
Remote Water Meter Technology - Billing Discrepancy

Date of Approval By Council: 01/20/98; 11/07/00; 12/12/2006 Resolution No.: 20/98; 676/2000; 828/2006

Lead Role: Chief Commissioner

Last Review Date: October 19, 2012

Next Review Date: 10/2015

Administrative Responsibility: Utilities

Policy Statement

Strathcona County will have in place a sound mechanism of establishing a fair and equitable methodology for recalculating the water consumption of our customers where actual water meter readings have been unavailable for a period of time.

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 Where annual meter readings are not obtained procedures are established to recover any shortfalls in revenue.

2.0 Definitions

- 2.1 ECR (Electronic Coded Registry) - Technology where electronic meter reading equipment obtain the actual meter reading via radio waves or hard wire wiring.

3.0 Guidelines

- 3.1 Meter Reading and Billing Accounts

The following guidelines will be undertaken by meter readers:

- 3.1.1 Meter readers will first attempt to obtain meter readings from the remote reading device during their regularly scheduled routes.
- 3.1.2 Readings obtained from ECR technology will be deemed to be 100% correct.
- 3.1.3 Meter readers will annually attempt to gain access to the residence for the purpose of obtaining an actual read in location, where ECR technology meter is not in place from the main meter. If access is not obtained meter cards will be left in the mailbox requesting homeowners to take the reading and mail or phone in the information.
- 3.1.4 The utility billing system will default to a computer estimate of 30 m³ of water for any customer that receives a combination of six (6) consecutive estimates. This will help ensure the customer is not exposed to a large back billing situation and may prompt communication with the County at which time arrangements can be made to verify the readings.

- 3.1.5 If, after three (3) months from the time the meter card is delivered, we are unable to obtain an actual reading from the homeowner, we will attempt to contact the customer by phone or letter requesting them to read the inside meter and phone in or mail the information to the County.
- 3.1.6 If we are unable to solicit a response from the attempts to contact the customer within thirty (30) days a special meter read will be attempted by the meter reader after regular working hours. A special meter read charge will be levied, as outlined in the fees and charges schedule approved annually by County Council.
- 3.2 The Utility Department will make the following arrangements to billings where the meter reading has not been obtained.
 - 3.2.1 The customer will be back billed for a maximum period of one (1) year for the difference between the average usage for a residential customer and the billing they received through this period.
 - 3.2.2 The utility bill will be calculated based on this information and the customer will be offered the opportunity to pay the charges interest-free over the next subsequent six (6) billings.
 - 3.2.3 Failure to make arrangements to pay these charges within sixty (60) days will result in:
 - a) Property Owners - n the transfer of these charges to taxes unless the property owner is registered in the Tax Installment Payment Plan (TIPP) program, in which case failure to make arrangements to pay these charges within sixty (60) days will result in the disconnection of service, and may result in the pursuit of these arrears through a collection agency.
 - b) Renters - n the disconnection of service and may result in the pursuit of these arrears through a collection agency.