

Gasquet Community Services District

Shut off Policy- In Compliance with SB 998

Purpose/Background

This policy enumerates the Gasquet Community Services District (hereinafter referred to as “Gasquet CSD”) administrative actions for the collection of delinquent accounts, including notifications, fee assignments and discontinuation of service. This policy will be made available to the public on the Gasquet CSD website (www.gasquetcsd.org). Gasquet CSD can be contacted by phone at (707) 457-3124 to discuss options and/or disputes for averting termination of water services for nonpayment under the terms of this policy.

Text of Policy:

As an urban or community water system that supplies water to more than 200 service connections, Gasquet CSD is governed by Senate Bill. No. 998.

Delinquent Accounts:

Gasquet CSD has set the water billing period to be the 1st day of the month following the month of service delivery and deems water bills delinquent if not paid by the 15th day of the month following the billing period. (Ordinance number 93-1). In actual practice bills are mailed out on or about the 1st of the month with a due date of the 20th of the month and deemed delinquent if not paid by the last day of the month. The following rules shall apply to the collection of delinquent accounts:

1. Delinquent Notice

If payment for a bill is not received by 12:00 P.M. on the last day of the month following the billing period, a 10% late fee will be assessed against customers whose total balance for all charges is over \$1.00. The due date and late fee will be displayed prominently on the bill. Upon a bill becoming delinquent, Gasquet CSD shall give the person or entity responsible for payment of the bill (hereinafter referred to as “customer”) a notice of delinquency stating that water service will be discontinued after sixty (60) days. The delinquent notice will be mailed to the mailing address designated on the account. If the mailing address and the address designated of the property to which water service is provided are different, a second notice will be mailed to the service address and addressed to “Occupant”. Gasquet CSD assumes no responsibility for contact information that has not been kept up to date by the customer.

2. Waiver of Late Fee:

At the request of the customer, Gasquet CSD will waive the late fee if there are extenuating circumstances and the customer has been assessed a late fee for delinquent payment no more than once in the proceeding twelve months.

3. Alternative Payment Arrangements:

Any customer who is unable to pay for water service within the normal payment period may request an alternative payment arrangement to avoid late fees or disruption of service. Gasquet CSD shall not discontinue water service for non-payment if a customer has requested and entered into an alternative payment arrangement. Payment arrangements that extend into the next billing period are considered an amortization plan, which must be in writing and signed by the customer. An amortization plan will amortize

the remaining unpaid balance over a period not to exceed 12 months from the original date of the bill.

4. First Disconnection Notice:

Gasquet CSD shall not discontinue water service for non-payment until payment by the customer has been delinquent for at least sixty (60) days. Gasquet CSD shall give the customer a first notice of disconnection approximately thirty (30) days but in no event less than seven (7) business days before termination of service for non-payment. The written first disconnection notice will be mailed to the mailing address designated on the account. If the mailing address and the address of the property to which water is provided are different, a second notice will be mailed to the service address and addressed to "Occupant". The first written disconnection notice will include:

- Customer's name and address.
- Amount that is past due
- Date by which payment or payment arrangements are required to avoid termination of service
- Description of the process to apply for an alternative payment plan
- Description of the process to dispute or appeal a bill
- Gasquet CSD's phone number and a web link to Gasquet CSD's written collection policy

a) Notice to Residential Tenants/Occupants in an Individually Metered Residence

Gasquet CSD will make a reasonable, good faith effort to inform the occupants, by means of written notice when the water service account

is in arrears and subject to disconnection at least ten (10) days before water service is shut off. The written notice will advise the tenant/occupant that they have the right to become customers of Gasquet CSD without being required to pay the amount due of the delinquent account as long as they are willing to assume financial responsibility for subsequent charges for water service at the address. In order for the amount due on the delinquent account to be waived, the tenant/occupant must provide verification of tenancy in the form of a rental agreement or proof of rent payments.

b) Notice to Tenants/Occupants in a Multi-Unit Complex Served through a Master Meter

Gasquet CSD will make a reasonable, good faith effort to inform the occupants by means of written notice hung on the door of each residence, when the water service account is in arrears and subject to disconnection at least ten (10) days before water service is shut off. The written notice will advise the tenant/occupant that they have the right to become customers of Gasquet CSD without being required to pay the amount due on the delinquent account as long as they are willing to assume financial responsibility for subsequent charges for water service at the address(es) served by the master meter. If one or more of the occupants are willing and able to assume responsibility for the subsequent charges for water service to the satisfaction of Gasquet CSD, or if there is a physical means, legally available to Gasquet CSD

of selectively terminating service to those occupants who have not met the requirements for service, Gasquet CSD will make service available to the occupants who have met those requirements

If the written first disconnection notice is returned through the mail as undeliverable, Gasquet CSD will make a reasonable, good faith effort to visit the residence and leave a notice of discontinuance for non-payment.

5. Final Disconnection Notice:

Failure to comply with the terms of an alternative payment plan for sixty (60) days or more or failure to pay current residential service charges for sixty (60) days or more will result in the issuance of a final disconnection notice. The final disconnection notice will be in the form of a door hanger delivered to the premises no less than five (5) business days in advance of discontinuance of service,

6. Forty-eight (48) Hour Courtesy Call:

Gasquet CSD will make a reasonable, good faith effort to notify the customer 48 hours in advance of disconnection of water service for non-payment. The means of notification will be by phone. Customer accounts may be designated to receive notification by text message if requested by Customer. The forty-eight (48) hour courtesy call is meant entirely as a courtesy and failure of Gasquet CSD to send the notice or failure by the customer to receive the notice shall not constitute an acceptable reason for non-payment or delay of disconnection.

7. Disconnection Deadline:

All delinquent water service charges and associated fees must be received by Gasquet CSD by 5:00 P.M. on the day specified in the written disconnection notice.

8. Disconnection of Water Service for Non-Payment:

Gasquet CSD will disconnect water service by turning off and in some cases locking off the meter. Before service is disconnected, the customer will be notified by a delinquent notice, a first disconnection notice, a final disconnection notice and a forty-eight (48) hour courtesy call. The customer will be charged a fee to re-establish service in the billing system regardless if whether the meter has physically been turned off. The meter will be locked in the off position if payment is not received within 7 days of initial disconnection.

9. Re-Establishment of Service:

In order to resume or continue service that has been disconnected for non-payment, the customer must pay a \$50.00 re-establishment fee. Gasquet CSD will endeavor to reconnect service as soon as practicable but, at a minimum will restore service before the end of the next regular working day following payment of any past due amount and delinquent fees attributable to the termination of service. Water service that is turned on by any person other than Gasquet CSD personnel or without Gasquet CSD's authorization may be subject to fines or additional charges or fees. Any damages that occur as a result of unauthorized restoration of service are the responsibility of the customer.

10. Re-Establishment if Service After Business Hours:

Service restored after 3:00 PM Monday through Friday, weekends, or holidays will be charged an after-hours re-establishment fee. Service will not be restored after regular business hours unless the customer has been informed of the after-hours re-establishment fee and has signed an agreement acknowledging the fee and agreeing to contact Gasquet CSD's billing department no later than noon the following business day to pay the subject fee. The after-hours re-establishment fee is in addition to the regular re-establishment fee and the late fee for the past due account. Gasquet CSD staff responding to service calls are not permitted to collect payment but will instruct the customer to contact the billing department before noon the following business day,

11. Notification of Disposition of Returned Check:

Upon receipt of a returned check taken as payment of water service or other charges, Gasquet CSD will consider the account not paid. Gasquet CSD will make a reasonable, good faith effort to provide a 48-hour courtesy notice of termination of service due to a returned check. The means of notification will be by phone. Customer accounts may be designated to receive notification by text message if requested by the customer.

Water service will be disconnected if the amount of the returned check and the returned check charge are not paid on or before the date specified in the notice of termination. All amounts paid to redeem a returned check and to pay the returned check must be in cash, money order or certified funds.

12. Returned Checks for Previously Disconnected Services:

In the event a customer tenders a non-negotiable check as payment to restore water service previously disconnected for non-payment and Gasquet CSD restores service,

Gasquet CSD may promptly disconnect service without providing further notice. No 48-hour notice will be given in the case of a non-negotiable check tendered for payment of water charges that were subject to discontinuance.

Any customer issuing a non-negotiable check as payment to restore service turned off for non-payment will be required to pay cash, money order, or certified funds to restore future service disconnections for a period of 12 months from the date of the returned payment.

13. Disputed Bills:

If a customer disputes a bill, an appeal must be in writing and must be filed no later than fifteen (15) days after the delinquency notice has been issued. If a customer disputes the water bill and exercised their right to appeal to Gasquet CSD, water services will not be disconnected for non-payment while appeal is pending. Gasquet CSD can be contacted by phone at (707) 457-3124 to discuss options.