



CITY OF CERRITOSSM

CIVIC CENTER • 18125 BLOOMFIELD AVENUE
P.O. BOX 3130 • CERRITOS, CALIFORNIA 90703-3130
PHONE: (562) 860-0311 • CERRITOS.US



CITY OF CERRITOS WATER SERVICE DISCONTINUATION POLICY

In Compliance with Water Shutoff Protection Act – SB 998

1. **Purpose:** This policy on the discontinuation of residential water service for non-payment has been established to comply with the provisions of Senate Bill 998, known as the Water Shutoff Protection Act, signed into law on September 28, 2018.
2. **Application of Policy:** This policy shall only apply to residential water service accounts, including detached single-family residences and multi-unit residential structures. The policy does not apply to commercial, industrial, landscape or fire service accounts.
3. **Contact Telephone Number:** The City of Cerritos Water Billing Division can be reached at (562) 916-1235.
4. **Discontinuation of Residential Water Service for Non-Payment:**
 - A. *Payment of Water Service Bills:* Bills for water service will be provided to each residential water service customer on a bi-monthly basis. Bills for water service are due and payable upon presentation and become subject to discontinuation of service if not paid within sixty (60) calendar days from the date of the bill. It is the residential customer's responsibility to assure that payments are received by the City of Cerritos Water Billing Division in a timely manner. Partial payments are not authorized (unless prior arrangements have been made) and postmarks are not acceptable. The City shall contact the residential customer no less than seven (7) business days by telephone OR written notice prior to discontinuation of water service.
 - B. *Written Notice Requirements:* The following shall apply to residential water service accounts with outstanding balances that remain unpaid for more than fifteen (15) calendar days following the bill date:
 1. **Reminder Notice:** A reminder notice will be mailed to residential water service accounts with unpaid balances thirty (30) days from the bill date if no payment has been received.
 2. **Final Notice:** A final notice will be hand-delivered and hung on the door of a water service account with an unpaid balance fifty (50) days from the bill date if no payment has been received. The notice will advise the customer that the water service will be discontinued if payment is not received, or a payment arrangement is not made, within ten (10) business days of the date of the notice. A copy of this policy will also be provided.

In the event the customer address is different than the physical service address, the City will provide a hand-delivered notification that is hung on the door of the physical service residence. The notice will advise the resident that the water service will be discontinued if payment is not received, or a payment arrangement is not made within ten (10) business days of the date of the notice. A copy of this policy will also be provided.

3. **Courtesy Call:** No less than seven (7) business days before discontinuation of water service, the City will provide notice to the residential customer of the impending discontinuation of service by telephone. The courtesy call shall serve as the City's final attempt to collect the past due amount prior to discontinuation. In that courtesy call, the City shall offer to provide a copy of this policy and, upon request, provide the residential customer with options for making payment arrangements and the procedure for the appeal of the customer's bill.
 4. **Service Discontinuation:** Service is discontinued no earlier than 60 days after the bill date.
- C. *Conditions that Would Preclude Water Service Disconnection:* Water service will not be disconnected for non-payment if all of following conditions are met:
1. Customer is willing to enter into a payment arrangement for the payment of the outstanding balance of the bill. Customer must request payment arrangement before the account is sixty (60) days past the bill date.
 2. Customer provides certification from a primary health care provider that the discontinuation of water service is potentially life threatening or poses a serious threat to the health or safety of a resident.
 3. Customer provides proof that they are financially unable to make payment within the normal water billing payment cycle. Proof can include participation in CalWorks, CalFresh, General Assistance, Medi-Cal, SSI or CARE (200% of poverty level).
5. **Appeal Process:** Should the amount of a residential water service bill be questioned, the customer should promptly contact the Cerritos Water Billing Division at (562) 916-1235 for an explanation of the bill. If the customer is not satisfied with the explanation, the customer may appeal the bill in writing to the Finance Manager for review. All written appeals shall be submitted to: City of Cerritos, 18125 Bloomfield Avenue, Cerritos, CA 90703, c/o Finance Manager. Appeals must state the reason(s) for which customer feels the bill is incorrect. The Finance Manager will review the case and is authorized to make adjustments to the bill as may be necessary to correct billing inaccuracies. Water service will not be discontinued while an appeal is pending. Following the issuance of a final decision on the appeal, the discontinuation policy as set-forth in Section 4 will continue to apply. If more than sixty (60) days have elapsed since the bill date while the appeal is pending, customer will have seven (7) business days from the issuance of the final appeal decision to pay any outstanding balance on the residential water service account.

- 6. Payment Arrangement Process:** The City is committed to working with our water customers to provide payment arrangements for water service to avoid undue hardships. Please call the Water Billing Division at (562) 916-1235 to request a payment arrangement.

The policy for the establishment of a payment arrangement is as follows:

The City will work with customer to establish mutually agreed upon terms for the payment of a delinquent water bill. Once approved, the payment arrangement schedule will be confirmed in writing. The customer will be asked to sign the arrangement and will be provided a copy. Payment arrangements will require full and on-time payments of future bills, while the delinquent amount can be amortized over a period not to exceed twelve (12) months.

If customer fails to comply with the agreed upon payment arrangement or does not pay current charges in accordance with the payment requirements set forth in Section 4, water service will be discontinued after ten (10) business days following issuance of disconnection notice.

- 7. Restoration of Service:** In the event of service disconnection, service will be restored upon receipt of payment for the outstanding delinquent balance and \$15 re-connection fee.