



# POLICY ON DISCONTINUATION OF RESIDENTIAL WATER SERVICE



CITY OF VERNON PUBLIC UTILITIES  
4305 S SANTA FE AVE.  
VERNON, CALIFORNIA 90058

## POLICY ON DISCONTINUATION OF RESIDENTIAL WATER SERVICE

### 1. Application of Policy

This Policy shall apply to all Vernon Public Utilities residential water service accounts, but shall not apply to accounts for non-residential service. To the extent this Policy conflicts with other rules, regulations, or policies of Vernon Public Utilities (VPU), this Policy shall control.

### 2. Billing Procedures; Discontinuation of Service for Nonpayment

Bills are due and payable on the Date of Presentation shown on the bill. Bills become delinquent and subject to a late fee if payment is not received (postmark not acceptable) by the VPU within twenty (20) days thereafter. If a bill is delinquent for at least 60 days, VPU may discontinue water service after complying with Public Utilities Code Section 10009 *et seq.* and Health & Safety Code Section 116900 *et seq.*

### 3. Contact Information

For questions or assistance regarding your water bill, or to discuss options to avoid discontinuation of service, the VPU's Customer Service staff can be reached at (323) 583-8811. Customers may also visit the VPU's Customer Service Division Monday through Thursday, from 7:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., except on City holidays, at 4305 Santa Fe Avenue, Vernon, CA 90058.

### 4. Billing Disputes and Appeals

Customers questioning a bill may request a review by a Customer Service Division representative. The review will include consideration of whether the customer should be permitted to amortize the unpaid balance over a reasonable period of time.

Any customer, whose request for review has resulted in an adverse determination by the Customer Service Division representative, may have such determination reviewed by the General Manager of Vernon Public Utilities. To avoid discontinuation of service, the customer shall pay the amount claimed by the City to be due. Such payment shall be deemed to be made under protest. In lieu of such payment, a customer may request to amortize payments. Approval of such amortized payments shall be at the sole discretion of the City. Checks or other forms of remittance for such payment under protest shall be accompanied by a letter of explanation to the General Manager. Upon receipt of the payment under protest and letter of explanation the General Manager will review the basis of the billed amount. After review the General Manager may: (a) if special circumstances exist, waive a returned check charge, reconnect charge, or late charge, or (b) recommend any adjustment to water charges as determined by the review. Any recommendation for a credit or refund must be approved by the City Administrator; if the amount exceeds \$10,000, City Council approval will also be required.

If the matter is not satisfactorily resolved by the General Manager, the customer may petition to the City Council for final determination.

## 5. **Extensions and Other Payment Arrangements**

If a customer is unable to pay a bill during the normal payment period, the customer may request an extension, amortization, or alternative payment schedule. City decisions on whether to grant payment arrangements, and the terms and conditions of the payment arrangements offered, are final and are not subject to appeal to the City Council. The customer must remain current on all water service charges while a payment arrangement is in place. If a customer has been granted a payment arrangement under this section and fails to pay an amount due under the payment arrangement by the due date, the City may discontinue water service.

## 6. **Medical and Financial Hardship Payment Arrangements**

The City will grant a payment arrangement to a customer if all of the following conditions are met:

(a) The customer, or a tenant of the customer, submits to the City the certification of a licensed primary care provider that discontinuation of 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 customer demonstrates that he or she is financially unable to pay for residential service within the City's normal billing cycle. The customer is deemed financially unable to pay during the normal billing cycle if: (a) 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 (b) the customer declares under penalty of perjury that the household's annual income is less than 200 percent of the federal poverty level; and

(c) The customer is willing to enter into an alternative payment arrangement with respect to the delinquent charges.

For customers who meet all of the above conditions, the City will offer the customer an extension, amortization, or alternative payment schedule. The City will select the most appropriate payment arrangement and set the terms and conditions thereof. Terms and conditions of a payment arrangement set by the City are final and not subject to appeal to the City Council. Customers must remain current on all water service charges while a payment arrangement is in place. If a customer has been granted a payment arrangement due to medical and financial circumstances and fails to pay within 60 days of a due date under the payment arrangement, or fails to pay current charges for 60 days, the City may discontinue water service.

## 7. **Other Remedies or Violations.**

In addition to discontinuation of water service, the City may pursue any other remedies available in law or equity for nonpayment of water service charges, including, but not limited to: securing delinquent amounts by filing liens on real property, filing a claim or legal action, or referring the unpaid amount to collections. The City also reserves the right to discontinue water service for any violations of City ordinances, rules, or regulations other than nonpayment.