



## **RULES AND REGULATIONS**

### **Application for Water Service:**

Each applicant for water service or installation of a water meter or construction meter will be required to sign an application through the District and pay any necessary fees before service is furnished. The application for water service will show the following information;

- a. Name, address and contact number(s) of the applicant and person responsible for paying the water bill.
- b. State issued identification card (or driver's license) and social security card number of the applicant and person responsible for paying the water bill.
- c. Location, address and intent of proposed service
- d. Date applicant desires service to begin
- e. Agreement of applicant to abide by all Rules and Regulations of the District

No applicant will be considered unless said applicant provides the District with an authorized valid proof of ownership (Grant Deed) for the property they wish to open service at (original documents only). If the lot is vacant, you will be required to provide documentation from the County stating you intend to build. Any application made by anyone other than the owner of record will not be considered unless the applicant provides a notarized agreement with permission from the owner or a tenant authorization form. The tenant authorization form will need to be completed in the office, along with the owner's proof of identity for verification. The owner of record is ultimately responsible for any and all amounts of money owed to the District.

In the event the customer turns on the water supply, suffers, or causes it to be turned on, without first having made such application, he will be held liable for all charges of the water service rendered. The amount thereof to be determined at the election of District either by the meter reading or on the basis of the estimated consumption for the length of time service was received by the customer without proper application.

When the District finds that water is being used without proper application, the customer will be notified and if application for such service is not made promptly thereafter and the District immediately

compensated for water already used, the supply will be shut off without further notice and the District may take legal action.

### **Illegal Use of Water:**

It shall be in violation of these Rules and Regulations to;

- a. Tap or make any connection into the District mains or into any public or private water service facilities without prior written consent from the District.
- b. Open a valve or extract water from a fire hydrant except for the suppression of fire, or except when prior written consent is given by the District.
- c. Break the lock or remove the seal on the meter
- d. Remove, alter or in any way render inoperative any meter so that the meter does not register the amount of water used.
- e. Bypass a meter so that water used is not recorded.
- f. Restoring water service after it has been suspended by Water District, by person(s) turning on the water at meter without the District's written permission.

### **Maintenance of Meters:**

The District will install, maintain and repair the service connection including the meter. However, service line fittings, connections and other facilities beyond the District meters are the property and responsibility of the customers and property owners. The District's responsibility ceases at the place where the District water meter is installed. Meters will be sealed by the District at the time of installation and no seal shall be altered or broken except by authorized District employees or agents. If a water user damages a meter, The District shall have the right to charge such user for the replacement thereof. If a meter is damaged, or a seal is broken, the District shall have the right to charge the customer of record and/or the property owner of the replacement thereof, as well as, a fine levied in the amount as determined by the General Manager and/or Board of Directors.

### **Transfer Fee:**

If water service has not been requested to be turned off by the former customer/owner, and the new customer comes in to transfer service into their name, no fee will be charged.

If the property has a change in ownership, the new owner will need to complete the application process listed above within seven days and pay all applicable fees in full. Failure to do so may result in service disconnection and/or a violation fine.

If there is a change in tenants/occupants, the owner of record must notify the District and provide a new tenant authorization form within seven days and pay any applicable fees in full. Failure to do so may result in service disconnection and/or a violation fine.

### **Connection & Deposit Fee:**

If a customer initiates a new residential service, a mandatory deposit fee of \$200.00 will be assessed, as well as a \$25.00 turn on/connection fee (if the water is off/disconnected). Commercial services will be assessed either a \$500.00 (¾ inch meter) or \$800.00 deposit (1 inch meter) upon initiation. Meters larger than 1 inch must be approved by the General Manager prior to installation and the deposit amount will be determined at that time.

All deposits are held and refunded following the calculation of the customer's final bill. Any remaining deposit balance after the deposit is applied to the final invoice, whether it be for a residential or commercial account, will be returned to the payee at the forwarding address they provide to the District.

### **Monthly Billing:**

Under ordinary conditions, the meters are read on or around the 25<sup>th</sup> of each month. If the 25<sup>th</sup> should fall on a Thursday, Friday, holiday or weekend, the meters will be read on the closest business day to the 25<sup>th</sup>. If the water service is on, whether or not there is any usage, the customer will be billed the minimum monthly amount. Under other conditions, the meter may be read as often as deemed necessary by the District.

### **Failure of Meter to Register or Covered/Inaccessible Meter:**

If a meter fails to register for any reason whatsoever during any billing period, the customer will be charged with the same use as determined by a comparable period. There will be no "improvements" within six feet of any meter connection without written permission from the Board. Any improvements not authorized by the Board may be removed at any time at the discretion of the District. If any objects cover or block access to the meter so that it cannot be read, an average bill corresponding to the same period during the previous year will be rendered and the customer will be fined every month until corrected; it is illegal to cover or block access to a meter at any time.

### **Payment of Water Bills for Commercial Service:**

The monthly water allotment is \$134.49 for usage of 0 to 1,000 cubic feet and \$0.1847 for each additional cubic foot. The mandatory deposit amount is \$500.00 for ¾ inch meters and \$800.00 for 1 inch meters. Meters larger than 1 inch must be approved by the General Manager prior to installation and the deposit amount will be determined at that time.

The water bill becomes delinquent if not paid in full by 3:00 p.m. on or before the due date indicated on the invoice (approximately twenty five (25) days from the billing date). If payments are received in excess of the billed amount, the District will credit the overpayment to the next invoice. Underpayment of any invoice may be treated as nonpayment. Any previous balance will be assessed at an interest rate of 1.5% per month and added to the next invoice. If the account becomes delinquent, the District shall attach a final notice to the premises, stating that the water service will be shut off and not resumed until, and unless, the total delinquent charges, plus a \$15.00 door-hanger (final notice) fee, is paid in full to the District's office by 12:00pm (noon) on the date indicated on said notice. If the water service is tuned off, a \$25.00 re-connection fee plus a deposit (amount will be based off of

payment/usage history) will need to be paid, in addition to the account's current balance, before the District will reinstate service.

### **Payment of Water Bills for Residential Service:**

The monthly water allotment is \$82.74 for usage of 0 to 1,000 cubic feet and \$0.1124 for each additional cubic foot. The mandatory deposit amount is \$200.00 for all residential meters.

The water bill becomes delinquent if not paid in full by 3:00 p.m. on or before the due date indicated on the invoice (approximately twenty five (25) days from the billing date). If payments are received in excess of the billed amount, the District will credit the overpayment to the next invoice. Underpayment of any invoice may be treated as nonpayment. Any previous balance will be assessed at an interest rate of 3% per month and added to the next invoice.

SB 998: For customers under two hundred (200) percent of the federal poverty level, the District will waive unpaid interest amounts once every twelve months. The District will deem a customer to have a household income below two hundred (200) percent of the federal poverty level if: (a) a member of the household is a current recipient of CalWORKS, Cal Fresh, 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 two hundred (200) percent of the federal poverty level.

Discontinuation Process: If the account is delinquent for sixty days or more, the District may discontinue water service. Before discontinuation, the District will: (a) provide a notice to the customer of record at least fifteen (15) days before discontinuation; (b) provide a ten (10) day notice to the occupants at the service address as provided below (if applicable); (c) make a good faith, reasonable effort to contact the customer of record or an adult living with the customer by telephone at least seven (7) days before discontinuation of service; and (d) if unable to reach the customer of record or an adult living with the customer, leave a final notice and a copy of the Rules and Regulations at the property at least forty-eight (48) hours before discontinuation. The final notice shall state that the water service will be shut off and not resumed until, and unless, the total delinquent charges, plus a \$15.00 door-hanger (final notice) fee, is paid in full to the District's office by 12:00pm (noon) on the date indicated on said notice. If the water service is turned off, a \$35.00 re-connection fee plus a deposit (amount will be based off of payment/usage history) will need to be paid, in addition to the account's current balance, before the District will reinstate service.

Notice to Occupants (multiservice dwelling): If the customer of record's mailing address is not the same as the service address, or if the customer of record is the owner, manager, or operator of the dwelling or residential structure, the District will send a notice to the occupants living at the service address at least ten (10) days before discontinuation of service. If service is provided through a master meter, and it is impracticable or infeasible to provide the notice to each unit by mail, the District will make a good faith, reasonable effort to provide written notice to the occupants. The notices will be addressed to "Occupant" and will notify the occupants that the account is past due and subject to

discontinuation, and will inform the occupants that they have the right to become customers of the District without being required to pay the amount due on the delinquent account.

The District will make service available to the occupants if each occupant agrees to the terms and conditions of service and meets the requirements of these Rules and Regulations. Notwithstanding, if one or more occupants are willing and able to assume responsibility for the subsequent charges to the satisfaction of the District, or if there is a physical means, legally available, of selectively discontinuing service to those occupants who have not met the requirements of these Rules and Regulations, the District shall make service available to the occupants who have met those requirements. To be eligible to become a customer without paying the amount due on the delinquent account, the occupant must verify that the delinquent account customer of record is or was the landlord, manager, or operator. Verification may include a lease or rental agreement, rent receipts, a government document indicating that the occupant is renting the property, or other information at the discretion of the District.

*Payment Arrangements:* A customer may request a payment arrangement to avoid late fees or disconnection of service. If the customer submits his or her request within thirteen (13) days after mailing of a written notice of discontinuation of service, the request will be reviewed by a manager of the District. The District will consider all circumstances surrounding the request and make a determination as to whether the payment arrangement is warranted. The District will choose which arrangement, if any, is available and set the repayment terms. Payment arrangements may include an extension, amortization of the unpaid balance, or an alternative payment schedule.

The customer must comply with the terms of the payment arrangement and remain current in each subsequent billing period while participating in the payment arrangement. Failure to comply with the payment arrangement or to pay current charges will result in discontinuation of 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.

The District can be contacted by telephone at (951) 849-2612 to discuss options for avoiding discontinuation of water service.

*Medical and Financial Hardship:* For customers that satisfy *all* of the following requirements, the District will not disconnect water service: (a) a licensed primary care provider certifies that discontinuation of water service will be life threatening or pose a serious health and safety threat to a resident of the premises; (b) the customer is financially unable to pay within the normal billing cycle; and (c) the customer is willing to enter into a payment arrangement for repayment of the delinquent charges. For customers who meet these requirements, the District will offer the customer a payment arrangement. The District will choose which arrangement will be offered and set the repayment terms. Payments arrangements may include an extension, amortization of the unpaid balance, or an alternative payment schedule.

The District will deem a customer financially unable to pay within the normal billing cycle if: (a) a member of the household is a current recipient of CalWORKS, Cal Fresh, 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 two hundred (200) percent of the federal poverty level.

The customer must comply with the terms of the payment arrangement and remain current in each subsequent billing period while participating in the payment arrangement. Failure to comply with the payment arrangement or to pay current charges for sixty (60) days or more will result in discontinuation of 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.

*Disputing or Appealing a Bill:* A customer may initiate a complaint or request an investigation regarding the amount of a bill by contacting the District in writing or by telephone within ten (10) days of the bill date. A timely complaint or request for investigation shall be reviewed by a manager of the District, who shall provide a written determination to the customer. The review will include consideration of whether the customer may receive a payment arrangement. The District may review untimely complaints or requests for investigation but such complaints or requests are not subject to appeal.

Any customer who disagrees with the District's initial determination on a disputed bill may appeal the determination to the Board of Directors by filing a written appeal within ten (10) days of mailing of the District's initial determination. Upon receiving the appeal, the District Secretary will set the matter to be heard at an upcoming Board meeting and mail the customer written notice of the time and place of the meeting at least ten (10) days before the meeting. The decision of the Board is final. The District will not discontinue water service for nonpayment while a timely dispute or appeal of the unpaid bill is pending.

### **After Hours Service**

Any service that is requested to be completed outside of normal operating hours will include an additional \$25.00 on top of the normal fee, if any, for the service. For example, if a customer is requesting their service be connected on a weekend, the fee would be \$25.00 for the connection plus an additional \$25.00, totaling \$50.00 for the service.

### **Notices**

Any notice that is served to the property (example: Final Notice) will include a door hanger charge of \$15.00 per notice. If the mailing address is different than the service address, a copy of the notice will also be mailed to the customer of record. Property owners will receive a copy of any notice served to their tenant(s) upon request.

### **Pressure Regulator:**

It is the sole responsibility of the customer of record and/or property owner to install and maintain the pressure regulator on their side of the meter. The High Valleys Water District may assist with the purchase and installation of a new regulator at the customer's cost.

### **Backflow Devices:**

Whenever a service connected to the District's system has an auxiliary source of water (i.e.; well, pond, stream, etc.), such service shall be protected by a protective device to prevent backflow of water into the District water system. The District may also deem it necessary for such protective device be installed on any commercial account and require installation before service is initiated. The installation of such protective devices shall be at the sole expense of the consumer. The District shall have the right to have all backflow devices inspected and tested by a certified vendor at least once a year, to establish that such protective devices are and remain effective. Records of the tests and any repairs shall be kept on file at the District office. The District shall have the right to authorize such inspections and to make cost thereof a charge upon and collectable from the customer.

### **Returned Checks:**

Whenever a check that is used to pay on an account for Water Service has been returned by the customer's bank for any reason, it is considered nonpayment and is subject to late fees and penalties. The first occurrence is subject to a \$15.00 fee; second occurrence is \$30.00; third and final occurrence is \$55.00. Payment in the form of a check will not be accepted following the third occurrence. If service is discontinued upon presentation of a non-sufficient check, customer must pay all returned check fees, in addition, to previously stated fees for reinstating service.

### **Collections/Liens:**

If following 30 days no payment is made after service is disconnected, a lien will be placed on the property and the customer of record and/or the property owner will be responsible for all fees and charges incurred. A notice of pending lien will be mailed to the customer of record and/or the property owner at the address provided to the District prior to the lien being placed on the property. All unpaid balances accrue interest at a rate of 36% per annum (or 3% per month).

### **Violation of Rules and Regulations:**

Per the State of California's Water Code, violation of these Rules and Regulations shall constitute a misdemeanor punishable by a fine of not less than \$100.00 and not more than \$1,000.00.