

SOUTHINGTON WATER DEPARTMENT

SERVICE SHUT OFF FOR NON-PAYMENT OF WATER BILL

POLICY: In accordance with the Rules and Regulations of the Southington Water Department (April 1, 2005), the penalty for nonpayment of a water bill is as follows:

1. A Past Due notice is mailed and a 1.5% late charge is assessed on all accounts unpaid 30 days after the bill date.
2. Penalties are assessed on unpaid water balances after the 30th of each subsequent month until paid.
3. Accounts unpaid 60 days after the original bill date receive a Shut Off Notice. The Shut Off Notice states a termination of service date no less than 15 days after the Notice date. If payment is not received by the termination date, the Department shall have the right to shut off water service to the property.
4. The Department shuts off water service to all accounts with a balance of \$50 or greater.
5. If a customer has had their water service shut off for any reason, the Department requires full payment of the unpaid balance plus a turn on fee.
 - a. If the service is resumed during the hours of 8:30 AM and 3:30 PM Monday through Friday, the fee is \$50
 - b. If service is resumed outside of the above hours and on holidays, the fee is \$150.
6. The Department does not shut off water service between the dates of November 15th and April 15th. The Department reserves the right to shut off for certain cases within that time period.

PROCEDURE:

- The A/R Clerk enters all payments through the Termination Date on the Shut Off notice.
- The A/R Clerk runs the Shut Off Register from the billing system (Flexibill) for all accounts with over 75 days past due with balances of \$50 or more.
- The A/R Clerk reviews each account to determine if shut off is appropriate. The following situations would be noted and the account NOT shut off if:
 - Water is already off
 - Payment Arrangement
 - Liened
 - Bankruptcy
 - Two family house with tenants
 - Duplex with split service
 - Medical necessity as documented by a physician, with a payment arrangement
- The A/R clerk prepares a Shut Off list in Excel noting the list number, the Account Name, Property Address, Account Number, Amount Due with columns to record Paid, Off, On and comments.
- The A/R Clerk prints off curb box locations for each account on the Shut Off List.

- The List and locations are given to the Distribution Foreman to carry out the next day.
- Shut offs are not done on Fridays or the last day of the week, if Friday is a holiday.
- Once the Maintainer has shut off an account, they radio into the Office and give the list number and say that it has been shut off.
- All references to accounts on the Shut off list are only referred to by the list number over the radio.
- Maintainer performing the shut offs:
 - Does not notify the occupants that they are there to do the shut off.
 - Does not accept money from the occupants during normal working hours.
 - They can delay the shut off if the occupant says they are going to make the payment on line or are heading to the office to make the payment in person.
 - Refer the customer to call the office with any questions and the confirmation number of any on-line payments.
- Once the balance and the turn on fee have been paid, the Office will radio the Maintainer instructing them to turn the service back on for that list number.
- The Distribution Foreman and/or the Maintainer will check in with the Office each morning to update their list for any payments received over night in the Drop Box or through Official Payments.

Problems:

- Customers unable to pay can be offered a Payment Arrangement or referred to Southington Community Services. The Department does not waive turn on fees for accounts being paid by SCS.
- Customers who request additional time to pay their balance will require a Payment Arrangement to be set up. The Office Supervisor will send out a letter outlining the terms of the Payment Arrangement and a signed copy of the letter must be returned for the arrangement to be in place.
- Any partial payments received from a shut off customer are applied first to the turn on fee and then to the balance.
- All shut off customers who call the office regarding the shut off need to be instructed that the turn on fee increases if they are not in our building before 3:30 PM.
- Customers who have been shut off and call the office after hours will contact the on-call Maintainer. The on-call staff can turn service back on after the customer has given them an Official Payments confirmation number for the past due balance PLUS the after-hours turn on fee of \$150. The Maintainer must instruct the customer that if both items are not paid in full the following morning the customer is again subject to turn off and an additional turn on fee.
- If the office staff and Office Supervisor are unable to reason with irate customers on the phone or in the lobby, such customers will be referred to the Superintendent and/or Assistant Superintendent.

Approved: 12/11/14