



## Topsfield Water Department

279 Boston Street  
Topsfield, MA 01983

### Water Charge Abatement Application

Customer Information			
Name:		Request Date:	
Address:		Phone:	
Service Id:		Email:	
Account Number:			

Billing Information			
Invoice Date(s):		Total Billed:	\$
Amount(s):	\$	Abatement Request	\$
Volume:			

Just a few questions...				
Do you have a lawn irrigation system?	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No
If yes, is it supplied by Town water or a well?	<input type="checkbox"/>	Town	<input type="checkbox"/>	Well
If yes, was it being used during the billing cycle in question?	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No
Did you have a leak? (Please attach invoice, parts list, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No
When was it discovered?				
When was it repaired?				
What type of leak was it? (faucet, toilet, irrigation, etc.)				
What was the estimated leak flow in gallons per minute?				
Was it repaired by a plumber?	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No
Was there any unusual change in number of residents (higher or lower) or change that would affect water use? If yes, please describe below.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No
Would you like the meter tested for accuracy?	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No
Would you like to receive bills on a monthly basis?	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No

Additional Information (Please provide any other information that may help)

\_\_\_\_\_

*Customer's Signature*

\_\_\_\_\_

*Date*

## **Topsfield Water Department**

### **Water Charge Abatement Application**

If there is a problem with your bill due to a reading error, estimated bill or other discrepancy, please call the Water Department directly at (978) 887-1517. If you are requesting an abatement due to a leak or for relief from an unusually large bill, please complete this form and forward a signed copy along with any pertinent documents to the Water Department.

#### *Abatement Process*

The Water Superintendent reviews all applications and has the authority, as delegated by the Board of Water Commissioners, to make necessary adjustments for billing errors, meters found to be inaccurate and abatements due to leaks. Other requests are forwarded to the Board of Water Commissioners for their review. The Board typically meets on the second Wednesday of each month. Please submit your application by the first Wednesday of the month if you'd like the Board to review it at their monthly meeting.

#### *Meter Accuracy*

We have tested numerous meters to check the accuracy of the meter fleet. Meters in our fleet use a variety of methods to measure water use but typical residential meters use either a piston or nutating disk. These meters are simple mechanical devices that typically under-register as they wear and age. More advanced meters can use sound or magnetic fields to sense water flow. These meters maintain their accuracy for longer periods because there are no moving parts to wear out.

Meters that are tested due to a billing question are sent to a third-party lab to get independent results. They're tested at three flow rates – low, medium and high which vary with the size of the meter. A typical household meter is tested at ¼, 2 and 15 gallons per minute. A meter is considered accurate if it tests within  $\pm 2\%$  at each flow rate. The meter fails the test if it exceeds  $\pm 2\%$  at any of the three rates. If the meter over-registers at any of the rates then a billing adjustment will be issued, otherwise the bill stands.

#### *Adjustment Calculations*

Corrections for billing errors, estimated bills, etc. are based on actual meter readings whenever possible. Water use is typically spread evenly over the billing periods in question to determine the adjustment amount. If a meter is found to be inaccurate then the abatement is based on the difference between the amount billed and historic water use for the property.

#### *Leakage Abatements*

Customers sometimes get large bills due to leaks in toilets, irrigation systems, etc. which can be quite expensive due to the increasing block rate structure. Leak abatements are given when water use is significantly more than historical use and the difference can be explained by a documented leak. The amount of the adjustment is the lesser of the difference between:

1. The volume of water billed at the current increasing block rate structure and the same volume billed at the lowest rate of the current increasing block rate structure; or
2. The original bill amount and the average historical use for same time period billed at the current rate.

#### *Billing Frequency*

Approximately ten percent of our customers are billed on a monthly basis with the remainder being billed quarterly. Monthly customers tend to be our largest use accounts or those that like getting more frequent bills to monitor their use and catch any potential leaks in a timelier manner. Please contact the Water Department if you would like to be billed on a monthly basis.

Please contact the Water Department at (978) 887-1517 or at [water@topsfield-ma.gov](mailto:water@topsfield-ma.gov) if you have any questions.