

# City of San Diego Public Utilities Department

## Customer Service Policy Manual

*Revised 10/12/2022*

## **A. Customer Responsibilities**

It is the customer's responsibility to follow all regulations detailed in this policy manual.

### **Property Owner Responsibilities**

Property owners are responsible for ensuring that there is an active customer account for that property if there is a water meter installed. If there is no active account, the property owner is still responsible for any water consumption for the property, as well as for paying base fees to cover the cost of maintaining the meter and other water infrastructure.

For properties with lease or rental agreements, when a tenant moves out of a property, the property owner is responsible for transferring the account into their name until a new tenant assumes responsibility for the account.

Customers are responsible for ensuring that plumbing fixtures and appliances are kept in working order without water loss. When defects or leaks are discovered in plumbing fixtures and appliances, customers are expected to fix the issue in a timely manner.

### **Customer Information, Maintaining your Account and Billing**

It is the customer's responsibility to maintain accurate records with PUD, which includes notifying the utility in a timely manner when there are changes to name, email address, phone number, mailing address, property management company (if applicable) or other information.

Customers are also responsible for notifying PUD when they need to close their account. The customer is responsible for payment of any charges on the account until it has been officially closed.

Customers are responsible for paying all PUD bills and fees in a timely manner. Failure to do so may result in penalties up to and including termination of service. The customer is responsible for any delays in billing or notifications caused by their failure to provide PUD with up-to-date contact information. Customers can update their information by contacting the Customer Support Division.

### **Infrastructure Maintenance and Use of Utilities**

Customers are responsible for maintenance of the water system from the property or discharge side of the meter on, including pipes and plumbing fixtures on the customer's property and in all structures. If a leak occurs on the customer's side of the meter, the customer is responsible for repairing it.

PUD also has the right to terminate service immediately where water quality is put at risk. This includes when the customer is found to have an unapproved service connection or when contaminants like harmful chemicals have been introduced to the drinking water system. Service will not be reinstated until the issue

has been addressed to PUD's satisfaction, and service may be permanently terminated if an issue is not addressed.

The sewerage system for a property is connected to the City sewer main through a sewer lateral. Customers are responsible for the maintenance of the sewer lateral from the property to the connection with the sewer main. If the sewer lateral has a break or collapse the homeowner must repair the portion of the pipe that lies between the house and the property line. If the break or collapse is on the City side, the customer must call the City's Sewer Emergency Line at 619-515-3525 to file a Plumber's Report. The City will investigate within 24 hours. More information is available on the [PUD website](#).

PUD has the right to recover the cost of sewer spillage and cleanup if the spillage is a result of a sewer leak on customer property.

### **Meter Access**

It is the customer's responsibility to ensure that meters can be accessed by PUD staff and contractors without undue difficulty. If a meter cannot be read, the customer's bill will be estimated.

Examples of situations where a meter may be obstructed or otherwise inaccessible include, but are not limited to:

- When meter access is blocked because a vehicle is parked on top of the meter box
- When the meter is behind a fence with no means of access
- When the meter is in a gated community and the point of contact for access is not reachable
- When there is an unrestrained dog in the area with the meter that may pose a threat to the meter reader's safety
- When landscaping or vegetation grows over the meter box

### **Tampering, Theft, and Unauthorized Use of Service**

Within PUD's service area, all water and wastewater equipment and infrastructure within public rights-of-way, on City property, or within a utility easement are property of PUD. Only PUD employees or authorized PUD representatives may operate or alter PUD meters, infrastructure, facilities, or equipment, including turning a meter off or on or making taps. PUD is not responsible for any water damage caused by tampering with equipment or facilities or by operating them without authorization. PUD also has the right to recover the cost of damage to its facilities due to unauthorized activities, as well as other associated costs, such as the cost of flushing the water system. Individuals found to have tampered with PUD property may also be subject to fines or criminal penalties per Title 13, Part 1, Chapter 5, Section 498 of California Penal Code.

No unmetered water may be taken from any connection, including a hydrant, without written permission from PUD. Individuals found to have taken unmetered water will be billed at PUD's discretion based on the actual or estimated amount consumed. Use of unmetered water also constitutes theft and is prosecutable per Title 13, Part 1, Chapter 5, Section 498 of California Penal Code.

If the property damage, or the use of unmetered water, was caused by a third party who is not the customer or property owner, the customer has the right to pursue action against the third party. Actions could include reporting the incident to law enforcement and/or pursuing a civil claim to recover costs.

Failing to follow regulations could result in water service being terminated until the issue is addressed. Persistent violations may result in permanent termination of water service. PUD may bill customers for any costs incurred because of improper maintenance of the customer's water or wastewater systems or because of violations of policy.

PUD has the right to immediately terminate service and remove equipment if tampering, theft, or unauthorized use of service is discovered, and to charge a fee to the customer to cover the cost of removing the equipment, and of reinstalling it if service is resumed. If a new customer purchases or occupies a property where water service equipment has been removed due to the actions of the previous customer, it is the responsibility of the new customer to cover all costs related to reinstallation.

## **Water Use Restrictions and Conservation**

The City of San Diego and PUD are committed to conserving water and promoting efficient water use. It is the responsibility of both PUD and customers to conserve water when possible.

One of the largest contributors to water usage is irrigation, such as the use of sprinklers or hoses to water lawns or gardens. The PUD website provides information on water-efficient gardening and other strategies customers can use to conserve water. PUD staff are also available to survey customer properties and identify opportunities to conserve water and maximize efficiency. More information on the survey program is available on the [Water Conservation webpage](#).

### **B. Obtaining Utility Service**

#### **Requesting a New Account**

Applicants must contact PUD to request a new account. Applicants may submit requests the using the following methods:

- Online via the PUD website
- To obtain a paper application please call Customer Support at 619-515-3500

Customers may use any of these methods to initiate a request, with the following exception:

Sewer only account: If a customer receives sewer services from the City of San Diego Public Utilities Department, but receives water services from another utility, please contact the water utility agency establish an account. The water utility agency will contact the City of San Diego PUD to set up the customer's sewer account.

#### **Opening an Account for an Individual**

##### **Information Required**

If an applicant wants to open an account as an individual, the following information is required:

- Name of primary account holder
- Date of birth of primary account holder
- Service address
- Mailing address
- Phone number
- Email address
- One of the following current government issued identification:
  - Driver's license
  - State identification card
  - Military identification
  - U.S. Passport or Passport Card
  - Foreign passport
  - Permanent Resident Card
  - Certificate of Naturalization or Certificate of US Citizenship
  - Student identification card
  - Social Security Card

## **Opening an Account for a Business or Organization**

### **Information Required**

If an applicant wants to open an account for a business or organization, the following information is required:

- Name of business or organization
- Service address
- Billing address
- Phone number
- Email address
- Federal Tax Identification Number (also known as Employer Identification Number), or City of San Diego Business Tax Certificate
- Contact information for person or department responsible for payment

### **Effective Date of Starting Service**

The effective date of service of the account will be the date when the new customer took financial responsibility for the water and wastewater service at the stated property.

Customers will be unable to submit a request to start service on a date that is more than 30 days in the future.

## Outstanding Balances

If a customer has a current balance due or an outstanding balance owed on a previous account, the amount will be transferred to the new account. If a customer requests an installment plan for balance owed, PUD may set-up an installment plan.

## Closing an Account

Customers must contact PUD to request their account be closed within five days of the closing date. Applicants may submit requests the using the following methods:

- Online via the PUD website
- Calling Customer Support at 619-515-3500

## Information Required

Only the account holder or a designated account representative that has been named on the account can initiate the request for disconnection of water service. The following information is required from the customer to close the account:

- Name of customer
- Service location address
- Mailing address for subsequent correspondence/final bill
- Date that the account will be closed
- Phone number for subsequent contact
- Email for subsequent contact

Customers may use any of methods listed above to initiate a request to close their account, with the following exception:

Sewer-only customers must contact their water provider to end sewer services. The water provider will then contact the City of San Diego PUD to close the account.

## Effective Date of Closing Service

Once the customer or authorized representative has provided the required information, the service will be closed effective the date requested by the customer.

## Final Bill

A final bill for services rendered through the effective closing date is sent to the customer generally within seven (7) days of the effective closing date. Meter reads for final bills are estimated using the daily usage for the same period the previous year or the average daily usage for the year if there is no billing history for that period.

Customers are responsible for the balance of the final bill.