



City of Chino Discontinuation of Residential Water Service Policy

The City of Chino (City) Utility Billing staff may be contacted in person or by phone, (909) 334-3264, to discuss options for averting discontinuation of water service for nonpayment under the terms of the Discontinuation of Residential Water Service Policy (Policy). The Policy shall be available on the City's website in the following languages: English, Spanish, Korean, Vietnamese, Tagalog, and Chinese (Mandarin).

1) Discontinuation of Service per Customer's Request:

- a. Service may be discontinued at the customer's request at no additional charge.
- b. Upon receipt of the customer's request, the City will obtain a mail forwarding address, a final meter reading, and discontinue service within one business day.
- c. The final bill will be mailed to the mailing address on file.
- d. If the final bill amount is not received by the due date, the account is subject to collection action.
- e. All approved refunds will be mailed to the mailing address on file.

2) Discontinuation of Service for Nonpayment:

- a. Services are subject to shut-off 60 days after the bill becomes delinquent.
- b. The City must notify the customer no less than seven (7) days prior to shutting off water service, either by telephone or written notice ("Disconnection Notice").
 - i. If notified by telephone – The City will provide the written policy and discuss alternative payment options. The City shall offer to discuss options for averting service such as alternate payment schedules, deferred payment plan, minimum payment options, and a petition for bill review and appeal.
 - ii. If customer is given a written notice – The City will send a written notice to the service address and will include all of the following:
 1. The customer's name and address.
 2. The amount of the delinquency.
 3. The date the payment or arrangement of payment is needed to avoid the water being turned off.
 4. A written procedure to apply for an extension.
 5. A written procedure to petition for bill review and appeal.
 6. A written procedure by which the customer can request a deferred, reduced or alternative payment schedule.

3) Alternative Payment Options to Avoid Discontinuation of Service:

- a. Any customer may request a short-term payment extension up to three times in a 12-month period.

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- b. Any customer unable to pay for service within the normal billing cycle may request an alternative payment arrangement to avoid discontinuation of service if they satisfy all of the following conditions:
 - i. Customer has certification of a “primary care provider,” as defined in Welfare and Institutions Code Section 14088(b)(1)(A), stating discontinuation of residential water service will be life threatening to or pose a serious threat to the health and safety of, a resident if the premises where residential service is provided; and
 - ii. Customer demonstrates that he or she is financially unable to pay by providing proof that the member of the household is currently a recipient of CalWORKs, CalFresh, general assistance, Medi-Cal, Supplemental Security Income/State Supplementary Payment Program, or California Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children; or the Customer declares that the household’s income is less than 200 percent of the federal poverty level; and
 - iii. Customer is willing to enter into one of the following alternative payment arrangements to be selected by the City, in its sole discretion: (1) an amortization agreement, (2) alternative payment schedule, (3) partial or full reduction of the unpaid balance, or (4) a temporary deferred payment plan, with respect to all delinquent charges to avoid discontinuation of service.
- c. The burden of proving compliance with the conditions described in Section 3(b) is on the customer. In order to allow the City sufficient time to process any request for assistance by a customer, the customer is encouraged to provide the City with the necessary documentation demonstrating the medical issues, financial inability, and willingness to enter into any alternative payment arrangement as far in advance of any proposed date for discontinuation of service as possible. Upon receipt of such documentation, the City, shall review that documentation and respond to the customer within seven (7) calendar days to either request additional information, including information relating to the feasibility of the available alternative arrangements, or to notify the customer of the alternative payment arrangement, and terms thereof, in which the City will allow the customer to participate. If the City has requested additional information, the customer shall provide that requested information within five (5) calendar days of receipt of the City’s request. Within five (5) calendar days of its receipt of that additional information, the City shall either notify the customer in writing that the customer does not meet the conditions, or notify the customer in writing of the alternative payment arrangement, and terms thereof, in which the City will allow the customer to participate
- d. Amortization: If the City has selected this alternative payment arrangement, the customer shall enter into a written amortization plan for the unpaid balance in accordance with the following terms:
 - i. The Customer shall pay the unpaid balance over a period defined by the City, not to exceed 12 months from the original date of the bill.

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- ii. The amortized payments will be combined with, and subject to the due date of the customer's regular bill.
 - iii. The customer may not request further amortization of any subsequent unpaid charges while paying delinquent charges pursuant to a payment plan.
- e. Alternative Payment Schedule. If the City has selected this alternative payment arrangement, the customer shall enter into a written alternative payment schedule for the unpaid balance in accordance with the following terms:
 - i. The customer shall pay the unpaid balance, over a period determined by the City, not to exceed twelve (12) months from the date of the bill.
 - ii. The City shall develop an alternative payment schedule for the customer. That alternative schedule may provide for periodic lump sum payments that do not coincide with the established payment date, may provide for payments to be made more frequently than monthly, or may provide that payments be made less frequently than monthly, provided that in all cases the unpaid balance and administrative fee shall be paid in full over the period established by the City.
 - iii. The customer may not request further alternative payment schedules of any subsequent unpaid charges while paying delinquent charges pursuant to a payment plan.
- f. Reduction of Unpaid Balance. If the City has selected this alternative payment arrangement, the customer shall enter into a written reduction of unpaid balance owed by the customer, not to exceed thirty percent (30%) of that balance without approval of and action by the City Council; provided that any such reduction shall be funded from a source that does not result in additional charges being imposed on other customers. The proportion of any reduction shall be determined by the customer's financial need, the City's financial condition and needs and the availability of funds to offset the reduction of the customer's unpaid balance. The customer shall pay the reduced balance by the due date set by the City.

Temporary Deferral of Payment: If the City has selected this alternative payment arrangement, the customer shall have payment of the unpaid balance temporarily deferred for a period of up to six (6) months after the payment is due. The City shall determine, in its discretion, how long of a deferral shall be provided to the customer. The customer shall pay the unpaid balance by the deferral date determined by the City

- g. All alternative payment options require a Financial Hardship Agreement (agreement) to be signed by the customer on record. Failure to comply with the agreement or failure to pay charges accrue in each subsequent billing period will result in discontinuation of services.
- h. If a customer fails to comply with the terms of any of the alternative payment arrangements for sixty (60) calendar days or more, or fails to pay the customer's current water service charges for sixty (60) calendar days or more the City will issue a written disconnection notice. The disconnection notice will be delivered to

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the property no less than five (5) business days in advance of discontinuance of service

4) Legal Tenant to Customer:

- a. Legal tenants at a property where service was discontinued for nonpayment in the name of the property owner or his/her authorized agent may establish accounts in their own name and assume responsibility for future bills. Tenants can become a customer by establishing an account in either individually or with other occupants on the same property providing a deposit is paid, and proof of legal tenancy is provided to the City. Current unpaid bills remain the responsibility of the current accountholder.

5) Restoration of Service:

- a. Customers whose service was discontinued due to nonpayment are responsible for all unpaid bills and associated fees. After residential water service has been discontinued, one of the following must apply before water service is reconnected:
 - i. Delinquent balance including penalties are paid in full.
 - ii. Customer established/qualified for amortization schedule, alternative payment schedule, temporary deferral of payment, extension, and/or partial/full reduction of delinquent bill and signed Financial Hardship Agreement.
 - iii. Legal tenant becomes customer and pays associated deposit.
- b. Same-day reconnections are not guaranteed unless there is a medical need. Fees associated with after-hour reconnections are due immediately.
- c. If water service has been discontinued and is to be reconnected, then any reconnection fees during the City's normal operating hours cannot exceed \$50, and reconnection fees during non-operational hours cannot exceed \$150 for customers with a household income below 200% of the federal poverty line or if the customer or any member of the customer's household is a current recipient of CalWORKs, CalFresh, general assistance, Medi-Cal, Supplemental Security Income/State Supplementary Payment Program, or California Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children.
- d. The City shall waive interest charges on delinquent bills once every 12 months for customers with a household income below 200% of the federal poverty line or if the customer or any member of the customer's household is a current recipient of CalWORKs, CalFresh, general assistance, Medi-Cal, Supplemental Security Income/State Supplementary Payment Program, or California Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children.

6) Disputes

- a. If you believe your bill is incorrect, please contact the City immediately.
 - i. You may file your dispute in person, by phone, or via email.
 - ii. Your dispute will be reviewed by the Utility Billing Supervisor.
 - iii. Service will not be discontinued while the dispute is under review.

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- iv. Once the Utility Billing Supervisor reviews the dispute, you will be contacted with the resolution. All undisputed amounts are to be paid during the normal billing cycle.
- v. Any overcharges will be reflected as a credit on the next regular bill to the customer, or refunded directly to the customer, at the sole discretion of the City.

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