



# 2024 Changes to Water Service Billing Background Information and Frequently Asked Questions

## **Background Information:**

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the City has elected a No-Shutoff Policy for delinquent water service accounts, meaning that water would not be shut off even if your water service account became past due. This was a direct response to the Governor's concerns that Californians suffering financial and/or medical hardships would not lose vital water service due to hardships caused by the pandemic. As the City emerges from the emergency procedures caused by COVID-19, the City is ending its No-Shutoff Policy and has adopted new policies and procedures regarding water service applications, utility billing and consequences for account delinquency.

## **Summary of Changes:**

- For Residential Accounts (Single Family Residences & Multi-Family Residences with 4 or less dwellings): Water Service may only be in the property owner's name.
- For Landlord-Tenant Accounts falling into this category:
  - Starting January 1, 2024, landlords are required to transition accounts into their name; corresponding tenant accounts will be closed.
  - After June 30, 2024, landlords not in compliance, will receive an administrative citation with fines starting at \$250.00 and increasing to \$1,000.00.
- Beginning January 1, 2024, Delinquent Notices will be mailed out for any accounts that have been past due for more than 60 days. These notices will be mailed to the property owners and in the case of tenant accounts to the tenant account holders. Past due accounts will be charged a \$15.75 delinquency fee. Thereafter, every month the account remains delinquent, another notice will be sent, and an additional \$15.75 fee assessed until the account is brought current.
- The City's Water Shutoff Policy is posted on the City's website and is also available in Spanish, Korean, Vietnamese, Tagalog, and Chinese (Mandarin).

## **Frequently Asked Questions:**

**Q: Why is the City making these changes?**

A: The City strives to provide the highest level of service to its residents and utility service customers. We believe these changes are necessary to ensure that water service remains uninterrupted, and billing/payment/collection is handled in the most effective and efficient manner possible. Although there will be some work to transition tenant accounts into the names

of the landlords, this process only needs to be done once and will ensure ongoing continuity of service and billing for each property.

**Q: What changes are being made to the application process?**

A: Beginning January 1, 2024, only property owners will be allowed to open water service accounts.

- If you are a landlord applying for new service, the account must be in your name (not in your tenant's name).
- If you are a landlord and service is currently in your tenant's name, you must open a water service account in your name. Once opened, your tenant's account will be closed.
- If you are a tenant, and service is currently in your name, please reach out to your landlord to ensure your landlord is aware of the change in policy.
- The required documents, general procedures, advance payment (deposit) of \$215.00, and Same Day Service Fees have not changed.

**Q: Is the service account "transition" the same as an account "transfer"?**

A: No. Utility accounts are not transferable. Landlords will be required to open a new service account by submitting a new service application and paying a new advance payment. Once completed, the tenant's account will be closed.

**Q: I am a tenant with a water service account. What will happen to my account?**

A: When your landlord transitions the water service into his/her name, your account will be closed.

**Q: I am a tenant with a water service account. What will happen to the advance payment (deposit) I paid when I opened my water service account?**

A: If you have a deposit remaining when your account is closed, it will be applied to your final bill. Please remember that after 12 months of good payment history, deposits are automatically applied to your bill so if your account has been active for more than a year, there may be no remaining deposit.

**Q: I am a landlord. When should I transition the account into my name?**

A: To avoid any penalties, we encourage your account to be transitioned into your name as soon as possible. You may do this even before the policy takes effect. However, please keep in mind that City Hall will be closed from December 22, 2023, through January 1, 2024, in observance of the Christmas and New Year Holidays. We encourage you to transition your account timely since any accounts that have not been transitioned by June 30, 2024, will be subject to an administrative citation with fines starting at \$250.00 and increasing to \$1,000.00.

**Q: I am the property owner, and the water service account is already in my name. Do I have to do anything?**

A: No. As long as your account is not past due, these changes will not affect you.

**Q: I am a landlord. How do I transition the water service account into my name?**

A: You can start service in person, by mail or over the phone in just a few steps:

- 1) Complete a [New Service Application](#), available at City Hall and also found on the City's website under *Utility Services*
- 2) Submit your completed application and required documents (see the next question) in person, by mail, or by e-mail
- 3) Make your advance payment of \$215.00 in person or on by calling Customer Service at: (909) 931-4150.

**Q: What are the requirements for starting service?**

A: The requirements are:

- 1) Complete a New Service Application
- 2) Residential properties will require a \$215.00 advance payment (acceptable payment methods: cash, cashier's check, money order, and debit/credit cards: Visa, MasterCard, American Express or Discover).
- 3) Copy of documents showing proof of ownership, such as the Final Settlement Statement or Recorded Grant Deed.
  - If ownership is in the name of a Trust: a copy of the trust documents showing the names of the party attempting to establish service as a Trustor/Trustee.
  - If ownership is in the name of a Business: copies of the Articles of Incorporation or LLC/LP documents showing the names of the party attempting to establish service as an authorized agent for the business.
- 4) Copy of your photo identification such as your driver's license and/or passport.

**Q: Can I submit my application through the mail?**

A: Yes. If you are unable to personally come to City Hall, you may mail your completed application, along with copies of proof of ownership (final settlement statement or recorded grant deed), driver's license and/or passport and advance payment of \$215.00 (acceptable payment methods: cashier's check or money order) to the following address:  
460 N. Euclid Avenue, Upland, CA 91786. *Please do not send original documents by mail.*

**Q: What happens if I forget to include something with my mail-in application?**

A: If all required documents and payment have been received, service will start the next business day. If any documentation is missing or incorrect, all documents will be mailed back and a request for the missing documentation will be enclosed.

**Q: Can I submit my application electronically or over the phone?**

A: Yes. You will need to email your completed application, along with copies of proof of ownership (final settlement statement or recorded grant deed) and driver's license and/or passport to [UtilityServices@uplandca.gov](mailto:UtilityServices@uplandca.gov). After emailing the required documents, you will need to call Customer Service at (909) 931-4150 to make an advance payment of \$215.00 by credit card (Visa, MasterCard, American Express or Discover). Additional fees will be collected if Same-Day Service is requested.

**Q: Can someone else start service on my behalf?**

A: Yes. The property owner must provide a completed application, proof of ownership (final settlement statement or recorded grant deed) along with a copy of their driver's license and/or passport and a Letter of Authorization allowing someone to start services in their absence. An advance payment of \$215.00 is required (acceptable payment methods: cash, cashier's check, money order and debit/credit cards: Visa, MasterCard, American Express or Discover). Additional fees will be collected if Same-Day Service is requested. If the advance payment is being paid by debit/credit card, it must be in the name of the person authorized to start service on behalf of the property owner and said person will be required to show either their driver's license and/or passport.

**Q: I am a landlord and I want to turn off service. How do I do that?**

A: Once the water service account is in your name, you may turn off the water service by calling Customer Service at (909) 931-4150. Please keep in mind, however, that we will verify that all tenants have vacated the property before the water shutoff can occur. It is the landlord's responsibility to verify the property is vacant, and should this not be the case, service will be restored, and the landlord will be required to pay for any resulting reconnection fees.

**Q: I am a tenant. The water account is in my landlord's name, but my landlord hasn't paid the water bill. Will my water service be turned off?**

A: No. We will not turn off water service to a tenant-occupied property. If your landlord has not paid the water bill, your landlord will receive a delinquent notice and be assessed a delinquency fee every month that the bill remains past due. This does not relieve you of any responsibility to pay your landlord and your landlord may pursue collection of any amounts you owe by any means legally available.

**Q: I am a property owner. What happens if I don't pay the delinquent balance on my account?**

A: Properties with utility accounts that have been delinquent for more than 60 days will be subject to the City's Lien Procedure (UMC 13.34). Properties can be removed from this list if payment in full is received. All properties remaining on the list by August 1st, will be submitted to the County Tax Collector where the delinquent balance and all related fees will be added to the property tax for that property.