




# Director's Rule

<b>Title</b> Customer Billing, Payments, and Collections		<b>Number</b> CS-310.1	<b>Rev. no.</b> 3
<b>Responsibility</b> Customer Care Division		<b>Supersedes</b> N/A	<b>Pages</b> 3
<b>General Manager/CEO Signature</b>  <small>Andrew Lee (May 7, 2024 08:50 PDT)</small>	<b>Approval Date</b> May 7, 2024	<b>Effective Date</b> May 10, 2024	

## 1. PURPOSE

This Director's Rule establishes the administrative process for the billing, payment, and collection of charges for water, wastewater, and solid waste services to customers of Seattle Public Utilities. It conforms with Seattle Municipal Code provisions under SMC 21.04, 21.28, SMC 21.40 and SPU policy CS-310.

## 2. DEFINITIONS

*Account balance.* The total dollar amount owing on an account, which includes current charges, past due balances, late fees, delinquency penalties, returned-check fees, and charges for property visits, shutoffs, meter removals, turn-ons, and resets that have been applied to the account.

*Account fees.* Charges to an account made in accordance with Director's Rule FIN-210.2, Standard, Connection, and Administrative Charges, which include late fees, returned-check fees, charges for property visits, shutoffs, water restorations, meter removals, and meter resets.

*Bill.* The monthly or bi-monthly statement of charges accrued for water, sewer and garbage service. The Bill is the official notice to the property owner, his or her agent, or designated account holder that payment is due.

*Certified funds.* Cash, cashier's check, money order, Visa or Master Card debit or credit card.

*Past due balance.* Unpaid debt from a single bill or multiple bills that was not paid by the due date specified on the bill(s).

*Payment plan.* An agreement between SPU and the property owner, his or her agent, or designated account holder, used to satisfy a current or outstanding debt in installments over a specified amount of time.

### 3. RULE

#### A. Billing for Services

- 1) SPU bills for utility account services on a monthly or bi-monthly basis, depending on account type.

SPU requires that utility accounts be established in the legal property or parcel owner's name.

Property owners will be sent the original bills and notices to their provided mailing address. However, upon request, property owners can request that duplicate bills and notices be sent to the occupants of a rental property.

- 2) Bills are provided by either of the following:
  - Mailing to the property owner, the owner's agent, or account holder of record
  - Online, if the property owner, the owner's agent, or designated account holder is enrolled in SPU's electronic billing service.
- 3) Property owners are responsible for
  - Providing SPU with accurate, reliable, and up-to-date contact information.
  - Notifying SPU within 10 business days of the exact date of a change in ownership.

#### B. Payments

- 1) Payment is due within 21 days of the bill date. Payments are first applied to the amount due for solid waste collection, then to sewer, and finally to water services.
- 2) Payment may be made by different means, such as cash, check, debit card or credit card. If a payment made by check is returned, SPU will charge a returned-check fee and require cash or Certified Funds be used to pay the balance due.
- 3) If payment made by Visa or MasterCard is declined, SPU will require cash, a cashier's check, or a money order be used to pay the balance due.

#### C. Past Due Notification

SPU will notify customers whose accounts become delinquent. Depending on the amount of the outstanding balance and the number of days the outstanding balance is delinquent, one or more of the following SPU collections and severance processes may occur.

- 1) **Reminder Calls**  
Auto-generated phone calls are made to the account holder to inform them of their past due balance.
- 2) **Urgent Notice**  
Once an Urgent Notice is generated, customers can a) pay their past due balance in full, or b) establish a payment plan. (See Procedure CS-360, Pay Plans and Payment Arrangements for Retail Customers.)

3) Final Shutoff Notice

Once a Shutoff Notice is generated, customers can a) pay their past due balance in full, or b) establish a payment plan. (See Procedure CS-360, Pay Plans and Payment Arrangements for Retail Customers.)

**D. Water Shut Off (Severance)**

To restore water services, the property owner, the owner's agent, or designated account holder must pay the required minimum reconnection amount in certified funds and is strongly encouraged to pay the remaining account balance by establishing a payment plan. (See Procedure CS-370, Minimum Reconnection Payment for Retail Customers.)

**E. Payment Plans**

Payment Plans are offered to assist customers in satisfying debt owed to the utility. Specific criteria must be met for a payment plan to be established.

Payment plan guidelines are listed in Procedure CS-360, Pay Plans and Payment Arrangements for Retail Customers.

A customer is allowed to set up a payment plan if the account is current, an Urgent Notice or Shutoff Notice has been generated, or the water service has been shut off and the minimum reconnection payment has been made.

**F. Meter Removal**

If the water meter has been removed, water services will not be restored to the property until the property owner has completed a meter reset application and paid the entire Account Balance and meter reset fee in certified funds.

**4. AUTHORITY/REFERENCES**

- SMC 21.04, Water Rates and Regulations
- SMC 21.28, Wastewater Rates and Charges
- SMC 21.40, Solid Waste Collection Rates and Charges
- Director's Rule FIN-210.2, Standard, Connection and Administrative Charges Rule – Water