



SUBJECT

Utility Billing Account Adjustment Policy	Policy Number 16.0.0	# Pages 3
	Effective Date 11-28-2011	Revision Date

1.0 PURPOSE:

1.1 This procedure defines a policy and procedure to ensure that adjustments (water sewer, refuse, etc.) to customer utility bills are issued in a consistent manner.

2.0 APPLICABLE TO:

- 2.1 Public Utilities Department Utility Billing Division
- 2.2 City of Santa Fe utility customers.
- 2.3 This policy does not apply to persons or entities who have undertaken illegal acts.

3.0 REFERENCES:

- 3.1 City of Santa Fe Municipal Code Chapter 13 - Storm Water, 15 - Utility Billing, 21 - Solid Waste, 22 - Wastewater and 25 - Water
- 3.2 Utility Billing Dispute Resolution Policy & Procedure; Low Income Credit Policy; Leak Adjustment Policy; Unknown Cause Adjustment Policy; and Vacancy Credit Policy.

4.0 DEFINITIONS:

- 4.1 Adjustment - Correction for an error greater than 30 days old.
- 4.2 Customer - Person or entity with a utility account with the City of Santa Fe.
- 4.3 Verifiable start date - Date in which error can be confirmed by documentation (e.g. utility billing system, route lists, work orders, etc.) or finalized investigation.
- 4.4 Incentive adjustment - Credits designed to encourage water conservation and other behavior beneficial to the community.
- 4.5 Tampering fee - Illegal act to steal utility service from the City.

5.0 POLICY:

- 5.1 It is a Public Utilities Department policy that billing be accurate. Adjustments will be tracked and issues that cause errors will be identified and corrected.
- 5.2 It is a Public Utilities Department policy to issue utility bill adjustments consistently and timely within 45 days from when error has been identified.

- 5.3 The value of adjustments (credit and debit) will be calculated from the verifiable start date of the error or a maximum of one (1) year, whichever is smaller.
- 5.4 Adjustments will be issued only after proper approval as defined by the policy.
- 5.5 Adjustments will be documented in the customer's account in the utility billing system and reflected on customer's next bill following approval of the adjustment.

6.0 PROCEDURES:

6.1 Processing

- 6.1.1 All adjustments must be routed to a Utility Billing Supervisor.
- 6.1.2 Customers will be notified that up to 45 days may be required for processing adjustments and that smaller adjustments may be completed in less time.
- 6.1.3 Supporting adjustment documentation shall include adjustment form, memo and account history, adjustment calculation data and application (where applicable, e.g. Leak Adjustment, Vacancy Credit, Low Income Credit, Unknown Cause, etc.) for approval routing.
- 6.1.4 All adjustments will be routed through each level of approval (and recommended) to the appropriate level of approval required based on the amount of the adjustment.

6.2 Approvals

- 6.2.1 If an error is detected prior to customer billing, the Utility Billing Division Director may approve an adjustment of any amount.
- 6.2.2 If an error is detected after a customer has been billed then the approvals listed below are required for any adjustment:
 - 6.2.2.1 Utility Billing Supervisors
 - 6.2.2.1.1 May issue up to \$100 adjustment for billing errors.
 - 6.2.2.1.2 May issue approved incentive adjustments, leak credits or tampering fees up to \$500.
 - 6.2.2.2 Utility Billing Division Director
 - 6.2.2.2.1 Approval is required to issue billing error adjustments from \$101 to \$3,000.
 - 6.2.2.2.2 Approval is required for leak credits between \$501 and \$5,000.
 - 6.2.2.3 The Utility Department Director
 - 6.2.2.3.1 Approval is required to issue billing error adjustments from \$3,001 to \$25,000.
 - 6.2.2.3.2 Approval is required for leak credits between \$5,001 and \$25,000.
 - 6.2.2.4 City Manager
 - 6.2.2.4.1 Approval is required to issue billing error adjustments with a value between \$25,001 and \$50,000.
 - 6.2.2.4.2 Approval is required for leak credits between \$25,001 and \$50,000.
 - 6.2.2.5 Insurance Claims Adjustment Committee
 - 6.2.2.5.1 Approval is required to issue billing error or leak credit adjustments \$50,001 and higher.


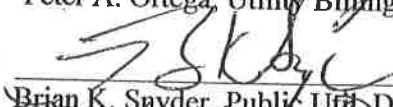
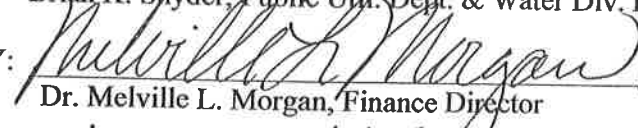
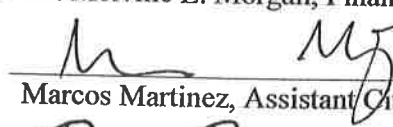
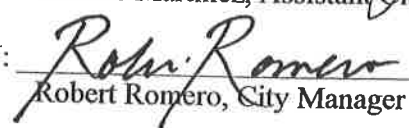
7.0 APPEAL PROCESS:

- 7.1 Disputes as set forth in Rule No. 9 of Exhibit A to Chapter XXV SFCC 1987* shall be submitted to the city in writing within thirty (30) days of the occurrence. The Utility Billing Division shall respond to the party in writing. In the event the customer is not satisfied with the response, the customer may submit a written appeal to the city. The appeal shall be received by the utility billing director within thirty (30) days of division's response and include the following:
 - 7.1.1 The factual basis for the appeal;
 - 7.1.2 The legal basis for the appeal; and
 - 7.1.3 The desired or requested action and outcome.
- 7.2 Appeals shall be heard by a hearing officer appointed by the city manager. The customer shall be given notice of the hearing. The hearing officer shall take testimony from the city and the customer, record the proceedings and prepare a written report and recommendation to the city manager. The city manager shall provide a written decision to the customer. Such decision shall be final.

8.0 REPORTING:

- 8.1 A report on all adjustments will be generated each bill cycle. The utility billing division director will review the report.
- 8.2 A monthly summary report will be created by the utility billing division director indicating the total amount of adjustments issued and shall include specific information about adjustments over \$1,500.

9.0 REVIEW AND APPROVALS:

- 9.1 PREPARED BY: 
Peter A. Ortega, Utility Billing Division Director DATE
- 9.3 REVIEWED BY:  11/28/11
Brian K. Snyder, Public Util. Dept. & Water Div. Dir. DATE
- 9.4 REVIEWED BY:  11/30/11
Dr. Melville L. Morgan, Finance Director DATE
- 9.5 REVIEWED BY:  12/7/11
Marcos Martinez, Assistant City Attorney DATE
- 9.6 APPROVED BY:  12-9-11
Robert Romero, City Manager DATE

