

## General

This policy outlines the financial assistance that may be offered to a customer that has experienced a concealed leak on their property and to provide customers with the criteria required to apply for a concealed leak rebate.

A concealed leak is an underground water leak in the private plumbing servicing a customer's property. These leaks occur on the customer's side of the customer connection point up to and including where the customer's plumbing connects to the water meter.

These leaks are usually underground and hidden from view such as within concrete or under lawns, gardens and driveways. There are often no visible signs of dampness or soaking where an occupant could reasonably be expected to know the existence of the leak. For the water leak to be considered concealed it must be difficult to locate and there must be no visual or audible evidence of the leak.

Property owners receiving metered water supplies are responsible for managing the water supply on their property. This includes the installation, repair, maintenance and monitoring of all the pipes, fixtures and fittings on their property up to the water meter and for identifying, preventing and managing water leaks and associated water losses. The property owner must take all reasonable effort to ensure that the property's water system is maintained and in good working order.

If a leak is detected it is the responsibility of the property owner to have the leak located and repaired by a licensed plumber as soon as possible.

The fact that a customer has not noticed or discovered the leak does not indicate that it is a concealed leak. Loss of water from faulty fixtures and fittings such as hot water services, leaking taps and toilet cisterns, irrigation systems or appliances such as dishwashers or washing machines are not considered to be concealed water leaks.

Solo Water encourages customers to actively manage their water use and identify potential leaks by periodically checking their property for leaks. There may be other reasons for higher water use at the property other than a concealed leak, it is therefore recommended that customers first conduct their own assessment of water use (including conducting their own meter read and leak test) prior to outlaying the cost of a licensed plumber for leak detection. A basic leak detection procedure is outlined in the customer's Home Owners Manual.

Solo Water has no obligation to provide financial assistance to customers affected by leaks located on their property.

As a goodwill gesture, in accordance with this policy, property owners may receive financial assistance where water has been lost on the customer's property due to a verified concealed underground leak that has resulted in abnormally high water usage related charges.

## Eligibility criteria and application for financial assistance

Financial assistance for a concealed leak may be provided if the following criteria are met:

1. The concealed leak must be repaired by a customer's licensed plumber within one (1) month of either identifying a concealed leak or becoming aware of higher than usual water usage at the property, whichever comes first;
2. The customer must not have received financial assistance for a concealed leak for water charges for the same property;

3. The customer must make an application in writing to Solo Water within three (3) months of identifying a concealed leak or becoming aware of higher than usual water usage at the property;
4. The property must have experienced a minimum water loss of 50 kilolitres (kL) over a maximum of two billing periods.

In order to assess your application you are required to provide a written statement and/or invoice from your licenced plumber showing that a licensed plumber has repaired the leak including the following information:

- The plumbers name, business name, licence number, phone number and email;
- The date the leak was identified and repaired;
- The meter reading as at the date of repair, identifying date and reading;
- The nature and location of the leak;
- A description of how the leak was detected;
- Copy of the completed Certificate of Compliance for Plumbing and Drainage Work (optional).

Your application will not be accepted in the following instances:

- The leak was visible (e.g. water is pooling, seeping and flowing; damp soil, surface, walls or floors; continuously wet or unusual growth of grass or vegetation);
- The loss of water is due to faulty plumbing fixtures or fittings (i.e. taps, toilet cisterns, hot water service, solar water, sprinkler or irrigation systems);
- The leak was due to neglect or obvious defect in the private water service;
- Failure of rainwater tanks, valves or the pipe work supplying them;
- The fault was repaired by someone other than a licensed plumber;
- Financial assistance for a Concealed Leak has previously been granted to the current owners.

Special allowances are not given to unoccupied properties, holiday homes, commercial and industrial premises or leaks located in unused areas or vacant blocks.

### **Financial assistance assessment and calculation**

When assessing a customer's application made under this policy and calculating the relevant financial assistance, Solo Water will:

- Assess each application against the eligibility criteria and specific exclusions which may also include a review of the sewer pump station system records servicing your property to verify eligibility;
- Consider up to two (2) consecutive billing periods, being the period in which the concealed leak was repaired and the previous billing period;
- Compare the increased water consumption with how much water is normally used at the property (by assessing usage against a comparable billing period before and/or after leakage event, average daily usage or other reasonable methodology as determined by Solo Water);
- Apply the applicable financial assistance to your water account; and
- Offer an interest-free payment plan for any remaining charges on your account not covered by this policy.

Approved customers that Solo Water determines meet the eligibility criteria will receive the relevant financial assistance as outlined below.

What is the allowance?

- Solo Water will cover, to those eligible, 50% of the additional water usage up to a maximum cap of 400 kL for the relevant water service. This applies to either drinking water or recycled water;
- The financial assistance provided to an approved customer will not include the bulk water supplier usage charge component of the concealed leak cost;
- Water service charges are not impacted by a concealed leak so no financial assistance is applicable towards these charges.