

**PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this policy is to outline the procedures that will be used for customer repayment of large water/wastewater bills due to DPW-verified equipment malfunction and/or undetected leaks.

**POLICY:**

The policy of the Upton Department of Public Works and the Town of Upton is to collect all user charges associated with the use of the Town's water and wastewater system. Currently, payments may be deferred, but are subject to 14% APR interest accrual; bills unpaid prior to December 31<sup>st</sup> of each year are subject to lien. In the event that the user charges are the result of DPW-verified equipment malfunction and/or undetected leaks, the following policy guidelines are established to further mitigate the financial hardships caused by these unanticipated charges.

**APPLICABILITY**

This policy is applicable when a "meter/external device discrepancy" (as verified by the Director of Public Works or designee) or when an undetected water leak (as determined by the Director of Public Works or designee) results in an adjusted water/sewer bill of at least 200% of the customer's prior average usage. This policy may not be applied to a user account for undetected water leaks more often than once every five years. It is further subject to the provisions of any agreement entered into between the customer and the Town Treasurer/Collector's Office.

**IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURE:**

**Background**

While the water flow meters utilized by the Town of Upton have an exceptionally accurate track record, unfortunately the external display devices that have historically been used to improve meter reading efficiency have occasionally malfunctioned and failed to accurately reflect the reading from the actual water flow meter located inside the home. These failures have typically been caused by a signal short between the meter and the external device. When this happens, the electronic pulses sent by the meter to the external display device are only received intermittently, causing some actual water flow to go unreported. Unfortunately, when the Town replaces these old meter systems with modern wireless units, the previously unbilled flow from the actual water flow meter is finally recorded; this often results in very substantial water/sewer bills that represent a financial hardship for customers.

# EXCEPTIONAL WATER/WASTEWATER BILL POLICY

## Policies

1) Upon the determination of the Director of Public Works or designee that the policy is applicable to a particular water/wastewater customer, the Department of Public Works shall notify both the customer and the Town Treasurer/Collector's Office in writing that the customer is qualified to petition the Town Treasurer/Collector's Office to enter into a agreement to pay the subject water/wastewater bill at 0% interest over a 12-month period (or other period as determined by the Town Treasurer/Collector). Upon entering into any agreement provided for under this policy, the Town Treasurer/Collector's Office shall provide to the Department of Public Works a copy of same. The Town Treasurer/Collector shall annually review the status of all customer agreements entered into under this policy and provide a report to the Town Manager, Director of Public Works, and the Town Accountant.

## Agreement Compliance

If the customer fails to abide by any of the terms of the agreement with the Town's Treasurer/Collectors' Office, this policy shall immediately cease to apply and the customer will be subject to all other provisions applicable to water/wastewater customers including 14% APR interest accrual provisions and lien provisions.

## APPROVED BY:

*Board of Selectmen, Chair: James A. Brochu*

*J. A. Brochu*  
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Revised dates: .....