



Administrative Policy Utility Unintended Use Policy

June 15, 2023
Revised April 6, 2026

OBJECTIVE

The objective of this policy is to recognize that under certain extenuating circumstances some utility customers may face extraordinarily large utility bills due to the unintended use of water services due to plumbing or equipment failures, for which some financial relief may be warranted.

The Wisconsin Public Service Commission regulates the Port Washington Municipal Water Utility. Under their governing Statutes, utilities are encouraged to adopt an unintended use policy and incorporate that policy into the utility's PSC approved tariff, which controls the regulated utility charges and practices. This policy, however, cannot reduce fees for unintended water use below the utility's cost of providing water.

The Port Washington Municipal Sewer Utility is governed locally by the municipality and may adopt standards as it sees fit to establish guidelines to provide financial relief to customers for the unintended use of wastewater services.

These eligibility guidelines are designed in a manner that provides relief under only the most clearly extenuating unintended usage circumstances. They are not intended to be used for the more frequent irregularities in water usage that occur on an ongoing basis. As such, the following guidelines will be used to govern the issuing of unintended use billing credits for customers.

DEFINITIONS

Unintended use credit – eligibility guidelines

- The customer's billed usage must be at least 2 times the average usage for the property, or 20 ccf (15,000 gallons), whichever is greater.
- Average usage will be evaluated based on the 3 most recent billing cycles for which the property was occupied, evidenced by usage of at least 5 ccf (3,500 gallons) per cycle.
- In the event of a change in use or occupancy for commercial properties, the utility may defer the eligibility determination for credits until 3 billing cycles of information for the current use or occupancy is available.
- These credits are not applicable to irrigation or other seasonal usage consumption.
- These credits are not applicable for estimate to actual reading adjustments, or any other billing adjustments based on inaccurate historical meter reading information.
- Requests for unintended use credits must be made within 90 days of the applicable billing statement.
- A property is only eligible for one credit within any 3-year period.
- Thereafter, the customer must use the Utility's water usage monitoring system to detect any future water usage irregularities.

POLICY

Unintended use - billing credits

Water Use credit:

As the Port Washington Municipal Water Utility uses a flat rate volume charge for water consumption, the rate established by the PSC is designed to reflect the utility's actual cost of providing water, plus the rate of return approved by the PSC.

- The unintended water use credit will therefore be a discount not to exceed the approved PSC rate of return for the utility's most recent rate case, on the amount of usage in excess of the customer's minimum eligibility usage. This discount will be 5.0% of the excess water volume based fees.

Sewer Use credit:

The Port Washington Municipal Sewer Utility uses a flat rate volume charge for wastewater services based upon the customer's water consumption. The remaining costs of the utility are intended to be covered by the fixed connections fees for system infrastructure, maintenance, and administration.

- The unintended wastewater use credit will be a 75% discount on the amount of usage in excess of the customer's minimum eligibility usage.
- In special circumstances where the utility can document that the unintended water usage was not discharged into the sewer system, the wastewater use credit will be a 100% discount on the amount of usage in excess of the customer's average usage.

AUTHORITY TO ISSUE CREDITS

Administrative utility billing staff will have the authority to issue unintended use credits for amounts up to \$500.00 under these guidelines.

Credit requests for amounts in excess of \$500.00 will require the City Administrator's approval, and/or may be referred to the Common Council for review and approval at the City Administrator's discretion.

ADOPTION AND APPROVAL

The Unintended Use Policy shall be an administrative policy.

Approved by the General Government and Finance Committee on April 6, 2026

Applicability: Port Washington Water and Wastewater Utility's

Effective Date: August 15, 2023, revised April 6, 2026