

## **D. CUSTOMER BILLING**

### **1. Frequency**

Customers will be billed bi-monthly in accordance with the rate structure of the Authority. Water meters will be read around the 15<sup>th</sup> to the 25<sup>th</sup> day of every other month.

### **2. Bills**

Bills will be mailed on or about the 5<sup>th</sup> day of the month following meter reading.

### **3. Services**

Water consumption and sewage will be billed as separate items on the bill, and will include bi-monthly service charges.

**There shall be no free services rendered by the Authority.**

### **4. Due Dates**

Bills are due within 30 days from the date of issuance. Regardless of payment method, payment must be received physically or electronically at the Authority's business office by 5:00 p.m. on the due date to avoid any penalty. The Authority is not responsible for non-delivery by the US Postal Service.

### **5. Grace Period & Penalty**

- a. A delinquent notice will be mailed to the customer 30 days after the issuance date of the regular bi-monthly billing and this notice will include a 10 percent penalty of the unpaid balance of the bill. This notice will alert the customer that the regular bill plus 10 percent penalty is due and payable within 10 days of the issuance date of the notice. Regardless of payment method, payment must be received physically or electronically at the Authority's business office by 5:00 p.m. on the due date or the service will be discontinued.
- b. Government Exemption: Customers that are governments and government agencies are exempt from the penalty if 100% of their expenses are paid for by public funds. Such customers include, but are not limited to, VDOT, Department of Forestry, post offices, County of Rockbridge, and Rockbridge County Schools.
- c. When service has been discontinued for non-payment, upon payment of cash (in person at the Authority Office), money order (by mail or in person), or online credit card (not debit card), of the regular bill, 10 percent penalty, a \$55.00 Delinquency Fee, and any other outstanding bills, the service shall be reinstated.
- d. Failure to receive bills or notices shall not prevent such bills from becoming delinquent or relieve the customer from payment. Customers are responsible for furnishing the PSA with their correct address.

Note: If more than 30-40 gallons of water go through the meter after it is turned back on and no one is home to notify, then the water will be turned off again and another \$20.00 turn-on trip charge will be added to return.

## **6. Property Sales and Foreclosures**

When a customer is delinquent, and the property has sold, the Authority will terminate service and not restore service in that customer's name, unless he/she complies with C.2. The customer must pay all outstanding fees, charges and penalties, and show staff a lease or rental agreement signed by the new owner and tenant.

Any liens for delinquent charges filed by the PSA prior to the sale must be satisfied in full before service will be restored to the property.

## **7. Sewer Service Adjustment**

The Authority will consider a sewer service adjustment or credit in only three (3) situations:

- a. The filling of a swimming pool or watering of new landscaping using 10,000 gallons or more **when advance notice is given to the Authority so that the amount used for such purpose can be verified by Authority Personnel.**
- b. A leak that is verified by Authority Personnel and that has no possible means of entering the sanitary sewer lines. Once the leak is discovered and verified, it must be repaired immediately. The adjustment shall be computed by crediting the customer the difference between consumption during the billing period in which the leak occurred and the consumption registered during a comparable period in the previous year. If little history exists, the charge will be based on an average of three previous bills. If no history exists, the charge will be based on guidelines of the Virginia Department of Health (200 gallons per day).
- c. Premises not discharging the entire volume of water into the sewer on a regular basis will be allowed an adjustment provided the customer install, at his own expense, a meter which is satisfactory to the Authority to measure the volume of water not entering the sewer. (Example: concrete plant)

## **8. Water Service Adjustment**

The Authority will adjust a water bill for a catastrophic leak, which is defined as a metered volume  $\geq 5$  times the metered volume used during the last comparable billing period, or as discussed below. The qualifying volume will be charged at a reduced rate. Residential and non-residential customers are eligible. Customers have the option to pay on a payment plan, provided they comply with Section 8 of these policies.

- a. Limit: Leak adjustments are limited to once every five (5) years per service location, and will be given for subsurface (not above-ground or inside) leaks only. Leak adjustments apply to one billing period (two months).
- b. Customer Responsibility: The customer must notify the Authority and fix the leak immediately. Authority staff must verify the subsurface leak, read the meter and inspect the repair. The customer is responsible for maintenance of the service line from the meter to the structure. The Authority is not responsible for notifying the customer of a leak, but will make an effort to contact the customer if a leak is

suspected. The customer is responsible for ensuring that contact information on file with the Authority is current.

- c. Adjusted Rate: The rate that will be charged for that volume defined as "catastrophic" (the metered volume greater than or equal to 5 times the "normal" bill), will be the system cost of the purchase/production, treatment and delivery costs for the area specific to the service address +5%. Staff will calculate these costs annually.
- d. Leaked Volume Less than 5 times the "Normal" Bill: Documented leaks of a volume greater than "normal", but less than 5 times "normal", qualify for a payment plan per the Authority's policy, but not a discounted rate. The full retail rate for the entire volume will be charged.
- e. Calculation of "Normal" Bill
  - i. Comparable billing period. When a customer has at least one full year of usage history, staff will use the metered volume from the comparable prior year period, to ensure that seasonal usages match as nearly as practicable, provided such usage is not clearly the result of a leak.
  - ii. Usage history <1 year. When a customer does not have a full year of usage history, staff will follow the procedures set forth in Section 6 above.
- f. The Authority Board reserves right to determine the charges for situations in which a customer's leak was not his/her fault, such as when documented pressure transients are caused by others.

#### **9. Deferred (time) Payment Plan for Hardship Cases**

- a. A customer may apply for deferred payment *before* the shut-off date by claiming a hardship by going to the Authority office and filing with the Business Manager. If the hardship qualifies, the customer will sign a deferred payment plan.
- b. Hardships eligible for time payment plans include: loss of job; medical emergency; excessive bill (such as one resulting from large leaks); and extraordinary financial difficulties. The customer shall provide written documentation as proof of hardship.
- c. The maximum length of a deferred payment plan shall be 90 days. The Executive Director may approve a plan for up to one year for catastrophic leaks.
- d. Minimum monthly payment amounts shall not be less than one-third of the total amount due unless the approved plan specifies otherwise, and must be paid to keep water on.
- e. Deferred payment amounts shall be **in addition to** the regular service bill amount.