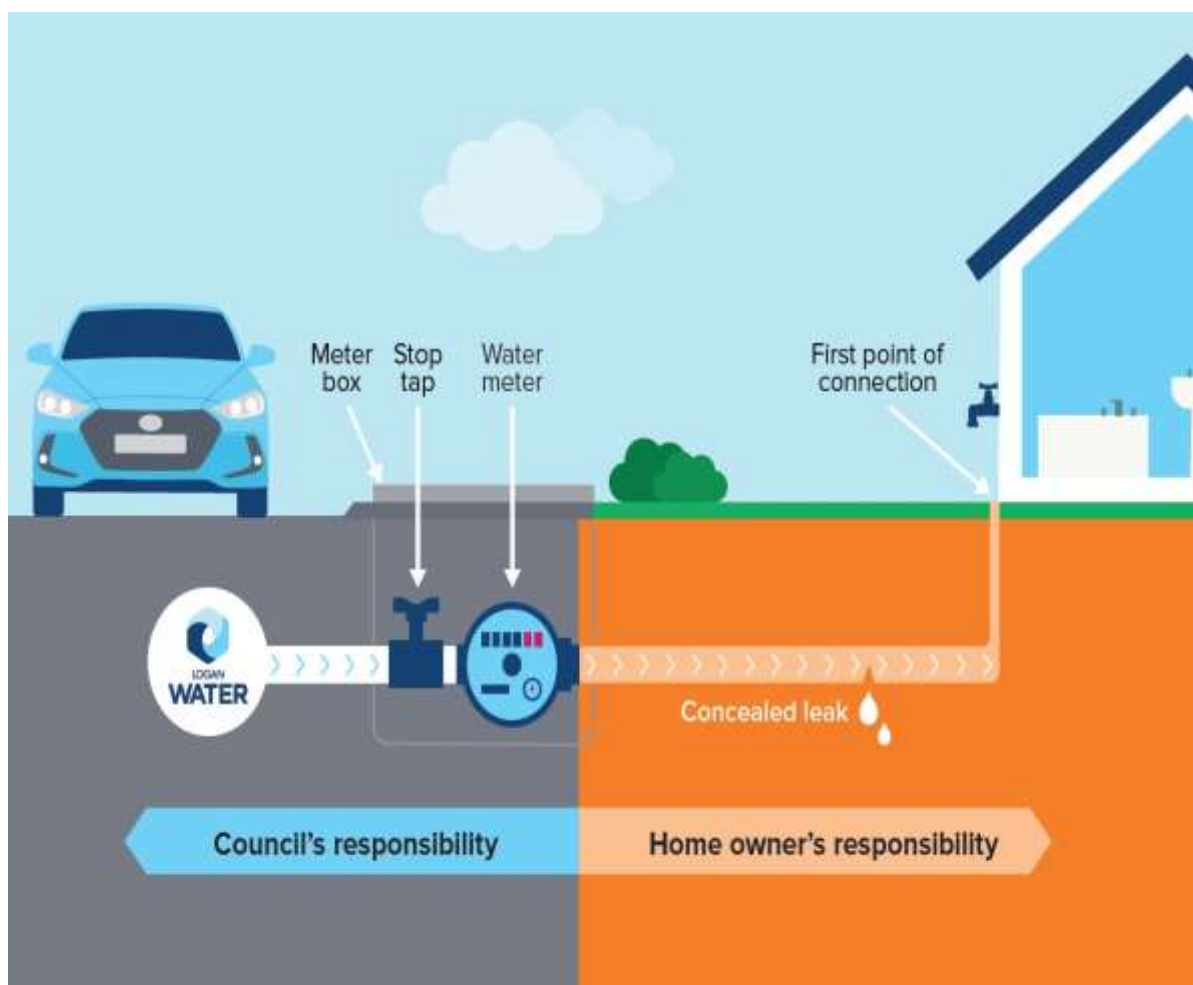


Diagram 1: Property owners plumbing responsibility

- (d) The property on which the concealed leak has occurred must not have been subject to development, excavation, construction, or any landscaping works in the previous 6 months.
- (e) The concealed leak must have been repaired by a licensed plumber, within one (1) month of the leak being identified/notified by the customer or by Council.
- (f) In the absence of advice from Council, the concealed leak must have been repaired within one (1) month of the issue date of the rate notice containing the increased water consumption charges due to the concealed leak. While Council make reasonable efforts to notify a customer of a potential internal leak, it takes no responsibility to confirm that notification has been received.

Applying for a remission

- (g) An application must be made on the prescribed form by the customer or their authorised agent within three (3) months of the issue date of the rates notice containing the increased water consumption charges due to the concealed leak.

- (h) The customer must provide, documented evidence from a licensed plumber (e.g., invoice or report on letterhead that includes the licence number) detailing work undertaken to repair the concealed Leak. This must accompany the application.

Calculation and payment of remissions

- (i) For new applications received after 2 August 2023, where all eligibility criteria are met:
 - i. Logan City Council will provide a maximum of 70 per cent remission of the estimated leakage amount for the Logan City Council water usage charge; or 100% remission where the customer is an Eligible Pensioner.
 - ii. a 70% remission will be provided for the State Bulk Water Charge component of the estimated leakage amount under the South East Queensland State Bulk Water Concealed Leak Remissions Scheme; or 100% remission where the customer is an Eligible Pensioner.
- (j) Customers who received a concealed leak remission from Council after the announcement of the State Bulk Water Concealed Leak Remission Scheme on 2 August 2023, and before the effective date of this policy, will be reassessed in line with the applicable remission of this policy. Impacted customers do not need to reapply.
- (k) This policy does not apply to applications first received prior to 2 August 2023. These applications will be assessed under the relevant policy.
- (l) Where a concealed leak has impacted more than one billing period and all eligibility criteria are met, consideration may be given to a remission for a maximum of two (2) consecutive billing periods. This means the period in which the concealed leak was repaired, and the preceding period).
- (m) Where a concealed leak occurs in a designated fire service and all eligibility criteria are met, the water consumption charge will be reduced from the designated fire service rate per kilolitre to the normal domestic rate per kilolitre for chargeable consumption. This is determined by the designated fire service water meter.
- (n) Any remission will be applied as a credit on the customer's assessment notice.
- (o) Where a change of ownership has occurred, remissions will be assessed for eligibility on a case-by-case basis.
- (p) The South East Queensland Bulk Water Concealed Leak Remission Scheme is a Queensland State Government initiative and remissions provided under this scheme are administered on behalf of Seqwater and the Queensland State Government by Logan City Council and may be subject to change.

Exclusions

- (q) The customer must not have received a financial adjustment on an account for that property due to a concealed leak within the last three (3) years from the end of the rating period when the financial adjustment was applied.
- (r) In cases where it is evident that continual claims are occurring for a property, Council reserves the right to refuse applications under this policy until the customer has upgraded the property water supply. This must be demonstrated by producing documentation from a licenced plumber detailing the work carried out.
- (s) A concealed leak does not arise out of any of the circumstances outlined in Table 1.

The leak must not be within a dwelling or building on the property or:	
✘ Faulty toilet cisterns (not covered)	✘ Hose pipes (not covered)
✘ Tap washers (not covered)	✘ External taps and fittings (not covered)
✘ Leaking water tanks and faulty tank float valves will not be considered under this policy (not covered)	✘ Leaking swimming pools, spas, water features (not covered)
✘ Leaking hot water services (not covered)	✘ Solar heating systems including the pipe work supplying these (not covered)
✘ Leaks within walls and floors and shower recesses (not covered)	✘ Tap o-rings (not covered)
✘ Leaking sprinkler and irrigation systems (not covered)	✘ Water lost as a result of theft, vandalism (not covered)
✘ Leaks in hoses (not covered)	✘ Leaving a tap running or unexplained water use is also not eligible for a remission under this policy (not covered)

Table 1: What is not covered

6. Roles and responsibilities

The applicant must provide all the required information at the time of application, to ensure the application can be processed promptly.

An authorised officer of Council will consider each applicant based on the criteria set out in this policy to determine their remission eligibility.

Council will aim to resolve any complaints about the application of this policy with customers directly. Complaints about the eligibility criteria or amount of financial assistance provided under the State Bulk Water Concealed Leak Remissions Scheme should be referred to the Department of Regional Development, Manufacturing and Water (DRDMW) by contacting 13 QGOV (13 74 68).

7. Reporting

This policy acknowledges the reimbursement by Seqwater of remissions of State Government Bulk Water Charges and will be reported as cost recovery by Logan Water and in Council's annual report.

8. Human rights

Under the *Human Rights Act 2019* (Qld), Council must not make a decision without considering and assessing the potential impact to human rights, and any impacts. Council does not consider that any human rights are impacted by this policy.

9. Definitions

The following definitions apply to this Policy.

TERM	DEFINITION
Concealed leak	Where: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• there is water escaping from the main internal property water supply where an occupant could not reasonably be expected to know of its immediate existence• the leak occurs in the property water supply on the residential side of the water meter (as shown in Diagram 1)• there is little or no audible or visual evidence of the leak.
Customer	A residential customer who: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• is connected to a water meter or sub water meter• receives a rate notice in their name that includes charges for water services.• This includes bodies corporate and legal representatives acting on behalf of a registered owner.
Designated fire service	A connection and meter installed to provide water for fire-fighting only.
Eligible pensioner	Eligible pensioners must be eligible to receive a pensioner water subsidy on their Rates Notice and are the owner/ part owner or life tenant of the property, live on the property permanently and have one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• a current Queensland Centrelink Pensioner Concession Card, or• a Department of Veterans' Affairs Gold Card; or• a Department of Veterans' Affairs Pensioner Concession Card.
Leakage amount	The difference between the average water consumption for the nominated period and the actual water consumption. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The average of the water consumption is calculated using data recorded by Council over the immediately preceding 4 billing periods for the relevant meter. If this method is not practical (for example, there is a new property owner), another reasonable methodology will be determined by Council.

Notification	Communication by letter, phone, text, card left at the property, in person or issued electronically.
Property water supply	<p>The underground pipe from the rear of Council's water meter to the initial connection point of the main dwelling or building.</p> <p>This does not include water service lines or plumbing that feeds off the underground pipe to other taps on the property or other minor buildings on the property.</p> <p>For trickle feed or mixed demand plumbing configurations, this only includes the first point of connection to the water tank or the initial connection point to the main dwelling or building from the designated on-demand line.</p>
Residential non-owner-occupied	The owner of a residential property who does not reside at the property.
Residential owner-occupier	The registered owner and occupier of the residential property to which the application for a remission relates.
Residential property	<p>A single self-contained dwelling house, home unit or townhouse that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is categorised by Council as Residential 1 or Residential 2 under Council's differential rating; or • can be demonstrated to have a dominant purpose for residential use.
Residential community title scheme	<p>Scheme land, with the single community management statement registered with Titles Queensland identifying that scheme land.</p> <p>Categorised by Council for rating purposes under its differential rating category, multiple residential dwellings.</p> <p>A community titles scheme comprises:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • at least 2 lots • common property • a single body corporate • a single community management statement.
South East Queensland Bulk Water Concealed Leak Remission Scheme	An initiative by the Queensland State Government effective from 2 August 2023, providing financial assistance to eligible customers in relation to the cost of the State Bulk Water Charges incurred due to a concealed leak at their property.

State Government Bulk Water Charges	The price the Queensland Government sets and charges Council to purchase water to supply to customers. This price is passed on to our customers at cost. It pays for capturing, storing, treating and transporting bulk water from the Queensland Government's South East Queensland Water Grid to Logan's water supply network.
Water	Potable water supplied by Council.
Water consumption charges	Council's charge for storing water, maintaining it to drinking quality standards and transporting it to customers' homes and businesses. This charge is based on how much water is used at a particular property.
Water subsidy	A subsidy provided to eligible pensioners by the Queensland State Government.

10. Document Control

Version Number	Description of Change	Author / Branch	Effective Date
1.0	Original	Water Service Performance	30 May 2017
2.0	Expansion of policy scope and application to 50% total cost of water lost by concealed leak and inclusion of all residential (including pensioner) customers and CTS properties.	Water Service Performance	1 July 2023
3.0	Change to remissions to address State Bulk Water Concealed Leak Remission Scheme taking remission amount to 70% of Logan City Council Charge and 70% of State Bulk Water Charge; and 100% of Logan City Council Charge and 100% of State Bulk Water Charge for Eligible Pensioner customers.	Water Service Performance	20 October 2023