

## **Policy on Discontinuance of Residential Water Service for Non-Payment**

For purposes of this policy, residential water service means water service to a residential connection that includes single family residences, multifamily residences, mobilehomes, including, but not limited to, mobilehomes in mobilehome parks, or farmworker housing.

Bills are considered past due and delinquent if not paid within 19 days from the date of mailing. It is the responsibility of every customer to pay the bill in full and on time. Liberty Utilities will allow every residential customer a total of 79 days from the date of mailing its bill, to make full payment of the bill prior to the discontinuance of service. Information on how to avoid disconnection of residential service for nonpayment is available by calling 760-247-6484 or toll free 800-481-9190.

Written disconnection notices will be mailed to the mailing address designated on the account. If the mailing address and the address of the property to which water service is provided are different, a separate notice will be mailed to the service address and addressed to "Occupant". In the event that a written notice is undeliverable, Liberty Utilities will contact the customer named on the account through a telephone notice. If Liberty Utilities is unable to contact the customer, Liberty Utilities will make a good faith effort to leave a door tag at the residence and leave a disconnection notice.

Liberty Utilities will not disconnect residential water service for nonpayment of a delinquent account unless we first provide the customer of record written notice of the impending shutoff no less than seven (7) business days prior to discontinuing service in accordance with Rules Nos. 8 and 11.

Where the owner, manager, or operator of the dwelling, structure, or park is listed as the customer of record, and water service is provided to residential occupants, Liberty Utilities will make a good faith effort to inform the occupants by means of posting written notice on the property at least fifteen (15) days prior to discontinuance of water service in accordance with Rule No. 8. The written notice will advise the tenants/occupants that they have the right to become customers of Liberty Utilities without being required to pay the amount due on the delinquent account, as long as they are willing to assume financial responsibility for subsequent charges for water service at that address.

## **Alternative Payment Arrangements**

Upon receipt of a water disconnection notice, if a customer is unable to pay his or her bill, he or she must contact Liberty Utilities to make payment arrangements by calling 760-247-6484 or toll free 800-481-9190. Depending on each customer's case, a customer may be offered a deferred payment (paying at a later date), reduced payment (spreading payments over an agreed upon period of time not to exceed 12 months), or some other alternative payment schedule. Water service will not be discontinued for nonpayment if the customer complies with the alternative payment entered with Liberty Utilities and the customer keeps current on his or her account for water service charges accrue in each subsequent billing period. If a customer fails to comply with an alternate payment arrangement, Liberty Utilities will give a discontinuance of water service notice, a minimum of five (5) business days before discontinuing water service. The customer will not be entitled to any further investigation or alternative payment arrangements with Liberty Utilities.

## **Residential Health and Safety Exception**

Water service to a residential water customer will not be discontinued for nonpayment when such customer establishes to the satisfaction of Liberty Utilities that all three of the following conditions are met:

- a) The residential customer submits certification from a primary care provider, as defined by the Water Shutoff Protection Act, 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 service is provided,
- b) The residential customer demonstrates that she or he is financially unable to pay for residential service within Liberty Utilities' normal billing cycle, and
- c) The residential customer is willing to enter into a deferred (paying at a later date), reduced (spreading payments out over an agreed upon period of time not to exceed 12 months), or some other alternative payment schedule.

**Restoration of Residential Water Service**

Where water service has been discontinued, Liberty Utilities may charge \$30 for reconnection fee during regular working hours or \$150 for after working hours pursuant to Rule No. 11. In addition, Liberty Utilities will request the customer to pay the remaining balance on the account and a security deposit to restore service.

Reconnection/disconnection fees must be paid in full before restoration of water service. These fees must be paid in cash or money order in our office or at an authorized payment location, or by credit or debit card over the phone or through our website. No personal checks will be accepted. To have service restored on the same day, payments must be made and our office notified no later than 4:00 p.m. Service will be restored on the next business day when payment is received after 4:00 p.m.

**Disputed Bill**

Any customer (or adult of a residential service address) who disputes the accuracy of their water bill may petition Liberty Utilities to review the disputed bill by calling 760-247-6484 or toll free 800-481-9190. The customer will not have their water service discontinued for nonpayment while an investigation by Liberty Utilities is pending, provided that: a) customer has submitted a petition for review within 5 days of receiving the disputed bill, and b) customer has made alternate payment arrangements, where he or she asserts the bill is beyond their means to pay in full within the normal payment period, prior to discontinuance of service in accordance with Rule Nos. 5 and 10.

If the customer is not satisfied with Liberty Utilities' response, the customer may submit a complaint to the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) by visiting <http://www.cpuc.ca.gov/complaints/>. Billing and service complaints are handled by the CPUC's Consumer Affairs Branch (CAB), which may also be reached by the following means:

Telephone	1-800-649-7570 (8:30 AM to 4:30PM, Monday through Friday)
Mail	California Public Utilities Commission, Consumer Affairs Branch 505 Van Ness Avenue, 3 <sup>rd</sup> Floor, San Francisco, CA 94102

If a customer's case meets the eligibility criteria, CAB will provide the customer with instructions on how to mail a check or money order to be impounded pending resolution of the case. The customer will not have their water service discontinued for nonpayment while an investigation by the CPUC is pending, provided that the customer has followed the procedures for review set forth in Rule No. 10.