CITY OF SIMI VALLEY - POLICY

DISCONTINUATION OF RESIDENTIAL WATER SERVICE DUE TO NONPAYMENT

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of the Policy for Discontinuation of Residential Water Service Due to Nonpayment (Policy) is to comply with the requirements of SB 998, known as the "Water Shutoff Protection Act", amending the City's current practices and procedures concerning non-payment for water service for residential customers.

This Policy may be found online at https://www.simivalley.org/departments/administrative-services/customer-services/utility-billing.

II. LANGUAGES

This Policy is available in English, Spanish, Chinese, Tagalog, Vietnamese, Korean, and Arabic, and any other language spoken by at least 10% of the people residing in the City's water service area. A hard-copy of the Policy may be provided upon request.

III. CONTACT INFORMATION AND HOURS

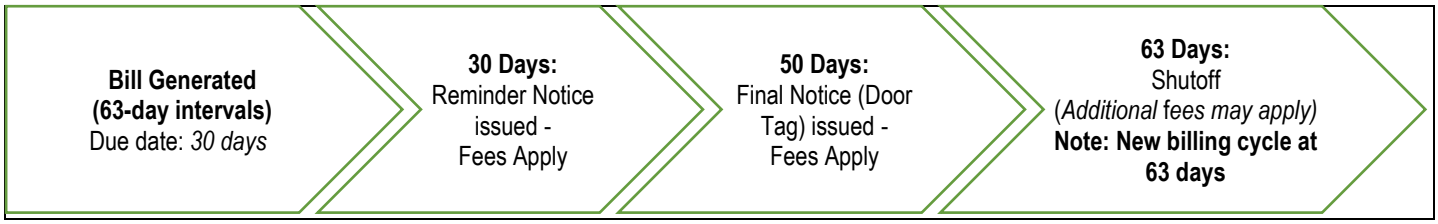
For information regarding the Customer's water utility services account, to make arrangements for payment options to avert discontinuation of residential water utility service, or for questions regarding this Policy, please contact:

CITY OF SIMI VALLEY
CUSTOMER SERVICES DIVISION
(805) 583-6736
For After-Hours Services, please call (805) 504-2708

City Hall Lobby Hours: Monday through Friday, 7:30 A.M. to 5:30 P.M. PST, excluding Holidays.

IV. BILLING TIMELINE

The City utilizes a bi-monthly billing system for residential water utility service. Unless specifically identified otherwise, days shall be defined as calendar days. An at-a-glance timeline for residential water utility billing and the actions for nonpayment are shown below:



V. BILLING AND DUE DATES

A. **Billing Date:** Bills for water utility services are issued to residential customers (Customer) every sixty-three (63) days. The Billing Date is defined as the date a bill is issued and reflected on the Customer's invoice. Bills are due and payable upon receipt.

B. **Reminder Notice**: A bill left unpaid after thirty (30) days from the Billing Date is considered overdue. At such point, a written reminder notice (Reminder Notice) will be sent to the Customer by U.S. Mail. The Customer will have ten (10) days from the date of the Reminder Notice to pay the outstanding balance, including any delinquency charges, in full.

The Reminder Notice shall be mailed to the mailing address designated on the Customer's account. If the mailing address and the property to which water service is provided are different, a duplicate Reminder Notice shall also be mailed to the service address and addressed to the "occupant". The Notice shall include:

1. Customer's name and address;
2. Amount past due;
3. Date by which payment or payment arrangements are required to avoid discontinuation of service;
4. Description of options to avert discontinuation of service;
5. Description of the process to review, dispute, adjust a bill, or appeal a decision of a bill;
6. City contact information.

The City assumes no responsibility for contact information that has not been kept up-to-date by the Customer, or if the postal service fails to deliver. If the Reminder Notice is returned through the mail as undeliverable, the City shall make every effort to contact the Customer by the phone number provided on file.

C. **Final Notice:** A Bill left unpaid for fifty (50) days from the Billing Date will have a door tag placed at the property location (Final Notice). The Final Notice will include information about the amounts past due, fees and charges required to restore account to current status, and the date of the proposed water shutoff (Water Shutoff Date). A copy of this Policy will also be provided to the Customer, if the Reminder Notice is returned as undeliverable. The Customer will have seven (7) business days from the date of the Final Notice to pay the outstanding balance including any delinquency charges in full.

VI. METHODS OF PAYMENT

A. **Mail:** Please make checks payable to the City of Simi Valley, and include the remit portion with the payment in the envelope to:

City of Simi Valley
P.O. Box 511363
Los Angeles, CA 90051-7918

B. **In-Person:** Customer must bring the entire bill with the remit portion to the City's Customer Services Division at:

City of Simi Valley
2929 Tapo Canyon Road
Simi Valley, CA 93063

C. **Telephone:** Telephone payments can be made 24 hours a day by calling (855) 288-1492 (toll free). The City accepts Visa, MasterCard, Discover, or Checking Account.

D. **Online:** Online payments can be made at www.simivalley.org/onlinebiller, or through the Customer's bank bill pay/online system. When setting up the City of Simi Valley as the Customer's payee, ensure that the entire City of Simi Valley account number is included. Customers paying through the City's website will take up to three (3) business days for receipt and processing. Customers paying through their bank's bill pay/online system should review the bank's estimated delivery date to guarantee the City receives outstanding amounts by the payment deadline.

E. **"City Payments"/Night Drop Box:** Payments may be placed in the "City Payments/Night Drop Box (Dropbox) located in front of the City of Simi Valley Public Library, next to the Library book drop boxes. Payments placed in the Dropbox should include the Customer's check or money order, payable to the City of Simi Valley, and the remit portion of the bill. Payments placed in the Dropbox on non-business days, or after 7:30 A.M., will be picked up the next business day.

Payments are credited on the date of receipt by the City and not the post mark date. Customer must contact Customer Services Division at (805) 583-6736 by 4:00 p.m. if Customer believes payment will not arrive by the deadline set to request an extension.

VII. FEES

A. **Returned Payments:** Upon receipt of a returned payment, the City will consider the account delinquent, Returned payments shall be subject to a returned item fee, in accordance with the delinquent service fee schedule.

B. **Late Charges:** Overdue balances are subject to a late charge, in accordance with the delinquent service fee schedule.

C. **Disconnection and Reconnection Fees:** Disconnection and reconnection fees will be assessed, in accordance with the delinquent service fee schedule.

D. **Underpayments:** Any underpayment will be deemed as delinquent. In all cases, underpayment or non-payment shall be subject to late charges.

VIII. PROHIBITION AGAINST DISCONTINUING RESIDENTIAL WATER SERVICE

A. The City shall not discontinue residential water service for nonpayment if the conditions under § XIII. EXEMPTIONS are all satisfied. If the Customer is able to demonstrate his/her eligibility, the City shall offer one or more of the following options:

1. Amortization of the unpaid balance;
2. Participation in an alternative payment schedule;
3. Partial or full reduction of the unpaid balance financed without additional charges to other ratepayers;
4. Temporary deferral of payment.

B. Such requests may be made in writing, and must include all relevant documents referenced under § XIII. EXEMPTIONS, and addressed to the Customer Services Supervisor, or his/her Designee. At the direction of the Administrative Services Director, the Customer Services

Supervisor, or his/her Designee, shall have the discretion to assess the request, review the documents, and provide the most viable option to the Customer.

C. A Customer may not request an installment payment of delinquent amounts more than once in a twelve (12) month period. All future bills shall become payable when due. Failure to comply with the terms of any above referenced payment options shall result in the issuance of a Final Notice.

IX. BILL DISPUTES AND APPEALS

A. Billing disputes must be submitted in writing addressed to the attention of the Customer Services Supervisor at:

EMAIL: UtilityBilling@SimiValley.org

MAIL: City of Simi Valley
Customer Services Division
2929 Tapo Canyon Road
Simi Valley, CA 93063-2117

B. A Customer may appeal the decision of the Customer Services Supervisor, and submit a request for review to the Administrative Services Director in writing, at the above email or address. Such requests must be submitted within fifteen (15) days from the date of the Customer Service Supervisor's decision.

C. A Customer exercising their right to appeal will not have their water service discontinued for non-payment while the appeal or review is pending.

D. A Customer may not appeal more than 3 billings in a 12-month period.

E. The determination of the Administrative Services Director is final.

X. DISCONNECTION OF WATER SERVICE FOR NONPAYMENT

The City shall disconnect water service by turning off, and in most cases locking off the meter. If City staff has been dispatched for a disconnection, the Customer may be charged a fee in the billing system regardless of whether the meter has physically been turned off.

Field-personnel are not permitted to collect payment. For questions regarding disconnected services, contact the City of Simi Valley, Customer Services Division at (805) 583-6736 during normal business hours. An exemption may be made, as stated in § XIII. EXEMPTIONS.

XI. RESTORING WATER SERVICE

In order to restore disconnected water service due to nonpayment, the Customer shall pay all past due amounts and delinquent fees attributable to the disconnection and reconnection of service. All assessed charges must be paid before service is restored.

The total fees for disconnection and reconnection during regular business hours is subject to the delinquent service fee schedule. Regular business hours are Monday through Friday, 7:30 A.M to 5:30

P.M. PST, excluding holidays. In-person payments to restore services can be made Monday through Friday, between 7:45 A.M. until 4:00 P.M. PST. If payment is received after 4:00 P.M., service will not be reconnected until the following business day. Service may be reconnected the same business day, after 4:00 P.M., by paying an after-hours restoration fee (subject to the delinquent service fee schedule) during normal business hours.

Water service turned on by any person other than City personnel, or without authorization, shall subject the Customer's account to fines or additional charges or fees, such as lock charge fee and lock replacement fee.

XII. NOTICE TO RESIDENTIAL TENANTS/OCCUPANTS

The City shall inform an adult tenant/occupant of the delinquent balance, by means of a door tag (Final Notice) and including this Policy, on the fiftieth (50th) day prior to water service being disconnected. The door tag will include information about the amounts overdue, fees and charges required to restore account to current status, and the Water Shutoff Date.

The notice shall advise the adult tenants/occupants that they have the right to become a Customer of the City, without being required to pay the amount due on the delinquent account, if they agree to the terms and conditions of service, and are willing to assume financial responsibility for subsequent charges for water service at that address. In order for the amount due on the delinquent property owner, manager, landlord, or agent account to be waived for the new Customer, the adult tenants/ occupants must provide verification of tenancy in the form of a signed lease or rental agreement, with the property owner, manager, landlord, or agent.

XIII. EXEMPTIONS

The City shall not discontinue residential water service for nonpayment if all of the following conditions are met:

A. The Customer, or a tenant of the Customer, submits to the City a certification of a primary care provider, as that term is defined in subparagraph (A) of paragraph (1) of subdivision (b) of Section 14088 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, that discontinuation of residential water service will be life threatening to, or pose a serious threat to the health and safety of, a resident of the premises where residential water service is provided; and

B. The Customer demonstrates that he or she is financially unable to pay for residential water service within the City's water system normal billing cycle. The Customer shall be deemed financially unable to pay for residential water service within the City's normal billing cycle if any member of the Customer's household is a current recipient of CalWORKs, CalFresh, general assistance, Medi-Cal, Supplemental Security Income/State Supplementary Payment Program, or California Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children, or the Customer declares that the household's annual income is less than 200 percent of the federal poverty level; and

C. The Customer is willing to enter into one of the options as stated in § VIII. PROHIBITION AGAINST DISCONTINUING RESIDENTIAL WATER SERVICE, A. to avert discontinuation of residential water service offered by the City, with respect to all delinquent charges.

D. The Customer must provide to the City documents in support of their status of A. and B. above.

XIV. EMERGENCY WATER SERVICE

For emergencies occurring during non-business hours, please call the City of Simi Valley Emergency Service at (805) 504-2708 during normal business hours.

XV. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

The City shall annually report the number of discontinuations of residential service for inability to pay on the City's website and to the State Water Resources Control Board.

XVI. LIMITATIONS

Nothing in this Policy restricts, limits, or otherwise impairs the City's ability to terminate service to a Customer for reasons other than those explicitly stated in this Policy, including, but not limited to, unauthorized actions of the Customer.