

**SAN FRANCISCO PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION
POLICY ON DISCONTINUATION OF RESIDENTIAL
WATER SERVICE FOR NONPAYMENT
(Adopted by Commission Resolution No. 19-0237)**

This SFPUC Policy on Discontinuation of Residential Water Service is adopted in accordance with the requirements of the California Water Shutoff Protection Act, California Health & Safety Code Section 116900 *et seq.*

I. SFPUC Billing and Collection Process Overview

The SFPUC bills customers monthly for their residential water service. Payment is due fifteen (15) days from the bill date. An SFPUC water and sewer bill will be considered a proper charge unless a protest is made by the customer to SFPUC Customer Services within fifteen (15) days from the bill date. If customers have questions about their bills or wish to dispute charges, they may contact SFPUC Customer Services:

By Phone: (415) 551-3000
By Email: customerservice@sflower.org
By Mail: SFPUC Customer Services
525 Golden Gate Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94102

Any charge or fee not paid within thirty (30) days from the bill date shall be subject to a late payment penalty equal to one-half of one percent (0.5%) for each thirty (30) day period or fraction thereof on the amount owed.

The SFPUC reviews water and sewer service accounts routinely to determine whether they have a past due balance that is delinquent. When an account has a past due balance that is at least forty-five (45) days old, the SFPUC mails the customer a Reminder Notice that payment is due. If no payment is received by the SFPUC fifteen (15) days after the date of the Reminder Notice, the account has a past due balance that is at least 60 days old and is considered delinquent. At this stage, the SFPUC initiates a severance process for the delinquent account that may include the discontinuation of water service.

At least seven (7) business days before the discontinuation of a customer's residential water service for nonpayment, the SFPUC will send a written notice by U.S. mail to the customer of the residence to which service is provided. If the customer's mailing address is not the address of the property to which service is provided, the SFPUC will also send the written notice to the address of the property to which service is provided. The SFPUC will inform the customer of their payment delinquency and the impending discontinuation of their residential water service, and it will provide the customer with information about the options to avert discontinuation of water service, as set forth in this policy below.

II. Options to Avert Discontinuation of Residential Water Service for Nonpayment

Customers who have received a notice of discontinuation of residential water service for nonpayment from the SFPUC have several options to avoid discontinuation of water service. These options include: (1) paying the delinquent amount to the SFPUC; (2) participating in a plan for deferred payments; (3) participating in an alternative payment schedule; (4) contesting or appealing the bill amount; and (5) contacting the SFPUC for more information about these options.

A. Pay Delinquent Amount to the SFPUC

Customers can pay the delinquent amount on their residential water service account through one of the following options:

1. Pay Online

- Customers may make a one-time online payment with a credit card (Visa or MasterCard), debit card, eCheck, or cash at <https://www.sfwater.org/waterezpay>. This payment service is provided free of any processing charges to customers. There is a payment limit of \$5,000 within a 30-day period on credit and debit cards only. The cash option allows for payments only at 7-Eleven stores using a barcode downloaded from the EZ-Pay site.

2. Pay by Phone

- Customers may call SFPUC Customer Services at (415) 551-3000 and choose “Pay By Phone,” or call SFPUC’s automated payment service provider directly at (844) 737-8222. Customers should have their account numbers ready when they call.

3. Pay by U.S. Mail

- Customers may send the bottom portion of their bill with a check or money order payable to “San Francisco Water” by U.S. mail to SFPUC Customer Services, P.O. Box 7369, San Francisco, CA 94120-7369. Customers should not mail cash.

4. Pay in Person

- Customers may make a payment in person, by cash, check, Visa, MasterCard, ATM cards (with MasterCard or Visa logo only), at the following locations:
 - 7-Eleven Stores (cash only, minimum payment of \$10.00)

Note: Customers may pay with cash at participating 7-Eleven Stores with an EZ-Pay barcode, downloadable at <https://www.sfwater.org/waterezpay>. Most 7-Eleven Stores are open 24 hours. Customers may visit their nearest 7-Eleven Store for more details.

- San Francisco Public Utilities Commission
525 Golden Gate Avenue (At Polk Street), 1st Floor, Cashier Window
San Francisco, CA 94102
8am – 5pm Monday through Friday (except City holidays)

Note: A night box is available after hours and is located to the right of the main entrance, corner of Golden Gate Avenue at Polk Street. Please use checks only when using the night box.

- City Hall, Room 140
1 Dr. Carlton Goodlett Place
San Francisco, CA 94102
8am -5pm Monday through Friday (except City holidays)

B. Participate in a Plan for Deferred Payments

Customers who are unable to pay the delinquent amount on their bills may participate in a plan for deferred payments to avoid discontinuation of residential water service for nonpayment. A plan for deferred payments allows customers to defer paying the delinquent amount on their bills and will defer collection action on the account for a period not to exceed thirty (30) days. Customers may contact SFPUC Customer Services by phone at (415) 551-3000 to request a plan for deferred payments.

C. Participate in an Alternative Payment Schedule.

The SFPUC offers two (2) types of alternative payment schedules for customers with a delinquent account balance to avoid discontinuation of residential water service: (1) a “Pay Plan,” and (2) “Payment Arrangement,” described in further detail below. Customers who are unable to pay the delinquent amount on their bill may contact SFPUC Customer Services by phone at (415) 551-3000 to discuss these options and enroll in an alternative payment schedule to avoid discontinuation of their residential water service.

a. A **“Pay Plan”** is an alternative payment schedule established by a written agreement between the SFPUC and a customer in which the customer agrees to make payments of their delinquent account balance on a customized schedule with specific due dates. Pay Plans allow customers to pay the delinquent charges with different or equal amounts in installments due on scheduled dates that are independent from the customer’s subsequent regular bill due date and selected by the customer.

- Pay Plans are suitable for customers who would like flexibility on the amount and due date of their payments.
- A Pay Plan installment amount will not appear as a separate line item on the customer’s regular monthly bill. The delinquent amount is included in the previous balance amount on each bill until the customer pays the final installment on their Pay Plan.
- The customer should pay the Pay Plan installments on the scheduled due dates and remain current on future charges to avoid discontinuation of water service.

b. A **“Payment Arrangement”** is an alternative payment schedule established by a written agreement between the SFPUC and a customer in which the customer agrees to pay the delinquent charges on their account with equal payment installments of a dollar amount selected by the customer that are due on the same due date of their subsequent regular monthly bills.

- Subsequent monthly bills sent to customers with Payment Arrangements will contain both the current charges for utility services and the Payment Arrangement installment amount that the customer has selected to pay in its agreement with the SFPUC.
- Payment Arrangements are suitable for customers who prefer to have one due date to pay both their current charges for utility services and their past due delinquent charges.
- Payment Arrangement installments must be paid on the customer’s regular monthly bill due dates in addition to the current charges to avoid discontinuation of service.

D. Contest or Appeal Bill Amount

Customers can contest or appeal their bill by contacting SFPUC Customer Services (1) by phone at (415) 551-3000, (2) by mail at SFPUC Customer Services, 525 Golden Gate Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94102, or (3) by email at customerservice@sfgwater.org.

- Customers should provide SFPUC Customer Services with specific information and details as to which bill they are disputing, which charges on the bill they are disputing, and the reason for the dispute.
- SFPUC Customer Services staff will review the customer's account, the bill and charges the customer is disputing, and the information and details the customer provides.
- Field visits and meter inspections may also be required on a case-by-case basis.
- SFPUC Customer Services will evaluate a customer's contest or appeal of their bill based on the review of the account, the information and details provided by the customer, and the results of any field visits or meter inspections, and adjust the bill, if warranted.
- SFPUC Customer Services will communicate its decision in writing to the customer.

If an authorized adult at the residence appeals the water bill, the SFPUC will not discontinue residential water service for nonpayment while the appeal or the high bill review is pending.

Customers who receive an abnormally high bill and suspect the cause maybe due to leaking pipe or plumbing fixture may qualify for the SFPUC's leak allowance program. For details about the SFPUC's leak allowance program, visit [www://sfgwater.org](http://www.sfgwater.org) or call the High Consumption Unit at (415) 551-4780.

E. Contact the SFPUC for Information

Customers may contact the SFPUC to discuss options for averting discontinuation of residential water service for nonpayment.

SFPUC Customer Services contact information is as follows:

By Phone: (415) 551-3000
By Email: customerservice@sfgwater.org
By Mail: SFPUC Customer Services
525 Golden Gate Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94102

III. Special Circumstances

Section 116910 of the Health & Safety Code provides special procedures and options for customers who satisfy **all** three of the following conditions:

(1) The customer, or a tenant of the customer, submits to the SFPUC the 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 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.

(2) The customer demonstrates that he or she is financially unable to pay for residential service within the SFPUC's normal billing cycle. The customer shall be deemed financially unable to pay for residential service within the SFPUC'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.

(3) The customer is willing to enter into an amortization agreement, alternative payment schedule, or a plan for deferred or reduced payment, consistent with this written policy, with respect to all delinquent charges.

Customers who believe that they qualify should contact the SFPUC Customer Services at (415) 551-3000 or customerservice@sfgwater.org for more information.

IV. Restoration of Water Service

If the SFPUC discontinues a customer's residential water service for nonpayment, the SFPUC will provide the customer with information on how to restore residential water service, pursuant to Section 116912 of the Health & Safety Code.

To restore water service, customers may either (1) pay the full delinquent amount through one of the specific payment methods listed below, or (2) enter into a Pay Plan or Payment Arrangement, as described in Section C of this Policy, by contacting Customer Services at (415) 551-3000. Once a customer pays the full delinquent amount or enters into a Pay Plan or Payment Arrangement, SFPUC will restore the water service on the same day if payment is received by SFPUC or Pay Plan or Payment Arrangement is made by 4pm Monday through Friday (except City holidays). If payment is received or pay plan or payment arrangement is made after 4pm Monday through Friday (except City holidays), the water service will be restored the following business day.

Payment Methods to Restore Water Service:

- Pay in person at San Francisco Public Utilities Commission, 525 Golden Gate Avenue, 1st floor, Cashier Window, San Francisco, CA 94102, 8am – 5pm Monday through Friday (except City holidays).
- Pay by phone by calling SFPUC Customer Services at (415) 551-3000 and choose "Pay By Phone," or call SFPUC's automated payment service provider directly at (844) 737-8222. Customers should have their account numbers ready when they call. Once the payment is made, customers should call SFPUC Customer Services at (415) 551-3000 to provide the confirmation of payment receipt number.
- Pay on-line with a credit card (Visa or MasterCard), debit card, eCheck, or cash at <https://www.sfgwater.org/waterezpay>. Once the on-line payment is made, customers should contact SFPUC Customer Services at (415) 551-3000 with the confirmation of payment receipt number.

V. Availability of Policy on SFPUC Website

This policy is available on the SFPUC website at sfgwater.org and is available in English, the languages listed in Section 1632 of the Civil Code, and any other language spoken by at least 10 percent of the people residing in the SFPUC's service area, per Section 116906 of the Health & Safety Code.