

Strawberry Lodge Mutual Water Shutoff Policy

1. Introduction

This policy describes Strawberry Lodge Mutual Water's administrative actions for the collection of delinquent accounts, fee assignments and discontinuation of service. Strawberry Lodge Mutual Water can be contacted at 909-337-4612 or office@slmwc.org to discuss options for avoiding discontinuation of water service for non-payment.

Strawberry Lodge Mutual Water is a community owned utility. It was formed in 1932 as a non-profit corporation. The system currently serves 136 homes in the community of Strawberry Lodge in Twin Peaks, CA.

This policy has been written in compliance with Senate Bill 998, **the Water Shutoff Protection Act**, Health and Safety Code Sections 116900 *et seq.*, as amended by Senate Bill 3.

1.1 Payment of bills

Bills for water service are sent every other month. The service charge is \$60.00 per month. Bills for water assessments are sent every four months and will be included in every other water bill. The assessment charge is \$300.00 per year. The total charges per year for Strawberry Lodge Mutual Water is \$1020.00. Customers may pay their bill in any of the following ways:

1. Regular billing cycle: Bills alternate between \$120.00 and \$ 220.00
2. Monthly: 85.00 per month
3. Annually: \$1020.00 per year

Payment can be made by check or money order. No cash is accepted. Payment shall be sent to:

Strawberry Lodge Mutual Water
C/O Smith Marion Co.
PO Box 943
Lake Arrowhead, CA. 92352-0943

Payment can also be made via Zelle. Zelle payments shall be made to (909) 824-4902 or office@slmwc.org.

2. Delinquent Accounts

Delinquent accounts are any account that remains unpaid by the 45th day after the issuance of the water bill (the "Delinquency Date"). Unless payment arrangements have been made, an account that is not paid to Strawberry Lodge Mutual Water by the Delinquency Date, it will be considered unpaid and subject to late fees.

2.1 Late Fees

If payment is not received by the Delinquency Date, a late fee will be assessed. The current late fee is 25.00 per billing cycle and that amount is subject to change by the board of directors from time to time.

2.2 Alternative Payment Arrangements

Any customer who cannot make the timely payment of their water bill may request an alternative payment arrangement to avoid late fees and/or disruption of water service. A request for an alternative payment arrangement should be made prior to the Delinquency Date, if possible. The final approval of any alternative payment arrangement will be decided by the board of directors. The board of directors will consider all factors and circumstances when making this determination. The board of directors will structure the repayment terms in one of the three options listed below. These terms shall not exceed 12 months. The terms shall be void if any payment is missed or not paid in full.

1. Amortization of the unpaid balance.
2. Participation in a payment schedule not to exceed 12 months.
3. Temporary deferral of payment.

2.3 Discontinuation of water service

Strawberry Lodge Mutual Water will discontinue water service if any of the following apply:

1. The customer fails to pay its water bill in full within sixty (60) days after the Delinquency Date and no alternative payment arrangement has been requested.
2. The customer fails to comply with the agreed upon payment arrangement for delinquent charges for 60 days or more.
3. The customer fails to pay the regular water service charges while under the terms of an alternative payment arrangement.

Water service will be shutoff no sooner than 7 business days after a final notice including the items set forth below has been posted or otherwise provided to the

customer of the intent to shutoff in a prominent and conspicuous location at the property.

Strawberry Lodge Mutual Water shall not discontinue water service for non-payment for any account that remains unpaid for less than 60 days past the Delinquency Date.

Strawberry Lodge Mutual Water shall not discontinue water service of residents who: (A) provide evidence that discontinuation of water service would be 1) life threatening, or 2) pose a serious threat to the health and safety of a person residing at the property; or (B) demonstrate a financial inability to pay for water service within the normal billing cycle. The resident is deemed “financially unable to pay” if any member of the resident’s household is 1) a current recipient of the following benefits: CalWORKS, CalFresh, general assistance, Medi-Cal, SSI/State Supplementary Payment Program, or California Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children, or 2) the resident declares the household’s annual income is less than 200% of the federal poverty level (see this link for the federal poverty levels applicable in California. In either of those two cases, the resident must be willing to make an alternative payment arrangement with Strawberry Lodge Mutual Water.

Strawberry Lodge Mutual Water shall not discontinue water service while an appeal or dispute is pending.

Strawberry Lodge Mutual Water shall make reasonable, good faith effort to contact the customer in writing or via email at least 15 days before the discontinuation of water service for non-payment. The written discontinuation notice will be sent to the billing address on file. If the mailing address and the physical address are different , a second notice will be posted at the physical address. The written discontinuation notice shall include the following information:

1. Customer’s name
2. Past due amount
3. Date by which the customer must contact the office to make payment arrangements or dispute the bill.
4. A description of the procedure by which the customer may request an alternative payment arrangement.
5. Description of the process to dispute or appeal a bill.
6. A copy of this policy.
7. Office phone number and email address.

2.4. Re-establishment of Service

In order to resume or continue water service that has been discontinued for non-payment, the customer must pay the balance due and all late fees in full. Water service shall be unlocked or turned-on by Strawberry Lodge Mutual Water at a fee determined by the board of directors within a reasonable amount of time but not after-hours. Water service that is turned on by any person not authorized to do so by Strawberry Lodge Mutual Water or without such authorization, may be subject to additional charges or fines or fees. Any damages that occur as the result of unauthorized work or services on the curb stop or meter are the responsibility of the customer.

2.5. Re-establishment of service after business hours

Water service restoration request received after 4:00 pm Monday through Friday or on weekends or holidays shall be charged a fee of \$100.00. This fee is in addition to any late or past due fees.

2.6. Returned checks

Any returned checks are considered non-payment of the account for purposes of determining the time for any potential discontinuation of service. The customer will be contacted by phone or mail to notify them of the returned check. Returned checks will result in a \$25.00 service fee. The customer will have 10 days after the date of written notice of the returned check in which to make payment in full, including the returned check fee.

2.7 Disputed bills

A customer may dispute any water bill on or before the due date by submitting a written explanation of the dispute. The letter must contain the date of the dispute, customer name, property address, mailing address, contact information and the reason for the dispute. The board of directors will review all disputes and will consider payment options as stated above. The customer will receive a written response within 4 weeks.

3. Water Usage

Leaks that are detected or witnessed on the customer's side of the service meter or valve can result in the immediate discontinuation of water service. At the discretion of Strawberry Lodge Mutual Water, if the observed leak will result in significant water loss then the water will be shutoff to the property at any available valve. The homeowner shall be contacted as soon as possible by phone, email or letter. All plumbing repairs must be completed before

water service is restored. Smaller water leaks shall be reported to the homeowner by phone, email or letter. If left unattended or not repaired for more than 72 hours will result in discontinuation of water service.

3.1 Unauthorized use

Water provided by Strawberry Lodge Mutual Water is not intended for commercial or agricultural use. Any customer found to be using water for commercial or agricultural use shall be notified by phone, email or letter. Water service shall be discontinued if the usage cannot be justified by the board of directors. Disconnection of water service for unauthorized use, including under Section 3.2, is not subject to the provisions specified in Section 2 of this policy.

3.2 Illegal connections

All meters and service connections are to be installed by Strawberry Lodge Mutual Water or by contractors at their direction. Illegal or unauthorized service connections create a contamination risk for the entire water system. Consequently, any illegal or unauthorized service connections will be shutoff immediately upon discovery with no notification required.

3.3. Resale

Customers are not authorized to sell or resell the water provided by Strawberry Lodge Mutual Water.