

CITY OF APPLETON UTILITIES POLICY	THEFT OF SERVICE, SURREPTITIOUS USE OF WATER, AND METER TAMPERING	
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I. PURPOSE

To provide the Appleton Water Utility with accurate billing records and accountability for water use. To deter (1) the theft of water from and (2) the damaging of water meters belonging to the Appleton Water Utility.

II. POLICY

Tampering with a water meter in an attempt to use water supplied by the Appleton Utilities Department (Utility) without that water being measured, tracked through the water meter, and paid for is a crime that is punishable under Wisconsin statutes.

III. DISCUSSION

When it is determined that there has been meter tampering, theft, or surreptitious use of water, a bill will be issued for the water stolen, based on the estimated consumption for the billing period or periods in question. Because meter tampering is a crime, the Utility also has the option to file a criminal complaint regarding the matter. See Wis. Stats. §98.26, §941.36 and §943.20. If theft of service has occurred, the utility has the right to back bill for such usage up to twenty-four (24) months in the past, including late payment charges as authorized by the Public Service Commission.

Charges may be filed for opening valves at the curb or meter that have been turned off by utility personnel; breaking, picking or damaging cut-off locks; by-passing meters in any way; taking unmetered water from hydrants by anyone other than the fire department, or utility for any purpose other than firefighting, testing or flushing of hydrants. Charges may also be filed for removing,

disabling or adjusting meter registers; connecting to or intentionally damaging water lines, valves or other appurtenances for the purpose of stealing or damaging utility equipment; any other intentional act of defacement, destruction or vandalism to utility property or act that effects utility property; and/or any intentional blockage or obstruction of utility equipment.

IV. PROCEDURES

- A. The customer will receive a notice of violation and bill for unmetered service resulting from any tampering if evidence suggests theft of utility service at the customer's premises.
- B. The customer will immediately cease any unlawful practice and pay any amounts due.
- C. Customer service is subject to immediate shut-off if the customer fails to pay the bill for the unmetered services; or when a situation exists with the potential to endanger public health.
- D. Service will not be restored until all payments are received by the Utility or the Utility and the customer agree upon payment arrangements.
- E. Service will be reinstated only during regular working hours, Monday through Friday, except in the case of an emergency.
- F. Discontinuance of service shall not release the customer from liability for payment for service already received.
- G. The Utility shall not be liable for any loss or damage resulting from the discontinuance of service.