Customer-Service Policy

**Rules and Regulations of the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, herein referred to as the “utility.”**

Issue date:

Revision date:

**Definitions.** The following terms when used in this policy mean:

*1. Applicant*: An individual, firm, partnership, corporation, authority, or other entity residing in or located within the service area applying for water service.

*2. Board*: The governing body of the utility.

*3. Customer*: An individual, firm, partnership, corporation, authority, or other entity who has applied for and is currently receiving water service.

*4. Point of delivery*: The point of delivery of service to a customer shall be at the water meter unless otherwise specified in the Water Use Agreement.

*5. Point of use*: The precise location at which water is used or consumed (a residence, building, or similar location on the customer’s premises where water is to be used by the customer).

*6. Service*: The availability for use by the customers of water adequate to meet the customer’s requirements. Service shall be considered “available” when the utility maintains the water supply at normal pressure at the point of delivery in readiness for the customer’s use, whether or not the customer makes use of it.

*7. Service area*: The geographic area served by the utility, described generally as \_\_\_\_\_.

*8. Service line*: The water line that extends from the point of delivery to the point of use for each customer.

*9. Water use agreement*: The agreement or contract between the customer and the utility, pursuant to which water service is supplied and accepted.

*10. Water service connection*: A water meter and other equipment for supplying water to a single point of use. A single customer may be supplied by more than one service connection if that customer has more than one point of use.

General

1. The purpose of the utility is to provide a safe supply of water to customers within its service area. Water supply and use shall be in conformance with these rules and regulations and the applicable rate schedule of the utility.

2. Each customer of the utility shall be eligible to receive service from the utility only after a Water Use Agreement has been executed between the customer and the utility. If a customer requires service at more than one point of use, a separate Water Use Agreement shall be executed for each point of use.

3. The utility agrees to provide service to the point of delivery, and install and maintain at its expense one metered service connection for each customer point of use, based on a valid Water Use Agreement.

4. The customer will install and maintain at his/her own expense service lines from the point of delivery to the point of use. The customer will make repairs on a timely basis as necessary.

5. A metered service connection is for the sole use of the applicant or customer. Customers shall not permit the extension of pipes for the purpose of transferring water from one property to another, from one point of use to another, nor share, resell or sub-meter water to any other person or entity.

6. Standard residential rates shall be applicable to all multiple residential and point-of-use properties. Multiple residential properties include mobile home parks, apartment buildings, motels, housing complexes, or similar residential developments. The board may, at its discretion, choose to serve multiple residential properties through a single master meter. In such cases, the owner must agree in writing that s/he will be responsible for payment of the monthly water bill. The system’s monthly bill for multiple residential properties will be computed as follows:

(Minimum residential rate x total number of dwelling units)

+ Per 1,000 gallon charge for use above the total minimum gallon usage

= Total monthly bill

7. At no time shall any customer or individual connect a non-system water source to any service line or water line that is also connected to the system. Representatives of the utility shall have the right to enter the customer’s premises for the purpose of inspection and enforcement of this policy at reasonable hours. Violations of this policy shall constitute cause for immediate disconnection of service.

8. It is the responsibility of each customer to anticipate changes in occupancy and to have service transferred to the new customer in accordance with the policy for obtaining service. Until service is formally transferred, the original customer shall be responsible for payment of service. The board may refuse to transfer service until all past-due bills and charges have been paid.

9. Customers agree to pay the established fee for water service in accordance with applicable rate schedules at the time service is provided by the utility.

10. Representatives of the utility shall have the right at any reasonable hour to enter customer’s property in order to read water meters, inspect piping, perform other duties for the proper maintenance and operation of service, or to remove meters and equipment upon discontinuance of service by either the customer or the utility.

11. The utility will make reasonable efforts to supply continuous, uninterrupted service. However, it shall have the right to interrupt service for the purpose of making repairs, connections, extensions, or for other necessary work. Efforts will be made to notify customers who may be affected by such interruptions, but the utility will not accept responsibility for losses which might occur due to such necessary interruptions. The utility does not accept responsibility for losses due to interruptions of service caused by storms, floods, or other events beyond the utility’s control.

Obtaining water service

1. Applications for water service shall be accepted at the system office and must be accompanied by a connection fee of $\_\_\_\_\_ and/or a meter deposit of $\_\_\_\_\_. The connection fee is non-refundable. The meter deposit will be maintained in a special account to ensure payment of water charges. When service is discontinued, the portion of the meter deposit remaining after current bills are paid will be returned to the customer within 15 days. Customers with service termination due to nonpayment will have their deposit applied to their accounts to satisfy arrears prior to actual termination of water service.

2. Before installing a service connection and providing water available for use, the utility may require the applicant to pipe his/her home and be ready to accept service.

3. Customers will arrange for a licensed plumber to make connections between the service line and the meter. The system operator will inspect plumbing work prior to completion of the work.

Customer billing

1. Customers will be billed monthly in accordance with the rate structure of the utility.

2. Water meters will be read between the **[date]** and the **[date]** of each month.

3. Bills will be mailed on or about the **[number]** day of each month.

4. Water consumption and sewerage will be billed as separate items on the bill.

Payment terms

1. Payment is due by the **[number]** day of each month.

2. Payments made after the **[number]** day will incur a penalty equal to **[number]** percent of the water bill or $\_\_\_, whichever is less.

Termination of water service

1. Customers who fail to pay the entire amount they owe by the last day of the month will be subject to termination of water service by the **[number]** day of the following month.

2. Customers with unpaid bills on the **[number]** day of the month will be notified by mail that water service will be shut off on the **[number]** day of the following month unless payment is made. This shutoff notice will be mailed no later than **[number]** days prior to termination of service.

3. Customers subject to termination of water service will be charged a disconnect fee of $\_\_\_\_\_, which represents time involved in removing the meter, administrative costs, and the like.

4. Customers may avoid termination of service by either paying the amount in arrears at the utility office before the scheduled shutoff date or by receiving a hardship deferment and signing a deferred payment plan specifying payment terms before the scheduled shutoff date.

5. Customers may appeal a notice of termination of water service. The utility manager or bookkeeper is designated as the utility representative for hearing customer appeals of notice of termination of water service. The representative is authorized to correct errors of the utility, adjust the amount due to the utility, receive payment to satisfy the amount in arrears, and to negotiate deferred payment plans. A written record of customer appeal will be prepared and maintained on file by the utility representative. The board will hear appeals at regularly scheduled board meetings ONLY AFTER the customer has followed the administrative procedure denoted above. Service will be shut off as scheduled regardless of a customer’s intent to appeal to the board.

Deferred-payment plan for hardship

1. A customer may apply for deferred payment BEFORE the shutoff date by filing a claim for hardship with the bookkeeper at the utility office. If the hardship qualifies, the customer will sign an agreement for a deferred-payment plan.

2. Hardships eligible for deferred payment plans include loss of job, medical emergency, excessive bill (usually resulting from large leaks), and extraordinary financial difficulty.

3. The maximum length for a deferred payment plan shall be **[number]** days unless the approved plan specifies otherwise.

4. Minimum monthly payment amounts shall not be less than **[number – percentage/ fraction]** the total amount due, unless the approved plan specifies otherwise.

5. Deferred-payment amounts shall be in addition to the regular service bill amount.

Reconnection of water service after termination for non-payment

1. Customers desiring restoration of water service after termination for non-payment must pay debts in the full amount AND pay an additional deposit in accordance with the fee schedule of the utility AND pay the service fee for reconnection in accordance with the utility’s fee schedule.

Meters

1. Meters will be furnished, installed, owned, inspected, tested and kept in proper operating condition by the utility without cost to the customer. A complete record of tests and histories of meters will be kept. Meter tests will be made according to methods of the American Water Works Association by the utility as often as deemed necessary.

2. Service meters whose error does not exceed + 2 percent shall be considered as being within the allowable limits of accuracy for billing purposes. The percentage of error will be considered by taking the average of the error at full load and the error at 10 percent load, unless a customer’s rate of usage is known to be practically constant—in which case, the error at such constant use will be used.

3. Meters shall be set in an accessible location on the outside of buildings, except where otherwise directed by the utility. All meters shall be set horizontally, and never connected to a vertical pipe. Meters set outside buildings shall be placed in a meter box furnished and installed by the utility.

4. Meter tests requested by customers will be performed without cost to the customer if the meter is found to be in excess of + 2 percent (either fast or slow). Otherwise, the customer who requested the test will be charged for the cost of performing the test.

5. The customer shall be responsible for any damage to the meter installed for his/her service caused by other than normal wear and tear.

Main extensions

In extending a water main to serve an applicant, the utility may, at its discretion, exercise one of the following options:

1. If the cost of the extension is less than the average cost of the entire system to each user and sufficient construction funds are available, the utility may elect to make the extension upon the applicant’s payment of the required connection fee and meter deposit.

2. If the cost of the extension is greater than the average cost of the entire system to each user, but construction funds are available to the extent of such average cost, the utility may elect to contribute to the extension in the amount of such average cost and require the applicant to deposit in cash the additional cost plus the connection fee. If/As additional customers are connected to the extension and as construction funds become available, all or part of the original customer’s deposit may be returned. Any portion of the original deposit remaining after the expiration of a five-year period will become property of the utility. In no case will interest be paid on such deposits.

3. In the event that the utility does not have funds available to pay for the construction in the amount of the average cost per user of the entire system, it may require as a condition of extending service that the applicant deposit an amount equal to the entire cost of the extension in addition to the charge of a connection fee. In such event, the utility may, as funds become available, return to the customer that portion of the deposit equal to the average cost of the system per user. No interest will be paid on such deposits.

Services

1. The utility will install and pay for all water-service pipes from its mains to the meters on property abutting the travelway along which the main is installed. The service pipes shall not be less than 3/4-inch in size.

2. The utility will install and pay for the utility cock, meter, and meter setting.

Applicants having excessive needs

1. In the event an applicant whose water requirements are found to exceed the utility’s ability to supply them from the existing plant without adversely affecting service to other customers, the utility will not be obligated to render such service unless and until suitable self-liquidating financing is arranged to cover necessary investment to expand the plant.

Availability of records for public inspection

1. Utility records, including minutes of meetings and financial records, are available for inspection by the public during office hours.

2. Utility records, including minutes of meetings and financial records, are available online on the utility’s website at **[URL]**

Notice of meetings of the board

1. The Board meets in regular session on the **[number]** day of each month, at **[time]**. Special meetings of the board are held as necessary. Notice of special meetings is posted at the utility office and on the utility website at least 48 hours prior to the meeting.

2. The agenda for regular and special board meetings is posted in the utility office and on the utility website at least 24 hours prior to the meeting.

Changes to this policy

1. The customer service policy is subject to change as required and voted upon by the board. The board shall establish rates and fees for service as necessary to operate and maintain the utility.

Schedule of rates

1. Residential rate (5/8-inch meter, ¾-inch meter, or multi-residential master meter):

First \_\_\_\_\_ gallons $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (minimum monthly charge)

Next \_\_\_\_\_ gallons $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ per 1,000 gallons used

Next \_\_\_\_\_ gallons $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ per 1,000 gallons used

Next \_\_\_\_\_ gallons $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ per 1,000 gallons used

2. Commercial rate:

3. Agricultural rate:

4. Industrial rate: