



## Policies Affecting Fees & Services

### **Application Fee:**

All new accounts are charged an Application Fee at the time the account is opened.

### **Security Deposit:**

Each new customer shall maintain a deposit for each service provided by the Authority and a signed deposit form on file. Deposits are maintained for as long as a customer uses water or sewer services provided by the Authority. For customers having deposits on the HCSA records; deposits shall be applied to the customer's final bill.

**Facility Fees:** For all new connections to the Authority's water and sewer system, a facility fee must be paid before water and/or sewer service is provided. The facility fee will be determined based on the size of the meter. In situations where a compound assembly is required, the facility fee is based on the largest meter of the assembly.

a. In situations where a compound assembly is required for the primary purpose of providing fire protection to the premise being served then the water a facility fee may be based upon the largest meter in the assembly whereas the sewer facility fee may be based upon the smallest meter size of the assembly.

b. The Authority reserves the right to assess the sewer facility fee based on the largest meter in the assembly.

**Mandatory Connections:** Pursuant to the provisions of the Code of Virginia 1950 annotated; Chapter 51 also known as the Virginia Water and Waste Authorities Act and detailed in 15.2-5137 Connection to the Authority's water and sewer system is mandatory.

### **Bimonthly Base Charge:**

Active accounts are charged a bimonthly base charge for each service provided.

### **Volume Charge per 1,000 Gallons Consumption:**

Customers are charged for water and sewer usage based upon metered water usage.

### **Billing:**

Residential meters are read every other month and bills are calculated based upon the consumption recorded. Bills are assigned a billing date which is normally the last day of the month during which the meter is read and then mailed to customers. The payment due date, approximately **20** days from the billing date, will be printed on the bill. Customers must pay the balance due by 5:00 pm on the due date to avoid late charges.

The Authority will assess a late charge on all accounts when the payment is not received by the close of business on the due date. At the time the late payment charges are assessed, a notice is prepared and mailed warning that water service will be cut off if the outstanding balance is not paid by the cutoff date specified in the notice which will typically be 10 days after the due date. Payment for late bills must be received in the Authority's office by 5:00 pm on the day prior to the cut off day.

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Payments received after this time, which are for less than full payment, or for which no prior agreement has been reached with the Authority will not prevent the services from being disconnected. On the day the services are cut off for nonpayment a nonpayment fee is assessed to each account that is slated to be disconnected. All outstanding balances and fees including the nonpayment fee must be paid before service will be restored.

Accounts that have been disconnected and for which payment is not received will have the meter removed within 7 days of being disconnected. Twenty one (21) days after being disconnected, a final bill will be prepared, any existing deposits applied, and the account will be placed in an inactive status. For service to be restored the person wanting service will have to reapply for service and pay all applicable application fees, deposits, past due balances, and penalties .

**Policy for granting a waiver of penalty or non-payment fee**

Customers may be granted a waiver of a late fee or a non-payment fee subject to the following:

- There must not be other late charges or penalties for at least 3 years prior to the date of the request.
- The customer must request the waiver. Staff will not research to determine eligibility prior to a receipt of a request.
- Hardship situations will be examined on a case by case basis.

**Service Trips for non-Payment and Restoration of Service:**

If a customer has not paid the outstanding balance on an account by the cutoff date nor contacted the Authority to make arrangements to have the balance paid, the water service will be cut off. Before service is restored the outstanding balance due, all late charges, and a service fee must be received in the Authority's office located 2529 Houghton Avenue in the town of South Boston. Authority personnel will **not** collect unpaid funds from customers at the service location. The fee shall be greater for service trips after normal working hours of 7:00 am to 3:30 pm. If the Authority personnel turn a water service back on and the meter continues to run, the service will be turned off to prevent damage from leaks or broken fixtures in the building.

**Meter Test Fee:**

When a customer requests the Authority to test a meter and the meter accuracy is within  $\pm 5\%$  accuracy, a fee will be charged.

**Nonpayment Fee:** Accounts that have not been paid by the cutoff due date will be assessed a nonpayment fee.

**Returned Check Fee:**

There will be a charge assessed for each check returned by the bank. If the bank should charge the Authority more than the published rate then the amount assessed will be the actual charge to the Authority, by the Bank.

**Fire Hydrant Use:**

Water may be obtained from the Authority's hydrants with the written permission of the Authority. This water must be metered. The base fee must be paid before the Authority will furnish a hydrant meter. No connections to a hydrant will be allowed that violate cross connection and backflow prevention regulations.

**Cross Connections:**

Cross connections of private or auxiliary water systems to the Authority's water system are restricted according to the WATERWORKS REGULATIONS FOR PUBLIC DRINKING WATER SUPPLIES as adopted by the Virginia Department of Health. Where the potential exists for such cross connections, a backflow prevention device approved by the Authority must be installed. Where required, the owner of the backflow prevention device must have annual tests performed to certify that the device is working correctly. Failure to install and operate such devices and/or provide certification or the test results to the

Authority may result in the interruption of water/sewer service. Should an interruption of service occur in addition to the provisions detailed in the Reconnect Fees and Restoration of Service section and the Unauthorized Connections section the Authority may also charge for any labor, materials, equipment, and/or any contracted services it incurs to install necessary apparatuses, disconnect services and/or further actions it deems necessary to prevent a cross connection.

**Sewer Connections and Discharges:**

Connections to and discharges into the Authority's sewer system must conform to the requirements of all other applicable local, state, and federal regulations. Failure to meet such provisions may result in the interruption of water/sewer service.

**New Connection Installation:**

All new connections to Authority lines shall be installed by approved contractors selected by the customer. The customer shall be responsible for paying the contractor directly. The Authority will only charge an engineering inspection fee.

**Engineering Field Service Fee:**

When connections are made to the Authority's system, either of new lines and appurtenances or of individual connections the Authority will charge a fee to observe and inspect the work being done if it is not done by Authority staff.

**Hardship Relief on Fees**

Hardship requests that are not covered by Authority policies will be considered on a case by case basis.

**Fees for Special Service Trips**

The service charges for special call for special trips shall be assessed for each trip made by Authority staff according to the published rate schedules. If the Authority is called out to turn water on, staff will not leave the water turned on if the meter indicates that the water is continuing to run after a reasonable period. There will be a service call charge for the next trip to turn the water back on.

### **Leak Adjustment Policies:**

**External Leaks:** This policy only describes adjustments for a leak that results in a high water and/or sewer bill where the source of excess consumption is clearly identified and repaired.

- The leak must be outside of the building being served, and be either in an enclosed crawl space or in the underground service line going to the building and the water did not enter the sewer system..
- “Average consumption” shall be computed from the 12 months water billing records prior to the leak. If there is not 12 months of data then the staff will calculate an estimate based upon the data available or use 7,500 gallons per bill for a typical residential connection.
- Upon receipt of proof of repair and verification by Authority staff the sewer portion of the bill will be adjusted back to an “average” billing amount based upon the “average consumption”
- The water bill will also be adjusted by ½ of the excess water used as compared with the “average consumption” for the 12 months prior to the period(s) during which the leak occurred.
- To encourage prompt repair, adjustments will not be given for any more than 2 billing periods.

### **Other High Consumption Adjustments:**

Adjustments may be given for other leaks or unexplained high uses which cause the billed consumption to exceed 3 times the “Average Consumption”.

- The request for an adjustment must be made in writing.
- After investigation and at the determination of the Executive Director, up to ¼ of the excess consumption may be adjusted off and the bill recalculated.
- Adjustments will not be given to customers who have multiple penalties or are repeatedly turned off for nonpayment.
- If circumstances warrant, and at the discretion of the Executive Director, credit may be given for all excess sewer billing.

Only one adjustment will be given for any reason every 18 months for a customer.

**Adopted By Board Action: December 15, 2011**