



Santa Fe Irrigation District

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BILLING AND COLLECTION PROCEDURES

Effective February 1, 2020

BILLS AND PAYMENTS

Meters for potable water will be read by Santa Fe Irrigation District (the District) bi-monthly. This will be done approximately the same day each month. Bills are due and payable when mailed and are delinquent if not paid within 7 days from the date of mailing.

Bills can be paid in person at the District office or by mail. District field and service personnel are not authorized to receive payments for water bills.

The District accepts payments by cash, check or through the District's customer online portal. Credit card payments made through the District's customer online portal may incur a fee based on the amount of the transaction.

BILLING DISPUTE

Any customer desiring to initiate a complaint or request an investigation concerning services or charges shown on a bill must do so within 5 days of receipt of the bill. For purposes of this section, a bill is deemed received 5 days after mailing. Any such complaint or request must be in writing and filed with the Administrative Manager. The review will include consideration of whether the customer may receive an extension, amortization, or other payment arrangement. If the customer is dissatisfied with the decision of the Administrative Manager, the customer shall have the right to appeal the decision to the District's Board of Directors by filing a written appeal within 7 days of the decision of the Administrative Manager. The District Secretary will set the matter to be heard at an upcoming Board meeting and mail the customer notice of the time and place of the meeting at least 10 days before the meeting. The decision of the Board is final. The District will not discontinue residential water service for nonpayment while a bill is subject to a timely dispute, complaint, or appeal.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

The District offers customers the option of installment payments or a 30 day deferral on one bill every 12-month period. Information may be obtained by telephone at the District office at (858) 756-2424, weekdays between the hours of 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. except on the alternating Fridays the office is closed. The District will not discontinue residential water service for nonpayment while the customer is complying with an installment payment plan or deferral. However, if a customer does not comply with the terms of the installment payment plan or deferral or pay current residential service charges, the District will post a final notice of intent to disconnect service in a prominent and conspicuous location at the service address at least five (5) business days before discontinuation of service. The final notice will not entitle the customer to any investigation or review by the District.

The District shall waive one delinquency penalty every 12 month period for any residential customer upon request.

ESTIMATED BILLINGS

Should any meter in service fail to register, or should the District be unable to read the meter for reasons beyond the control of the District, the amount of water used shall be estimated by the District by comparing it to the same billing period in previous years.

BILLING ADJUSTMENT

The District reserves the right to adjust a bill to correct any error that may be found. If the error is in favor of the customer, a refund or credit shall be given to the customer. If the error is in favor of the District, the customer shall be billed for the deficiency. No adjustment shall be made for an error that occurred for more than 18 months before the adjustment unless expressly approved by the Board.

CHECKS RETURNED - NOT SUFFICIENT FUNDS

A service charge shall be imposed and added to the amount due the District for any check that is not honored for any reason by the customer's bank.

DISCONTINUATION OF RESIDENTIAL SERVICE FOR NONPAYMENT

Single Family Residence/ Ownership or Tenant

Bills for water service are delinquent if not paid within seven (7) days from the date of mailing and water service will be terminated no less than 60 days after bills become delinquent. A penalty equivalent to 10% of the original bill will be assessed if not paid within 35 days of the date of mailing. The District shall send a customer a notice by first-class mail that the bill has become delinquent and a penalty equivalent to 10% of the original bill will be assessed at least ten (10) days prior to the penalty being assessed. At least 17 working days prior to the termination of service, the District shall make a reasonable, good faith effort to contact an adult person residing at the property by telephone or in person. A discontinuance notice, charged to the customer at the District's current door hanger fee rate, will also be placed on the property at least ten (10) days prior to the termination of service. A shut off fee will be added after the expiration of these ten (10) days, in addition to the 10% penalty and door hanger fee, whether or not service is discontinued. If the total bill is \$25.00 or less, there will be no steps taken for collection at this time.

In addition, if the owner, manager, or operator of the property is the customer of record or if the customer of record's mailing address is not the same as the service address, the District will also send a notice to the tenants living at the service address at least ten (10) days before discontinuation of water service.

Multi Unit Residential Services

Bills for water service are delinquent if not paid within seven (7) days from the date of mailing and water service will be terminated no less than 60 days after bills become delinquent. A penalty equivalent to 10% of the original bill will be assessed if not paid within 35 days of the date of mailing. The District will send the person or persons of record responsible for the payment of the account a notice by first-class mail that the bill has become delinquent and a penalty equivalent to 10% of the original bill will be assessed at least ten (10) days prior to the penalty being assessed. At least 17 working days prior to the termination of service, the District shall make a reasonable, good faith effort to contact the customer of record or an adult person at the customer's address by telephone or in person. At least ten (10) days prior to the termination of service a "Notice of Intent to Disconnect Water Service" will be placed on bulletin board areas where most residents would see it, i.e., recreation rooms, mail rooms, in apartment buildings or mobile home parks. In the case of duplexes serviced by one meter, both sides will receive notice.

The procedures in this section apply to master-metered properties and individually metered service in a multi-unit residential structure, mobile home park, or farm labor camp where the

owner, manager or operator is the customer of record.

Procedures for Tenants to Become Customers on Delinquent Accounts

If a tenant of any residential property is not a customer of the District and billing for the property becomes delinquent, the tenant may become a customer of the District and not be responsible for the delinquent amount with verification that the delinquent account customer is or was the landlord, manager, or agent of the property. Verification may include a lease or rental agreement, rent receipts, a government document indicating that the resident is renting the property, or information disclosed pursuant to Section 1962 of the Civil Code. The District will make service available to the tenants if each tenant agrees to the terms and conditions of service. Alternatively, if one or more of the tenants are willing and able to assume responsibility for all subsequent charges to the account to the satisfaction of the District, or if there is a physical means legally available to the District of selectively discontinuing service to those tenants who have not met the District's terms and conditions of service, the District will make service available to the tenants who have met those terms and conditions.

Discontinuation of Service for Vulnerable Peoples

The District shall not discontinue residential service for nonpayment for any customer that meets all of the following conditions:

- a) The customer, or tenant of the customer, shall submit certification from a primary care provider (*internist, general practitioner, obstetrician-gynecologist, pediatrician, family practice physician, nonphysician medical practitioner, or any primary care clinic, rural health clinic, community clinic or hospital outpatient clinic currently enrolled in the Medi-Cal program, which agrees to provide case management to Medi-Cal beneficiaries*) that discontinuation of service will be life threatening or pose a serious threat to the health and safety of a resident of the premises;
- b) The customer declares that the household annual income is no more than 200 percent of the federal poverty level or provides current documentation that any member of the household is a recipient of: CalWORKs; CalFresh; general assistance; Medi-Cal; Supplemental Security Income / State Supplementary Payment Program; or California Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Woman, Infants, and Children; and
- c) The customer is willing to agree to installment payments with respect to the past-due charges.

For any customers who meet all of the above conditions, the District will offer an installment payment plan for the past due charges. The customer is responsible for demonstrating that the conditions above have been met.

Any customer that does not comply with the terms of the installment payment plan or pay current residential service charges for 60 days or more will be subject to discontinuation of water service. The District will post a final notice of intent to disconnect service in a prominent and conspicuous location at the service address at least five (5) business days before discontinuation of service. The final notice will not entitle the customer to any investigation or review by the District.

Service shall not be discontinued while the District works to confirm that the conditions of this section have been met.

CHARGES TO REINSTATE TERMINATED SERVICES

The following conditions apply to the preceding Single Family Residence and Multi Unit Services. Service that has been terminated for non-payment will be reinstated upon the payment of all sums owed the District. When one parcel or contiguous parcels are served by more than one meter which are billed to the same customer, and both are delinquent at the same time, only

one service fee will be charged if full payment of all charges are made at one time. If the charges are not paid for all meters at one time, a service fee will be charged for each meter.

TIME TO RESTORE SERVICE

Water service will be turned on only between the hours of 7:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. on business days of the District. Service may be turned on after hours if the customer agrees to pay all charges by noon of the next working day and if during the preceding 12-month period the customer has not been notified of the intention of the District to terminate service.

DAMAGE TO DISTRICT FACILITIES

If a customer breaks or damages any locking devices or equipment to turn on his/her water service after it has been turned off for non-payment, the District will remove the water meter. The meter will not be replaced until all water charges, penalties, fees and cost of damage to the equipment are paid plus \$100.00 to cover the expense of removing the meter to terminate service.

FINAL BILL - CHANGE OF TENANT/NO CHANGE OF OWNERSHIP

A final bill will be sent to the tenant. At that time a copy of the final bill will be sent to the legal owner with a letter notifying the owner of the bills. Final bills are due 14 days from mailing date and if unpaid the owner will then be notified that payment is past due. If the final bill is unpaid 40 days after mailing to the owner a 10% penalty will be added. The owner is responsible for water service bills to the property. If a tenant leaves an unpaid bill, the District will notify the owner of the unpaid charges. If the charges are not paid by the owner, they will be added to the tax assessment roll and be collected with the property taxes (Water Code Sec. 25806).

FINAL BILL - CHANGE OF PROPERTY OWNERSHIP

The final bill will be sent to the former owner. The final bill is due and payable 14 days from the date of mailing. If the final bill is unpaid 14 days after mailing, a 10% penalty will be added. This bill, plus a processing fee, will be added to the next tax assessment roll and shall become a lien on other property within San Diego County owned by the former owner.

BANKRUPTCY OF CUSTOMER

Pursuant to the Bankruptcy Act (P.L. 95-598), the District shall not alter, refuse or discontinue service to, or discriminate against, a customer or a trustee of a customer, solely on the basis that a debt owed by the customer to the District for service rendered before the order for relief was not paid when due. It shall be the responsibility of the customer to supply the District with a copy of any applicable order for relief. The District shall discontinue service if neither the customer, nor the trustee, within 20 days after the date of the order for relief, furnishes adequate assurance of payment in the form of a deposit for service after such date. As used herein "adequate assurance of payment" shall mean a cash deposit in an amount equal to the highest of the last six billings rendered to the customer's property, or for the customer's property, if the customer has not occupied the property for that period of time, prior to the order for relief. As used herein, "order for relief" shall have the same meaning as given to it in the Bankruptcy Act. The commencement of a voluntary case under the Bankruptcy Act shall constitute an order for relief. Service may be discontinued in accordance with the rules of the District upon nonpayment for service rendered after the order of relief.

CHANGES IN BILLING INFORMATION

Please notify the District promptly in the event of any change in ownership, tenancy, or billing address. Service to date is the customers responsibility and charges will continue in your name until the District is specifically notified to the contrary.