

# PAST DUE WATER BILL POLICY

Menlo Park Municipal Water  
menlopark.gov/water  
650-330-6750  
Effective January 1, 2022



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| <b>Purpose</b>   |
| This policy describes the City's process for handling past due bills including notifications, late penalties, disconnections, reconnections, alternative payment arrangements and special circumstances (low income residents and medical need for water).   |
| <b>Notifications</b>   |
| The City will provide a notice to customers of delinquency and pending termination via mailed notices, door tags, emails and/or telephone calls.<br>The City will make a reasonable, good faith effort to contact the customer of pending disconnection by phone, mail or notification at the premises no less than 10 business days before disconnection. Customers will receive a disconnection notice or door tag notice for water bills that are past due by more than 45 days. The City will charge a \$31 door tag notice fee, which shall be applied to the customer's next water bill.   |
| <b>Late penalties</b>  |
| Customers will incur a 1.5 percent late fee if payments are not received by the bill due date.   |
| <b>Disconnections</b>  |
| Customers with past due water bills that are more than 60 days old from the original bill due date, may be disconnected and a reconnection fee may apply before reconnection. To prevent disconnections, customers may qualify for a payment arrangement or remit payment at least 1 business day before the scheduled disconnection date.<br><br>Residential customers may request an exemption from being disconnected if all of the following applies:<br>1. The customer demonstrates low income<br>2. The customer demonstrates a medical need for water<br>3. The customer is willing to enter into a payment arrangement  |
| <b>Reconnections and reconnection fees</b>   |
| Customers shall set up an alternative payment arrangement or pay the past due amount plus the reconnection fee to reconnect water service.<br><br>Reconnection fees: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reconnection scheduled for next business day – \$140</li><li>• Reconnection scheduled for same day or after business hours – \$338</li></ul>  |
| <b>Alternative payment arrangements</b>  |
| Any customer who is unable to pay for water charges, within the normal payment period may request a payment arrangement to avoid disruption of service. The City will grant a payment arrangement, including but not limited to, alternative payment schedules, deferred payments, and minimum payments as specified in this policy for any customer who does not already have an active payment arrangement.<br><br>Requirements to make a payment arrangement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Requests must be made at least one business day before the scheduled disconnection date.</li><li>• Customers shall make a 10 percent good-faith payment to establish a payment arrangement and only one payment arrangement can be active at the same time.</li><li>• Customers must agree to the payment arrangement verbally over the phone or in writing, comply with the terms of their payment arrangement, and remain current as charges accrue in each subsequent billing period.</li><li>• Customers may request up to two payment arrangements during any calendar year. Each payment arrangement can only last up to 12 months per request.</li></ul><br>Requirements for customers in a payment arrangement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Customers may not request an additional payment plan of any subsequent unpaid charges while paying delinquent charges to an existing payment arrangement.</li><li>• Customers on payment arrangements cannot request due date extensions.</li></ul><br>Due date extensions: |

- Customers may request up to 2 due date extensions during any calendar year. Requests must be made at least 1 business day before the water bill due date. Once extended, due dates cannot be revised to a later date.

A customer who enters into and abides by a payment arrangement shall not be considered delinquent. Failure to comply with the terms of a payment arrangement will result in the customer being considered delinquent. The customer will then be subject to disconnection once the account is delinquent for 60 days and additional arrangements or extensions will not be available for any new delinquent balance, and the customer will not be granted future alternative payment arrangements until the delinquent balance has been paid.

**Medical need**

Customers can demonstrate a medical need for water if they can provide a written certification from their primary care provider that discontinuation of water service will be life threatening to, or pose a serious threat to the health and safety of, a resident of the premises where water service is provided.

**Low income (residential customers only)**

Customers can qualify for special provisions if they are enrolled in the rate assistance program.

To be eligible for the rate assistance program, households must meet the following criteria:

- Must be enrolled in the PG&E CARE program.
- Must provide a recent PG&E bill to verify CARE enrollment. Must show name, service address, statement date and CARE renew by date;
- Must provide the most recent Recology bill. Must show name, service address, account number, bill date and cart size; and
- Must provide the most recent Menlo Park Municipal Water bill, if applicable. Must show bill date, account number and service address.
- Service address must be the same for all three utility bills (PG&E, Recology and Menlo Park Municipal Water, but names may be different.

Special provisions:

- Customers shall pay a reconnection fee, in addition to the total amount due on the account, to restore service
- Reconnection scheduled during business hours – \$50
- Reconnection scheduled during nonoperational hours – \$150
- Customers can request the 1.5 percent late fee to be waived once every 12 months

For more information on the rate assistance program please visit [menlopark.gov/rateassistance](http://menlopark.gov/rateassistance)

**Landlord/tenant relationships**

If you are renting a property that has an individual meter under the property owner’s name, and the account is past due; tenants have the right to become customers.

- In order to waive the past due amount, the tenant shall provide a copy of a lease/rental agreement, rent receipts or government document indicating he/she is renting the property as verification.
- A tenant who chooses to become the customer can deduct water charges from periodic payments, such as rental payments to the property owner, if water charges are not separately stated.

**Appeal process**

Customers may dispute their monthly water bill by submitting a water bill protest form within 15 days from the bill date. The City shall review appeals and investigate as needed. All decisions are made by the public works director or designee. Water service shall not be discontinued while the appeal is pending.