

Chapter 3: BILLING PROCEDURES, LATE CHARGES, VOLUNTARY TEMPORARY ACCOUNT SUSPENSION, AND ACCOUNT TERMINATION

3.03.010 Billing Cycles.

Rates and charges for water service shall be billed on a monthly or bimonthly basis. Payment shall be due within twenty-six days of the billing date. (Res. 2021.02.08)

3.03.020 Direct Billing of Tenants.

Property owners will be billed for water service. Property owners who rent or lease their property(ies) to others may request that a copy of the water service bills also be sent to his/her tenants. To do so, property owners must complete a "Request to Bill Non-owner" form, on which the property owner clearly acknowledges (1) that the property owner is ultimately responsible for the water charges against the property, (2) whether or not the owner chooses to have a copy of the bill sent to the tenant in the name of the tenant, and (3) agreeing that additional charges incurred in the course of renting property, such as, but not limited to, the cost for duplicate billing and charges related to additional service requests such as after-hours water service shut-off/turn on, labor, materials, or equipment, are ultimately the property owner's responsibility, regardless of whether or not the owner has a private agreement with the tenant stipulating otherwise. A copy of the Request to Bill Non-owner Form will be maintained on file in the District office. (Res. 92-8, 1992)

3.03.030 Late Charges.

- A. If payment is not made within twenty-six days of the billing date of the first bill (the "first bill"), then a ten percent late charge based on the amount of the unpaid rates and charges shall be added to the customer's account balance.
- B. Payment on the next bill (the "second bill") shall be due within twenty-six days of the billing date. If payment is not made within twenty-six days of the billing date of the second bill, then a ten percent late charge based on the amount of the unpaid rates and charges for which a late charge has not been imposed shall be added to the customer's account balance. If, at the time the second bill is printed, the customer has not paid the then-outstanding bill (first bill) from the preceding billing period, then the second bill shall reflect:
 - 1. The unpaid account balance from the preceding billing period including the ten percent late charge;
 - 2. Consumption charges and water basic charges;
 - 3. Any adjustments, i.e., leak adjustment, transfer balance; and
 - 4. The total amount due for the two billing periods.
- C. Delayed payment arrangements can be made once by the District, in accordance with the Liens provisions of this code.

- D. The District Manager or the Finance Manager is authorized to waive one late charge for residential customers who have not had previous late charges added to their accounts and who have reasonable justification for the late payment. (Res. 2020.02.08)

3.03.040 Final Notice of Delinquent Account.

- A. RCW 57.08.090 authorizes the District to turn off all or part of a customer's water service after charges for water supply are delinquent for a period of sixty days. Pursuant to that statutory authority, when the amount of the first bill described in Section 3.03.030 has been outstanding for at least sixty days, the District may mail a final notice to the customer.
- B. The final notice shall contain the following:
 - 1. A statement showing the customer's aged account balance, including all late charges.
 - 2. A statement informing the customer that the entire account balance, including the total amount due for any unpaid billing periods plus all late charges, must be paid within seven days of the final notice printing date, and clearly setting forth the date required for payment (the date required for payment shall be referred to on the final notice as the "pay by date").
 - 3. A statement advising the customer that:
 - a. Failure to pay the entire account balance by the pay by date will result in additional costs and termination of water service beginning at eight a.m. on the last Tuesday of the month; and
 - b. Service will not be restored until the customer pays the entire delinquent account balance in full, including all charges and fees applicable to service restoration as set forth in Appendix 3A.
- C. Final Notice to Known Rental Properties.
 - 1. If the delinquent account is for service provided to a known rental property, then as a courtesy to the resident, telephone notice shall be provided or a "door hanger" notice shall be delivered to the service address and left in a prominent place. The telephone notice or door hanger notice shall contain substantially the same information as the final notice. A final notice shall be mailed to the property owner.
 - 2. If a property owner has authorized the district to send a copy of the bill to tenants pursuant to Section 3.03.020, then a final notice will be mailed to both the property owner and the tenant. (Res. 2020.12.42)

3.03.050 Resolution of Delinquent Accounts; Turnoff.

- A. After the District has mailed a final notice as provided in Section 3.03.040, if full payment of the entire account balance is received by the District by the final notice due

date, then the account will be cleared and no further action will be taken against the customer in connection with that particular delinquency.

- B. After the District has mailed a final notice as provided in Section 3.03.040, if the customer has not paid the entire amount due stated in the final notice within seven days of the final notice printing date, District staff is authorized to turn off the water service. Typically, water service will be turned off at eight a.m. on the last Tuesday of the month. Water service shall not be restored until the customer pays:
 - 1. The entire delinquent account balance; and
 - 2. Any charges and penalties as set forth in Appendix 3A.
- C. The District's turn-on fee may be waived in cases where the bill is being paid by organizations exempt from federal income tax under Section 501(a) of the Internal Revenue Code.
- D. In the event that a customer has received a final notice and is scheduled to have service terminated, the District Manager, Finance Manager, or their designee is authorized to make delayed payment arrangements with the customer on terms and conditions acceptable to the District.
- E. Nothing in this chapter shall preclude the District from filing a lien for delinquent payment. (Res. 2021.02.08)
- F. In the event of a heat related alert issued for the day of the shut off, the District will not shut off residential customers (including group homes and health care facilities). For those customers that were not shut off based on the heat related alert, the District will shut their water off after the heat-related alert goes off unless payment arrangements have been made.
- G. For those residential customers (including group homes and health care facilities) that have been shut off prior to the heat alert, they can request a no cost reconnection when a heat-related alert has been issued.
- H. Under normal weather conditions, if a customer's water is shut off and the request for reconnection occurs during normal business hours and a payment plan arrangement has been made, the water will be guaranteed to be turned back on that same day. The minimum payment must be at least 6% of the gross household income (see the low-income application for salary information documentation). Reconnection requests made after normal business hours will be charged the normal reconnection fee as set forth in Appendix 3A.
- I. Sections 3.03.050.F-H are intended to comply with RCW 57.08.081(8)-(11). To the extent there is any conflict between those District Code sections and that statute, as may be amended, the statute shall control (Res. 2023.07.23)