

Policy No.: P400-21-1	Type of Policy: Finance
Policy Title: Discontinuation of Residential Water Service for Nonpayment	
Policy Description: Authorize the General Manager to Approve Discontinuation of Residential Water Service Due to Nonpayment	
Approval Date: 9/7/2021	Last Review Date: 2021
Approval Resolution No.: 46-21	Next Review Date: 2025
Rescinded Resolution No.: N/A	Rescinded Resolution Date: N/A

It is the policy of the Board of Directors of Dublin San Ramon Services District:

To authorize the General Manager or designee to approve discontinuation of residential water service arising from nonpayment of billed usage charges. Such discontinuations are to be conducted in accordance with Dublin San Ramon Services District (DSRSD) Code Chapter 1.50 Nonpayment of Fees and Charges, in addition to the “Water Shut-off Protection Act” (California Health and Safety Code Division 104 Part 12 Chapter 6) which has established specific requirements for water systems to follow when discontinuing residential water service due to nonpayment of charges.

1. Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of this policy is to define the conditions and procedures for discontinuing residential water service due to account holders’ nonpayment of water charges, including how account holders and/or occupants are notified by this policy, how they may obtain a payment arrangement or alternative payment schedule, how they may contest or appeal water charges, and how they may restore service after it has been discontinued for nonpayment.

2. Posting of the Policy

This policy will be posted on the District’s website. In addition to English, this policy will be made available in Spanish, Chinese, Tagalog, Vietnamese, Korean, and any other language spoken by at least 10% of the people (currently no other language meets this criteria) residing in the DSRSD service area.

3. Collection timeline for Utility Bills

- a. Per DSRSD Code §4.40.140, bills are due upon receipt and past due 30 days from the billing date. The billing due date is printed on the bill sent to the account holder.
- b. If the utility bill remains unpaid 30 days after the bill date, late fees and/or interest charges in amounts established by separate District ordinance or resolution will be added to the

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unpaid balance, and a “Late Payment Notice” will be mailed to the account holder. This notice will request that payment be made within 23 days from the date printed on the notice.

- c. If the utility bill remains unpaid 23 days after the “Late Payment Notice” was sent to the account holder, telephonic contact with the account holder will be attempted, after which, if the bill remains unpaid, a “Final Notice” will be mailed to the account holder. This notice will require payment to be made within 7 days from the delivery date. If payment is not received within the 7 days, the utility service may be discontinued without further notification attempts. The District will offer to provide this policy in writing and offer to discuss options to avert discontinuation of service if the telephonic contact is successful.

4. Payment Arrangement, Deferred Payment, and Alternative Payment Schedule

Upon receipt of a “Late Payment Notice” an account holder can request a payment arrangement, a temporary deferment, or an alternative schedule to make the required payments (a “payment plan”). DSRSD may choose which payment arrangement to accept as long as the outstanding balance is paid within a 12-month period.

5. Special Medical and Financial Circumstances

Water service shall not be discontinued for nonpayment if **ALL** of the following conditions are met:

- a. The property owner, or tenant of the property owner, submits the certification of a primary care provider that discontinuation of service will be life threatening or pose a serious threat to the health and safety of a resident of the premise where service is provided, **AND**
- b. The account holder demonstrates financial inability to pay for residential service within the normal billing cycle. (Account holder is deemed unable to pay if any member of the 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 account holder declares that the household’s annual income is less than 200 percent of the federal poverty level.), **AND**
- c. The account holder is willing to enter into a payment arrangement, a temporary deferral or alternative payment schedule consistent with this policy.

The District may choose which payment option to offer and accept. It should result in repayment of the outstanding balance in no more than 12 months. Payment arrangements longer than 12 months may be granted if the General Manager or designee finds that a longer period is necessary to avoid undue hardship on the customer based on the circumstances of the individual case.

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If for 60 days or more, the account holder fails to comply with the payment plan or the account holder does not pay the current charges while under the payment plan, then residential water service may be discontinued after a final notice to discontinue service is posted at the property.

6. Landlord Customers of Single-Family Residential Properties

When the account holder is a landlord and the account is delinquent and subject to discontinuation of service, the District shall make good faith effort to inform the residential occupants, by means of written notice hand-delivered or mailed to the service address, that service will be terminated at least 10 days prior to the termination. The notice shall also inform the occupants that they have the right to become account holders without being required to pay any amount that may be due on the delinquent account. The water system may require the tenant to verify that the delinquent account customer of record is or was the landlord, manager, or agent of the dwelling. The water system is not required to make service available to the tenants unless they agree to the terms and conditions of service.

7. Landlord Customers of Multi-Family Residential Properties

When the account services a multi-family residential building, the District will not discontinue service for nonpayment of charges. Pursuant to DSRSD Code §4.40.120, unpaid utility charges on residential multi-family buildings may be added as a special assessment to the property owner’s Alameda County or Contra Costa County property tax bill. No resident of a multi-family residential building will have their services discontinued due to the delinquency of a property owner.

8. Procedure for Customers to Contest or Appeal a Utility Bill

An account holder who desires to appeal or dispute the accuracy of the charges on a utility bill shall, no later than 30 days from the date of the original bill, submit a written notice to the Utility Billing & Customer Services Supervisor. The account holder must provide the reason or reasons for which the appeal or contest is based such as an erroneous water meter reading. The Utility Billing & Customer Services Supervisor, or designee, is authorized to correct an erroneous bill. The account holder shall be given written notification of the decision regarding the dispute. The Utility Billing & Customer Services Supervisor, or designee, will investigate claims relating to the accuracy of the amount billed, but will not review claims concerning level of service, general level of rates, pending rate changes, source of water, or similar matters.

If an account holder disagrees with the decision of the Utility Billing & Customer Services Supervisor, or designee, the account holder may appeal that decision to the General Manager. The General Manager, or designee, may review the accuracy of the amount billed, but will not review appeals under this procedure concerning level of service, general level of rates, pending rate changes, source of water and similar matters.

Any account holder who, pursuant to this policy, submits an appeal or contests the accuracy of the water consumption shown on a bill, shall not have service discontinued for nonpayment during the pendency of any investigation or appeal, provided the customer keeps current the account for services rendered as charges accrue in each subsequent billing period.

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9. **Contact DSRSD about Your Bill**

An account holder may call 925-828-8524 to discuss options to avert discontinuance of service for non-payment.