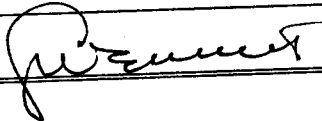




POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Subject: Utility Billing	Index: Finance Number: 201-9
Effective Date: September 1, 2005	Prepared By: Finance & Administrative Services
Supersedes: July 1, 2003	Approved By: 

1.0 PURPOSE:

To provide guidelines and procedures for the processing of utility bills.

2.0 ORGANIZATIONS AFFECTED:

All departments/divisions

3.0 REFERENCES:

Ordinance Nos. 1120 and 1135

4.0 POLICY:

- 4.1 All invoicing, monitoring and collection of utility bills is the responsibility of the Finance Division.
- 4.2 City Council Ordinances determine rates and parameters of the billing rates, fees, invoicing and collection of utility bills.

5.0 PROCEDURE:

5.1 Request for Service Requirements

- 5.1.1 Requests for water and sewer service may be submitted verbally by phone or in person at the Utility Billing office.
- 5.1.2 A deposit may be required if an applicant does not provide a clear record of no delinquent payments with the City or another public utility for the previous 12-month period or if an applicant does not have a satisfactory credit score provided by an independent credit agency selected by the City.

5.2 Billing/Shut-off Procedures

- 5.2.1 Accounts will be billed for services on a monthly basis based on current water, sewer, storm drain and urban runoff rates. A copy of the current rates is available from the Utility Billing office.
- 5.2.1.1 Water billing rates for residential customers are based on a tier in relation to units consumed, plus a monthly charge.
- 5.2.1.2 Water billing rates for commercial customers are based on a uniform rate per consumption, plus a monthly charge.
- 5.2.1.3 Sewer billing rates are based on water consumption, type of home or business, plus a monthly charge.
- 5.2.1.4 Storm drainage fees are billed on a monthly or semi-annual basis and are based on the classification of the property.
- 5.2.1.5 Urban Runoff Management Fees are billed on a monthly or semi-annual basis and are based on the classification of the property.
- 5.2.1.6 If a customer qualifies for San Diego Gas & Electric "*CARES Program*" they also qualify for San Clemente's program, and are waived the fixed charge based on meter size.
- 5.2.2 All charges for water, sewer, storm drainage and urban runoff management fees are due and payable upon receipt.
- 5.2.3 A delinquent penalty of 10% will be assessed on all amounts remaining unpaid approximately thirty days after the bill date. Approximately sixty days after the customers due date, a shut-off notice is mailed to the customer, notifying them that their water will be shut off if payment is not received by the delinquent date. If the customer's bill remains unpaid after the delinquent date, a final three-day notice is posted on the customer's door. Accounts remaining unpaid at the end of the final notice period will have water service shut off.
- 5.2.4 If water service has been turned off for nonpayment, service will not be resumed until all charges, penalties and turn-on fees have been paid.
- 5.2.5 Any meter shut-off due to nonpayment of a utility bill will not be turned on before 8 a.m., or after 5:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday or after 4:30 p.m. on alternating Fridays.

5.2.5.1 Meter readers are prohibited from accepting payment from customers when they are in the field. Payment must be made at the Utility Billing office. Payment arrangements must be made with the Utility Billing office prior to the shut-off date. Any payoff arrangements made must provide for the payoff of all service charges (current delinquent charges plus new billing charges) within a three month period.

5.2.6 Any payment to redeem a check returned by the bank for insufficient funds (NSF) must be made by cash, cashier's check or money order along with an additional charge of \$15.00.

5.3 Adjustment of Charges

5.3.1 **Water** – The Finance Manager may adjust bills for clerical or meter reading errors and where investigation reveals an incorrect registration of the meter. Waiver of penalties may be granted on a case by case basis with the approval of the Finance Manager. Filing an appeal does not prevent accrual of penalty charges or turn off of service for nonpayment.

5.3.1.1 If a meter fails to register during any period or it registers inaccurately, the customer will be charged an average daily consumption as determined by the accurate meter reading during the previous year at a similar time of year and under similar use demands. Customers may request meter checks by contacting the Utility Billing office.

5.3.2 **Storm Drain Fee** – The storm drain fee is based on each parcel type's contribution to the storm and surface water runoff into the City's storm drainage facilities. Each property owner has a right to request a re-computation of their charge. Such appeals will be made through the City Engineering Division.

5.3.3 **Urban Runoff Management Fee** – The urban runoff management fee is based on a parcel's expected contribution of runoff, which is determined by an estimate of the impervious area on that parcel. Impervious areas include such things as buildings and pavement, which prevent or restrict storm water from getting into the soil and increase runoff from a parcel. Each property owner has a right to request a re-computation of their charge. Such appeals will be made through the City Engineering Division.

5.4 Payment of Billings

5.4.1 Utility payments can be mailed using the return envelope provided with the bill or can be made in person at the Utility Billing office. The City accepts cash, checks and credit cards (Visa and MasterCard).

5.4.2 Utility bills can be automatically deducted from a checking or savings account. Customers may request an "Auto Pay" application from the Utility Billing office.

5.5 Collections of Billings

5.5.1 Delinquent accounts may be turned over to the City's collection agency and reported to TRW, Trans Union and Equifax.