

<i>Social Assistance Act Reg. 5(2), 12(1), 17(4), 19(16-17), Supports for Persons with Disabilities Gen. Reg. 49</i>	Program	Social Assistance, AccessAbility Supports	
	Subject	Utilities	Policy # SA 5.8 AAS 6.8
Effective Date: April 1, 1986		Authorized by:	
Revised Date: September 1, 2023		Deputy Minister Teresa Hennebery	

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To provide financial support to eligible applicants of Social Assistance (SA) and Assured Income (AI) to secure and maintain utilities.

2.0 DEFINITIONS

- 2.1 **Applicant:** an adult person who applies for or has applied for assistance on behalf of an applicant.

- 2.2 **Assured Income (AI):** a component of AccessAbility Supports (AAS) that provides monthly financial support to eligible applicants with disabilities to use towards securing basic needs.

- 2.3 **Overpayment:** cash and/or a material benefit which an applicant was not entitled to receive or an advance of funds to assist in securing or preventing the loss of living accommodations or basic utilities.

- 2.4 **Recipient:** a person who is provided SA or AI and includes a person whose SA or AI have been suspended but not cancelled.

- 2.5 **Supports Coordinator:** a staff member that provides direction and case management support in delivering a range of social benefits and services to applicants eligible for Social Programs.

3.0 POLICY STATEMENTS

- 3.1 For the purposes of this policy use of the word applicant is inclusive of recipient.
- 3.2 Utilities are considered an item of basic need. For the purposes of this policy, utilities include electricity, sewer, water, waste management, and laundry costs.
- 3.3 An applicant is eligible for a utility allowance where the cost of utilities is not included in the cost of rental accommodations or included in the property taxes of owned accommodations.

- 3.4 A utility allowance for the cost of waste management paid on an applicant's property taxes will not be considered as part of the calculation of an applicant's allowable shelter rate.
- 3.5 Where an applicant is unable to fund an installation or deposit fee, an advance of funds to assist in securing utilities may be granted. Installation or deposit fees are to be recovered as an overpayment over a period of up to 12 months as per Social Programs policy 1.7 Recovery of Overpayments.

4.0 PROCEDURE STATEMENTS

- 4.1 Applicants are responsible for providing documentation of utility costs to the Department as per Social Programs policy 1.3 Documentation Requirements.
- 4.2 Utility costs must be listed in the applicant or co-applicant's name. Documentation issued in a third-party name will not be considered when determining an applicant's eligibility for utility costs.
- 4.3 The Supports Coordinator will calculate the average monthly utility costs incurred by the applicant based on previous annual consumption records. Where previous annual consumption records are unavailable, the Supports Coordinator will place an estimate on the applicant's file to be reviewed as consumption records are made available.
- 4.4 The Supports Coordinator will calculate and record the actual utility costs incurred by the applicant on the applicant's electronic file to be adjusted to keep benefits within the allowable shelter rates.
- 4.5 Applicants are eligible for a laundry allowance of \$18.00 per month for a single applicant and an additional \$6.00 per month for each additional person in the household. Where an applicant has a washing machine, applicants are ineligible for a laundry allowance under this policy.
- 4.6 Where an applicant is eligible to receive an installation or deposit fee, the Supports Coordinator will follow the procedures outlined in Social Programs policy 1.7 – Recovery of Overpayments to add the damage deposit as an overpayment to an applicant's file.
- 4.7 Where an applicant is granted an advance of funds to assist in securing utilities, the Supports Coordinator will assist the applicant in completing an *Acknowledgement of Overpayment Form* (attached). A copy of the Acknowledgement of Overpayment form will be given to the applicant and a second copy will be kept in the applicant's file.

5.0 REFERENCES

- 5.1 Social Programs Policy 1.3 Documentation Requirements
- 5.2 Social Programs Policy 1.7 Recovery of Overpayments

6.0 ATTACHMENTS

6.1 Acknowledgement of Overpayment Form

HISTORY:

September 1, 2023: Editorial, content, and format changes. Now applies to Social Assistance and AccessAbility Supports. Combines SA policies 5.5 Utilities and 6.2 Utilities – Installation and Deposit. Policy number has been updated from SA 5.5 to 5.8.

Acknowledgement of Overpayment

Client/Trustee/Agent	PHN	Date
Co-Applicant	PHN	Telephone
Mailing Address (No., Street, Apartment No., PO Box, RR No.)		Overpayment Amt:

I/We acknowledge that I/we received an overpayment of \$_____ which is repayable under the *Social Assistance Act* or the *Supports for Persons with Disabilities Act*.

I/We further acknowledge that such overpayment constitutes a debt to the Minister in the same amount.

I/We jointly and separately agree to pay the Province of Prince Edward Island (payable to the Minister of Finance) the sum of \$_____ payable in equal monthly installments of \$_____.

I/We acknowledge that the terms of repayment of this debt will be subject to periodic review and revision at the sole discretion of the Minister until the sum is paid in full.

I/We understand that, if I am no longer eligible to receive assistance and I default on my obligation to repay my overpayment balance, the Minister may use other collection tools available to them which may include filing judgement against my personal property or garnishing of my federal income tax refunds.

SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT

SIGNATURE OF WITNESS

PRINT NAME

PRINT NAME

DATE (YYYY MMM DD)

DATE (YYYY MMM DD)

SIGNATURE OF CO-APPLICANT

SIGNATURE OF WITNESS

PRINT NAME

PRINT NAME

DATE (YYYY MMM DD)

DATE (YYYY MMM DD)

I am not in agreement with the amount of overpayment and have been advised that I have _____ days from today to provide Notice to the Appeal Board of my intention to appeal this decision.

(initials of Applicant)

(initials of co-Applicant)