

COVID-19 Moratorium on Municipal Water Shutoffs

In response to COVID-19, Governor Cuomo signed into law amendments to the Public Service Law ordering a moratorium on terminations & disconnections of residential customers' services of electricity, gas, steam, landline telephone, and water during the state of emergency. This provides that residential customers, in certain circumstances, may be eligible for additional protections from terminations or disconnections if the residential customer had a "change in financial circumstances due to the COVID-19 state of emergency."

On September 4th, 2020, the Governor signed Executive Order 202.60 extending the State of Emergency until October 4th, 2020. This moratorium is in effect until 180 days after the COVID-19 state of emergency is lifted or expired. The Public Service Law amendments "shall take effect immediately and shall expire March 31st, 2021, when upon such date the provisions of this act shall be deemed repealed." (L.2020, c.108§5)

Public Service Law §89-b

"8. No water-works corporation shall terminate or disconnect the supply of water to residential accounts for the non-payment of water rents, rates or charges for the duration of the state disaster emergency declared pursuant to executive order two hundred two of two thousand twenty (hereinafter "the COVID-19 state of emergency"). Water-works corporations shall have a duty to restore service, to the extent not already required under this chapter, to any residential customer within forty-eight hours if such service has been terminated during the pendency of the COVID-19 state of emergency.

9. For a period of one hundred eighty days after the COVID-19 state of emergency is lifted or expires, no water-works corporation shall terminate or disconnect the service of a residential customer account because of defaulted deferred payment agreements or arrears owed to the water-works corporation when such customer has experienced a change in financial circumstances due to the COVID-19 state of emergency, as defined by the department. The water-works corporation shall provide such residential customer with the right to enter into, or restructure, a deferred payment agreement without the requirements of a down payment, late fees, or penalties, as such is provided for in article two of this chapter."

If you attest that due to the COVID-19 state of emergency you have experienced a change in financial circumstances and are having difficulty paying your bills, you may contact the Village, sign a Certification, and arrange to enter into a deferred payment plan without the requirement of a down payment, late fees or penalties. To use these protections, you must contact the Village Office at 315-689-7350. If paperwork is not completed the Village must assume you have experienced no such change. Please note this only applies to disconnection of service due to non-payment resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic and does not protect customers from disconnection for other causes such as dangerous conditions, illegal or fraudulent use of the water service.

The following questions will be asked of you when you contact our office:

- ~ Have you experienced a change in financial circumstances due to COVID-19?
- ~ What is the change?
- ~ Have you applied for HEAP, EAF, SNAP, Temporary Assistance?
- ~ How much can you afford to pay?
- ~ Would you like to enter into a Deferred Payment Agreement?
- ~ Can you make the required self-certification? - "I attest that due to the COVID-19 state of emergency, which began on March 7, 2020, I have experienced a change in financial circumstances."