

The City of East Providence Past-Due Water/Wastewater Collection and Shutoff Policy

Purpose: It is the responsibility of the City of East Providence to ensure that all of its residential and commercial customers pay their water/wastewater bills on-time for properties that they own, rent, use or occupy. Unpaid bills unfairly increases the burden for maintaining the entire cost of the water/wastewater system on those customers who do pay their bills on-time. In order to promote equity among all of its water/wastewater customers, the City of East Providence will implement this policy for past-due accounts where at its sole discretion the City of East Providence will have the option to: 1) demand full payment of the past-due amount; 2) enter into a payment agreement for the past due amount according to the qualifications, terms and conditions listed below in Section I; 3) shut off water service for the property per the procedures listed in Section II; and/or 4) put the property up for tax sale.

I. Payment Agreements

a. Qualifications

- i. Must be an owner occupied residence. Residential income property, commercial accounts and industrial accounts are not eligible to enter into a payment agreement.
- ii. The customer must have a past-due balance of at least \$500 (\$250 for seniors 65, or over).
- iii. Payment agreements are not available to any customer who has defaulted on a previous payment agreement with the City for either past due water/wastewater or property tax within the past three calendar years.

b. Terms and Conditions

- i. The City's Tax Collection Division will be responsible for issuing, monitoring, and collecting on, payment agreements.
- ii. If there is a current amount due at the time of a payment agreement application, then that entire current amount (100%) must be paid prior to the issuance of any payment agreement for past-due amounts.
- iii. Twenty-five per-cent (25%) of the delinquent, past-due amount is due immediately upon entering into a payment agreement (for instance, if \$1,000 is the past due amount – then \$250 must be provided to the City as a down payment).
- iv. The balance of the delinquent, past-due amount will be paid in monthly installments beginning on the last day of the month following the month that the payment agreement was executed (for instance if the payment plan was executed on July 10, the first monthly installment will be due on August 31st) according to the following repayment schedule:
 1. For past-due balances that were less than \$1,000, the remaining amount after the 25% down payment will be due in six (6) equal monthly installments (for instance, if \$1,000 is past due – then \$250 (25%) would be due immediately, and \$750 would be paid in six (6) equal monthly installments of \$125).

2. For past due amounts great than \$1,000, the remaining amount after the 25% down payment will be due in twelve (12) equal monthly installments (for instance, if \$1,500 is past due – then \$375 (25%) would be due immediately, and \$1,125 would be paid in twelve (12) equal monthly installments of \$93.75).

v. Prepayments of past due amounts are allowed, and will serve to reduce the remaining past due balance.

vi. Interest continues to accrue on the unpaid balance during the payment agreement.

vii. Installment payments are due on the last day of the month.

viii. All future (charges for current usage) water/wastewater bills must be paid when they become due.

ix. In the event that an installment payment, or current month payment, is not received by the due date, the payment plan will terminate, and the entire past due, and current, water/wastewater amount will be immediately payable. If full payment of the past due and current amount is not received within three business days of the payment agreement termination, service will terminate according to the shut-off procedures listed in Section II below.

II. Water Shutoff Procedures

a. Notice

i. Accounts that are 60 days, or more, past due will receive a notice on their water/wastewater bill stating, "Your account is at least 60 days past due. Unless you immediately pay the entire past due amount, or enter into a Payment Agreement, your water service will be shut off. This is your final notice! No further notice will be provided to you! If you have already paid your past due balance, or have entered into a Payment Agreement with the City's Tax Collection Division, please disregard this notice."

ii. The above notice is a call for the delinquent water/wastewater customer to take immediate action to remedy their past due situation. Disregarding the notice will initiate shutoff procedures as detailed below.

III. Water Shutoff

i. The City of East Providence will recognize a water shutoff moratorium for residential properties from November 15th through April 15th. This moratorium does not apply to commercial or industrial accounts.

ii. Anyone who qualifies for water shutoff on April 15th will be red tagged.

iii. Red tags will be posted on the delinquent customer's door five (5) days in advance of the projected water shutoff date.

- iv. Water shutoffs will occur between 8:00 am and 2:00 pm, Monday through Thursday.
- v. Water that has been shut off for non-payment of past due amounts will not be turned back on until the past-due amounts, that now include turn off/on fees as described in Sub-Section vi below, have been paid in their entirety. Please note that personal checks will **not** be accepted for reinstatement of water service that has been shutoff. Additionally, personnel checks will **not** be accepted to avoid water shut off once a property has been red tagged. In either situation, as described in this paragraph above, bank checks, cash, money orders and credit cards will be the only forms of payment that will be accepted.
- vi. There is an additional customer charge of \$50 for water shutoff, as well as a \$25 charge to reinstate water service. Such charges are levied immediately once the Water Department is on site to shut off a delinquent customer's water, and must be paid in full, along with all other past due amounts, before water service is restored.
- vii. Checks or EFT payment requests rejected by a financial institution, for any reason including insufficient funds will immediately terminate an existing payment agreement, and water shutoff procedures will be initiated as detailed in Section III. Customers with a rejected EFT payment will be assessed an additional \$15 bank fee on their water/wastewater account. Customers that have payment agreements terminated because of check or EFT payment requests that have been rejected by a financial institution will not be allowed to enter into any new payment agreements, and will be required to pay in full their water /waste water account balance with bank checks, cash, money orders or credit cards to avoid water shutoff.