

Section 3

Metering and Billing Procedures

3.1 Metering

3.1.1 Methods of Installation For New Metered Water Service Connections

All new meter installations shall incorporate remote read meters. Six (6) installation procedures are described below. Their respective water service fees are addressed in Section 4 and Appendix A, Rates, Fees, Charges and Deposits.

Type One

Under a Type One installation, District will tap the water main, provide and install the service piping, meter with remote read device, and meter box and associated appurtenances.

Type Two

Under a Type Two installation, the water service line has been installed to the meter box location at the Applicant's property line as part of a water main extension by the developer/contractor and included in the water main extension cost. The District will provide and install the meter with remote read device, meter box and associated appurtenances.

Type Three

Under a Type Three installation, the water service line, meter box, and associated appurtenances, less the meter, have been installed to the Applicant's property line by the developer/contractor as part of a water main extension and included in the main extension cost. The District provides and installs the meter with remote read device.

Type Four

Under a Type Four installation, the water service line, meter with remote read device, meter box, and associated appurtenances have been installed to the Applicant's property line as part of a water main extension by the customer/developer and included in the main extension cost.

Type Five

Under a Type Five installation, a deduct service, consisting of water service line, meter with remote read device, meter box and associated appurtenances, will be installed downstream from and in series with the domestic service to a dwelling or structure. A

deduct service is intended and available for irrigation of minor landscaping and other incidental uses that will not enter the local sanitary sewer system and shall not be larger than the adjoining meter. The deduct service may be installed concurrently with or after a Type One through Type Four domestic service and may be used for the purpose of metering water use that may not be discharged into the public sewer system (reducing the sewer bill accordingly).

Type Six

Under a Type Six installation, District will tap a water main larger than 12 inches and less than or equal to 18 inches, other than concrete cylinder pipelines, provide and install the service piping, meter with remote read device, and meter box and associated appurtenances.

Other General Requirements relating to Type One through Type Six metered water services

- “Appurtenances”, relating to Type One through Type Six water services above, do not include pressure regulating or cross-connection control assemblies on the customer side (downstream) of the meter assembly.
- For services other than a single-family residence, applicants will be required to provide to the District a complete list of fixtures with their respective equivalent fixture unit values and a meter size determined by the applicant’s licensed plumber, architect, or engineer, as outlined by following the current adopted Uniform Plumbing Code. *(1929-01)*
- The District requires the installed water meter to meet the peak water demand. The District may approve an alternative means to meet the peak water demand. The required water meter size to be installed will depend on the peak flow requirement and the water pressure of the water main that will supply the metered water service. *(1929-01)*
- Because hydraulic limitations can restrict the District’s ability to provide water for a service connection, the District reserves the right to limit the size of the water service to be installed. This determination will be based on hydraulic considerations of the water main that will supply the metered water service. *(1929-01)*
- The District shall execute a water service contract for each new non-deduct irrigation service(s), outlining the duties of the District to provide water and the duties of the applicant in the use of the water, including a clause such that if problems arise related to water system source capacity or hydraulics, water for irrigation or other non-domestic demands can be limited or discontinued. Water for irrigation is recommended during, and may be limited to, “off peak” hours of 10 p.m. to 5 a.m. each day, or such hours as the District may prescribe.
- All charges, fees and expenses charged by local, State, or federal agencies to the District to fulfill an Applicant’s service application shall be added to the cost of the Type One service installation.

- All service connections to the District system shall be billed according to the appropriate rate schedule in Appendix A, Rates, Fees, Charges, and Deposits.
- Special meters may be installed on any account when the nature of the Applicant's equipment and operation so indicates for correct rate schedule application and/or Applicant service improvement.

The District shall adjust Installation Charges on January 1st, of each year, based on increases in the Engineering News Record Construction Cost Index for the Seattle area from November of the preceding year. The actual fee paid will be those in effect at the time of payment.

Metered Services for Irrigation (1929-01)

Either of two types of irrigation services may be utilized: deduct (Type Five) or non-deduct (Types One through Four). These meter Types are described above.

3.1.2 Standpipe, Flushing Assembly or Fire Hydrant Use

Water use from fire hydrants, flushing assemblies or standpipes requires use of a fire hydrant meter. Additional details are provided in Sections 4.1.5.

3.1.3 Fill Station Use

Use of fill station water may be provided to District retail service area customers subject to the completion and approval of an application prepared by the District.

Additional details are provided in Sections 2.2.6, 2.9, and 4.1.6

3.2 Billing

3.2.1 Responsible Party

The responsible party is the person(s) for whom service is being rendered and the person(s) whose name appears as a customer according to the records of the District. It is the customer's responsibility to provide the District with current and correct contact information, including customer name(s), mailing address, phone number(s) and, if available, email(s) contact information (hereinafter referred to collectively as "billing address").

3.2.2 Meter Reading

Meters will be read on monthly or bimonthly cycles at the District's option.

- ◆ Double check or reduced pressure detector meters will be read monthly.
- ◆ The District may alter or reroute its meter reading and billing cycle dates when such alteration or rerouting is in the best interest of the District.

Opening or closing readings may be prorated.

3.2.3 Mailing and Notification

The District will send bills and notices by first class mail. Bills will be sent to the mailing address furnished by the Applicant or, at the option of the customer, an email notification that the bill is available electronically. An Applicant/Customer who does not provide a proper mailing address or a means of receiving mail, may be subject to disconnection. Failure to receive a bill or notice will not release the Customer from the obligation to pay for services provided.

3.2.4 Issuance of Bills

Bills will be issued monthly or bimonthly, depending on the reading cycle and assigned payment plan, and generally will be based on exact meter readings. Bills may be estimated when:

- Meter is not accessible to meter reader; or,
- Meter is under snow or water; or,
- Meter malfunctions; or,
- Other circumstances beyond District control interfere with meter reading.

In the event that bills are estimated, an adjustment will be made at the time of the next regular billing that is based on an actual meter reading if available.

3.3 Payment

3.3.1 Application of Payments Received

Payments received shall be applied in the following priority to outstanding account balances: past due water service charges, past due penalties and fees, current water service charges.

3.3.2 Automatic Withdrawals

The Finance Manager of the District or his/her designee is authorized to enter into agreements with customers and their respective banking institutions to establish automatic payment of District water bills by cash withdrawals directly from customer bank accounts and to apply such withdrawals to payment of customer water bills according to District procedures.

To establish automatic withdrawals for payment of water bills the customer shall:

- Sign a form acceptable to the District and the customer's bank an authorization for a withdrawal from the customer's account for the purpose of paying the customer's water bill; and

- Provide a check on the customer's account with the bank, along with a routing number and account number whenever withdrawals are to come from such an account.

Whenever an automatic withdrawal is rejected, the customer will be charged the penalty imposed for returned checks.

3.3.3 Credit and Debit Cards

The District will provide customers access to an independent contractor that provides credit or debit card services by telephone and online.

If credit card payments are revoked twice in a one-year period, the customer's right to utilize credit card payments may be rescinded.

3.3.4 Extended Payment Program

In order to be eligible for the extended payment program, a District customer must:

- Contact the District to arrange a payment plan before being placed on the disconnect list; and
- Have a "Satisfactory Payment History" with the District. Satisfactory payment history means that the customer has complied with all terms of prior extended payment agreements with the District and during the previous twelve (12) months the customer has not had a non-sufficient funds (NSF) check to the District, or a similar returned credit item, or been disconnected for non-payment; and
- Be named as the responsible party on the utility account or the legal owner of the property.

Under documented extraordinary circumstance, the Finance Manager may approve a payment arrangement for a customer who does not meet the eligibility criteria as set forth above.

An executed payment agreement will be revoked when:

- A customer fails to make timely payment(s) pursuant to terms of the executed agreement. "Timely payment" is defined as having been received in the District's offices by the close of business on the day specified; or
- If any portion of the charges for water billed to the customer after signing an extended payment agreement becomes delinquent; or
- If the bank returns any customer's payment and the payment amount is reversed during the terms of the extended payment agreement. This includes payments returned for non-sufficient funds (NSF) and/or other errors or omissions.

If an executed payment agreement is revoked, the customer's water service is subject to immediate termination without further notification to the customer.

3.3.5 Returned Payments

A service fee shall be added to the customer's account for each returned item when notified by the district's bank of nonpayment by the customer's bank or payment vendor. The service fee amount shall be set according to a fee schedule adopted by the District.

The amount of the returned item payment that was applied to the customer's account will be reversed, and the status of the account for collection and enforcement will be determined as if the District never received the returned item. The customer's account shall be immediately subject to all applicable fees and enforcement actions, including termination of water service, if applicable.

If the District receives two or more returned items within any twelve (12) month period, the District may refuse to accept checks or other electronic payments on that account.

3.4 Procedures for Collecting Past Due Accounts

In addition to the steps authorized by RCW 57.08, the following provisions set forth procedures to be utilized by the District if a bill for services rendered to a customer of the District becomes delinquent.

3.4.1 Water Bills

Each water bill shall include a billing date. The date will be the date the bill is mailed to the responsible party. Each bill will have a past due date. The past due date shall be eighteen (18) calendar days beyond the bill date.

3.4.2 Delinquent Notices

Delinquent notices shall be mailed to the responsible party that does not pay in full their water bill on or before the past due date shown on their water bill. Delinquent notices shall be mailed to the responsible party fourteen (14) calendar days after the past due date. The delinquent notice will allow the delinquent responsible party seven (7) calendar days to make payment. The total amount must be paid in cash, check, debit or by credit card and received at the District office by the required payment date to avoid additional collections procedures and fees.

3.4.3 Late Fee

To recoup a portion of the cost associated with collecting delinquent bills, a late fee of \$10.00 or one (1%) percent per month, whichever is greater, will be applied to all bills with unpaid balances fourteen (14) calendar days beyond the bill due date. At their discretion, the Finance Manager or Customer Service Department employees are authorized to reverse a late fee on an account, provided that the account has had no late

payments, reversals, or other fees within the previous twelve (12) months and/or agrees to sign up for autopay.

3.4.4 Final Notice

Final notices shall be mailed to the responsible party notifying the Customer that their water service will be disconnected if payment in full is not received. The final notice shall be mailed one (1) working day after pay-by-date specified on the delinquent notice.

The final notice will allow the responsible party of record ten (10) calendar days to make payment. The District reserves the right to deviate from this schedule; however, the sequence of events shall remain the same.

3.4.5 Disconnection Service Fee

Water accounts and services that are unpaid after the “Shut Off” deadline will be levied a disconnection service fee. The disconnection service fee shall be as indicated in Appendix A, Rates, Fees, Charges and Deposits.

Whenever an account becomes delinquent, all service fees, interest, and penalties become due and payable together with the delinquent amount. A customer with any delinquent amount not paid by the required payment date is subject to enforcement and collection procedures, including termination of water service, and fees and charges, as set forth in the District’s current fee schedule.

Water services placed on the disconnect list must pay the entire account balance and the disconnection service fee in full before the service will be restored.

3.4.6 Medical Emergency Shut-Off Protection

Any Customer with a medical emergency may request either to have their service not shut off or have it restored.

The following steps must be taken by the Customer once medical emergency has occurred.

- Once the Customer has been notified of and acknowledged a planned shut off (either by phone, letter, actual shutoff, or by PUD employee dispatched to disconnect services) the Customer will have ten (10) days to:
 - ◆ Provide an explanation of how the current medical condition will be aggravated by disconnection of service signed by a medical provider that includes:
 - Residence location.
 - Estimate of how long the condition is expected to last.

- Title, signature, and phone number of the person certifying the condition.
- ◆ If services are disconnected before the Customer claims a medical emergency, their services will be restored the following day for a disconnection service fee as set forth in Appendix A, Rates, Fees, Charges and Deposits. If the call to reconnect is after normal District work hours, the Customer may choose to have their water reconnected and pay the after-hours disconnection service fee as set forth in the applicable Rate Schedule.
- ◆ If the Customer fails to meet these conditions of reconnection, they will be sent a disconnection notice and will be terminated at the next regularly scheduled disconnection cycle.

3.4.7 Heat Advisory Shut-Off Protection

The following steps will be taken when the national weather service has issued or has announced that it intends to issue a heat advisory for the area in which the residential user's address is located (RCW 54.16):

- A residential user whose service has been disconnected for lack of payment, in the thirty (30) days prior to the national weather service heat advisory announcement, may request the district reconnect service.
- The District shall make a reasonable attempt to reconnect service the next business day. The District may require the residential user to enter into a payment plan prior to reconnecting service in compliance with (RCW 54.16).
- At the District's sole discretion, disconnection of service(s) may be postponed until such time as the national weather service heat advisory is no longer in effect.

3.4.8 Hardship or Extenuating Circumstances

The General Manager or Finance Manager are authorized to grant extensions or accept partial payments for water services for extenuating circumstances or hardship cases. Extensions may be granted on a case-by-case basis. Extensions or partial payments will not be automatic and may only be granted if requested as outlined in the past due notice. Extensions or partial payments shall generally not exceed thirty (30) days in duration. Complete payment for extensions allowed under this clause shall generally be made in full no later than thirty (30) days after the pay by date as specified in Section 3.3.4. A Customer's failure to make payment within the extension period may result in disconnection of the Customer's water service without further notification.

3.4.9 Closed Account Minimum Balances

If the amount of any closing balance due is less than five (\$5) dollars, the District may cancel the charge and the service will be adjusted to a \$0.00 balance.

3.4.10 Transfer of Previous Unpaid Accounts

The District may transfer to any existing or new water service any unpaid charges for service previously rendered to the same Customer at any other location within the District's service area. Such transferred balance shall be considered part of the Customer's current obligation to the District as though the previous unpaid balance had been incurred at the present service address.

If it is determined that a Customer has an outstanding balance from a previous account with the District and is receiving Benefit of Service through a different account with the District, but not in the Customer's name, the outstanding balance may be transferred to the active account.

If it is determined that a Customer has an outstanding balance from a previous account with the District is eligible to receive a refund through a different account with the District, whether or not in the Customer's name, the outstanding balance may be deducted from the pending refund.

3.5 Billing Adjustments

3.5.1 Requests to Adjust Water Service Charges

Ratepayer requests for a billing adjustment shall be referred to the Finance Manager.

- The Finance Manager shall review the request and have the authority to adjust a bill resulting from an error, mistake, or resulting from water loss due to damages caused by the District.
- If an adjustment to the water service charge is warranted for other than error or mistake, the Finance Manager shall provide the General Manager with a report and a recommendation for action. The General Manager is authorized to make the adjustments justified by the circumstances.
- If an adjustment to the water service charge is warranted for damages caused by the District or other circumstances beyond the customer's control, the Finance Manager will consult with staff to coordinate any adjustments.

3.5.2. Request to Adjust Miscellaneous Utility Billing Charges or Other Fees, Fines, or Penalties.

Ratepayer requests for waiver or adjustment of a utility billing charge or other fee or fine shall be referred to the Finance Manager.

- The Finance Manager or their designee shall be authorized to waive or dismiss a utility billing charge or administrative fee so long as the customer has not been charged the fee at any prior time and has not previously had any other utility billing collection charge or administrative fee waived.
- The Finance Manager or their designee is also authorized to dismiss or adjust a utility billing collection charge or administrative fee if they determine that the fee was assessed in error or District staff failed to follow District procedures.

3.5.3 Adjustments

Retroactive Adjustment

Retroactive adjustment of commercial, industrial, and residential bills arising from an incorrect application of rates, stuck meters, or clerical errors will typically be made only for those billing periods within the six (6) months immediately preceding discovering the circumstances for which the adjustment is made. At the discretion of the General Manager, adjustments over six (6) months may be made.

Misidentification or mix-up

Should one customer be billed for service furnished to another because of misidentification of the meter(s) through which each customer has received service, each account typically will be corrected for the last six (6) months of service so billed and paid. Each account will then be charged for all service furnished but limited to those billing periods which occurred within the six (6) month period immediately preceding discovery of the meter mix-up. At the discretion of the General Manager, the six (6) month period may be extended or shortened based on the particular circumstances.

3.5.4 Refunds

To prevent fraud or loss of District funds, refunds for overpayments will not be distributed until all necessary internal and external processing is complete. This may take up to fourteen (14) days to process refund requests.

3.6 High Consumption Events

3.6.1 Conditions

Customers may be eligible for an adjustment to their water bill subject to the following criteria:

- No adjustment will be made for any leaks or breaks beyond the external entrance to the primary structure. This includes leaks within or under the structure, internal or exterior fixtures, or irrigation lines.
- No adjustment will be made for any branches coming off the main service line.
- The water bill must be at least two (2) times the average usage for the same billing period over the past three (3) years.
- The leak or break must be repaired within thirty (30) days of notification by the District that a leak may exist or of the customer's actual discovery of the leak.
- A property is eligible to receive only one (1) leak adjustment every five years, regardless of changes in tenants or occupants.
- Adjustments are only available for residential customers including multi-family dwellings with two units or less.
- The adjustment will only apply to the leak period and shall not exceed four (4) consecutive months or two billing cycles.
- The break or service line leak and its repair must be documented in an acceptable manner to the District. Documentation may include a licensed plumber's itemized invoice, repair order, photos, receipts, or other documentation as necessary to support the adjustment request and document any repairs. A request for an adjustment shall be on an official form provided by the District.

3.6.2 Adjustment Procedure

Should all these conditions be met, then staff will enter an adjustment on the customer's water bill as follows:

- The adjustment amount will equal half the difference between the high-water consumption and normal average consumption.
- Similar-sized dwelling on which to base an adjustment.
- All adjustments will be applied as a credit to the account balance. Leak adjustments will only be refunded to closed accounts with a credit balance.
- Adjustments are limited to \$1,000 maximum amount.

3.7 Adjusting Customer's Water Bills Due to a Declared Disaster

It is recognized there may be cases that are dependent upon nature and totally beyond the Customer's control: e.g., floods that inundate an area for durations longer than two days.

When the federal or State government declares an area as a disaster area, the District's policy will be:

- When a Customer's meter(s) cannot be accessed on a normal reading day cycle, the Customer will be invoiced for the meter charge only (no consumption charges); further, the Customer's bill will reflect any consumption charge for that period on his subsequent bill when the District's meter reader can gain normal access to the meter.
- Should a Customer incur damage to his water piping system on the Customer's side of the meter, due to or during the event, the District will adjust the Customer's water loss as follows:
 - ◆ Where the cost of the excess water is not equal to more than the Customer's average consumption charge over the previous two (2) meter readings, the Customer will be charged the average of the previous two (2) billings for each billing period missed and no further adjustment will be made.
 - ◆ When the excess water amounts to more than the average of the previous two (2) meter readings, the District will adjust the consumption charge to the average of the previous two (2) billings.
 - ◆ If bills are estimated, an adjustment will be made at the time of the next regular billing that is based on an actual reading.
- Once the Customer learns of the water loss, the Customer must take immediate steps to correct the faulty plumbing, equipment or pipe causing the loss. This requirement is predicated on the event subsiding sufficiently to access the problem area.

The Customer must inform the District that the problem has been corrected so that investigation, meter readings and records can be made reflecting the problem, action taken to correct the problem and the dates of such action.