

# CUSTOMER RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

## Introduction

The following provides existing and new residential customers with a summary of their rights and responsibilities as required by Chapter 660 of the Maine Public Utilities Commission (MPUC) rules and regulations. The purpose chapter 660 is to ensure:

- safe and adequate provision of residential utility service;
- service is not disconnected or refused unreasonably; and
- the utility's right to collect proper bills for residential utility service.

Every privilege that is granted and every duty that is required by Chapter 660 imposes an obligation on utilities, applicants and customers to accept these privileges and perform these duties with good faith, honesty and fairness, and in accordance with the Wiscasset Water District's approved Terms and Conditions.

WWD provides sewer billing and collection services for Town of Wiscasset and Town of Edgecomb. WWD does not establish sewer rates for these Towns; each Town sets their own sewer rates. Once the sewer bill has been paid, WWD gives the sewer revenue it has collected to the Town.

## Definitions

The word "*Utility*" refers to the Wiscasset Water District.

The word "*District*" refers to the Wiscasset Water District.

The word "*Applicant*" refers to any person, firm, corporation or governmental division who has applied for and is granted service or who is responsible for payment of the service.

The word "*Customer*" refers to any person, firm, corporation or governmental division who has an established account and/or receiving service from the District.

## Application for Service

The owner or the owner's agent or occupant of the establishment to be served may apply for service on forms provided by the utility at the office of the utility at 65 Birch Point Road, Wiscasset, Maine. There is a nominal fee due at the time the application is filled out. Please look under the "Fees" section.

## Deposits

The utility may demand a deposit from any residential customer if it has proof, as defined by MPUC rules and regulations that the customer is likely to be a credit risk or will damage the District's property. The amount of a deposit shall not exceed a reasonably estimated bill for two (2) average billing periods. The interest rate on customer deposits shall be at the rate set from time to time by the MPUC. All credit and collection

procedures for residential customers will be based upon Chapter 660 of the MPUC rules and regulations.

### **Billing**

All bills are due and payable upon presentation and are considered past due 30 days from postmarked date. Bills shall be payable at the office of the utility. Annual metered rate charges are normally billed quarterly in arrears. The utility does reserve the right to render bills monthly if it so desires.

- *Non Receipt of Bill* - The customer will be responsible for providing a correct billing/ mailing address. Failure of the customer to receive his/her bill does not relieve him/her of the obligation of its payment nor for the consequences of non-payment
- *Late Payment* - A late payment charge will be made on any outstanding balance after 30 days from the billing date. The late payment charge will be the maximum allowed under chapter 660 of the Maine Public Utility Commission rules.
- *Accuracy of Meters*- The Maine Public Utilities Commission establishes the schedule of required meter tests and the accuracy standards that a meter must meet. Upon customer request, the utility will test the customer's water meter in the presence of the customer or representative, at no charge unless the customer requests more than one test in 18 months. If the customer requests a test more frequently, the utility may require the customer to pay a deposit of \$100.00 for a meter that is 1" or smaller and \$300.00 for a meter larger than 1", to cover the cost of the test. If a meter tested at the request of the customer does not conform to standards, the customer's deposit will be refunded and the utility will adjust the customer's bill according to the provisions of Chapter 620. If the meter conforms to standards, the utility may keep the customer's deposit and continue to use the meter at the customer's premises.

### **Fees**

Below are a few common fees, besides normal water and sewer usage that you might incur.

- *Application for Service*- there is a \$25.00 application fee which is due at the time the application is filled out.
- *Returned Check Policy*- The utility will charge the customer's account for any check returned by the bank for reason of non-payment. The charge is the greater of \$5.00 per account to which the check is to be applied, or the amount the bank charges the utility not to exceed \$15.00. The utility will furnish the customer with proof of any bank charges in excess of \$5.00 if requested in writing by the customer.
- *Collection Trip Fee* - If utility personnel visit the customer's premises to disconnect service for non-payment and in lieu of actual disconnection the customer pays or makes a payment arrangement for the entire past due balance,

the utility will charge a collection fee of \$10.00 or the utilities reconnection charge, whichever is less.

- *Reconnection Fee*- The reconnection charge is \$25.00 for each resumption of service made during normal business hours of 8:00 am to 3:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The charge during other than normal business hours is \$55.00 per hour with a minimum charge of \$82.50.
- *Broken Meter charge*- It is the responsibility of the customer to keep the meter in a safe, dry place. If the meter shall break while in possession of the customer, the customer will be responsible for paying for a replacement meter.

## **Payments**

*General*- You may pay your bill by mail or in person at 65 Birch Point Road, Wiscasset. For added convenience, we also have a secure drop box for check payments which is located at 65 Birch Point Road, Wiscasset. If you mail your payment to us, your bill is considered paid on the day we receive it. If you pay at our office, your bill is considered paid on the day you make the payment. Payments dropped off in the secure drop box are collected every morning and your bill will be considered paid the day it is retrieved from the box. If you make a partial payment, we will apply it to the oldest, undisputed water balance due unless otherwise specified in writing how the payment should be applied. We accept payment by cash, check, money order, and by the following credit cards: Visa, MasterCard. There is a 2.5% fee when using the credit card method for paying your bill. A charge may be assessed to the accounts of any customer whose payment is rejected for insufficient funds or cancellation of accounts. We will, upon request, furnish you with proof of bank charges above \$5.00.

*Financial Assistance*- When a customer cannot pay a bill and the customer is in imminent threat of being disconnected, the customer has the following options: 1. Dial 211 for assistance, 2. Contact the Department of Human Services; or 3. Contact local Town or City government office for General Assistance.

*Payment Arrangements*- We will continue service, even if you can't pay your account in full, as long as you agree to a reasonable written payment arrangement to pay your bill in affordable weekly installments. You must also agree to pay all future bills within 30 days of the postmark date, until the overdue amount is paid in full.

We take into consideration the following issues when making a payment arrangement:

- Your ability to pay.
- Your previous payment history.
- The reason the bill cannot be paid.
- How long the bill has remained unpaid.

If you do not make payments according to a written payment arrangement, we will send you a disconnection notice that gives you three (3) business days to pay the full overdue amount. We are not required to make a second arrangement, but we will attempt to respond to your particular situation.

**Disconnection**

Service may be discontinued by reason of nonpayment of water bills or for violation of any rule, terms and conditions or regulation contained herein. Service, once disconnected, may not be restored until the cause of the discontinuance of service has been removed and penalty charges, if any, have been paid in full. Before service is discontinued for delinquency, the utility will follow a reasonable procedure to collect payment, including, but not limited to, the issuance of a shutoff notice mailed fourteen days in advance of shutoff date.

The disconnection notice will tell you what to do to avoid disconnection and how you can dispute your bill or disconnection itself.

**Reconnection**

The utility will restore service promptly-during business hours on the day requested or after hours if needed- provided you have paid any reconnection fees, your overdue bill or have agreed to a payment arrangement.

The utility will charge a customer a reconnection fee to restore services at the customer's premises if service was disconnected for non-payment of bills, violation of the Terms and Conditions, fraudulent use of water, dangerous conditions on the customer's premises, violation of Commission rules or at the customer's request. Please refer to the "Fees".

**Complaints**

If you have a question or complaint about our service, please call us first. We have employees available during business hours to answer your questions, make payment arrangements, investigate your complaints and resolve disputes.

If you disagree with our decision, you have the right to appeal to the Consumer Assistance Division (CAD) of the Maine Public Utilities Commission, State House Station 18, Augusta, ME 04333. You can call the CAD toll-free at 1-800-452-4699 or visit their webpage at [www.maine.gov/mpuc/consumer](http://www.maine.gov/mpuc/consumer). Before you call or write the Commission, you **must** give us a chance to respond to your complaint.