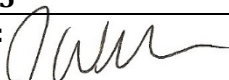


CITY OF SUMNER	
UTILITY CUSTOMER SUPPORT POLICY	
Subject: Covid-19 Utility Billing Customer Support	
Effective Date: September 23, 2021	Page: 1 of 5
	Approved: 

1.0 PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVE

This Utility Billing Customer Support Policy addresses the requirements of the Washington State Governor’s Office Proclamation 20-23.16, dated 07/02/2021.

The objective of this policy is to provide a framework to support customers of the water/sewer/stormwater utility who have been financially impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic.

This framework will provide guidance for:

- Customer notification;
- Customer Support Programs;
- Public information requirements; and
- Statewide Resources

2.0 CUSTOMER NOTIFICATION

Communication between the City and customers remains vital. The City’s goal is to ensure customers maintain access to essential services during the state’s recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic.

2.1.0 Utility Billing Notices:

Beginning in November 2021, the City will resume sending delinquent notices in the form of shut-off notices to inform customers of pending interruption without payment or payment arrangement. Notices will continue to include guidance to utility customer support programs.

2.1.0 City of Sumner Website:

The following will be noticed on the City of Sumner website:

The City of Sumner is committed to keeping our customers connected to essential services during the COVID-19 pandemic emergency. If you are experiencing hardship as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, you may be eligible for support, including long-term payment arrangements or bill assistance. This Customer Support Policy does not relieve customers from the obligation to pay for utility services.

3.0 CUSTOMER SUPPORT PROGRAMS

Beginning with the Governor’s initial proclamation in March 2020, all service terminations and imposition of late penalties were suspended through September 30, 2021. The City of Sumner

will continue to follow all future Governor proclamations. The City of Sumner offers both deferred payment arrangements and referral to outside organizations for assistance with outstanding utility balances for customers financially impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic.

3.1.0 Deferred Payment Due Dates:

A deferred payment due date will be automatically extended to all residential and non-residential customers, under the following guidelines:

- A. The Payment Deferral will grant all customers a two month payment deferral, during which time no late fees or service interruptions would be imposed.
- B. The City will resume imposing late penalties January 1, 2022.
- C. The two month period begins upon expiration of Proclamation 20-23 (September 30, 2021).
- D. The intent of the two month deferral is to allow adequate time for customers to develop a plan to address arrearages.
- E. Customers are encouraged to keep or bring their accounts current during this time.

3.2.0 Extended Payment Plan:

- A. After the expiration of the payment deferral period, customers may request up to a twelve month payment arrangement to spread out the cost of outstanding balances and/or apply to the Financial Support Programs detailed below.
- B. Customers must request a payment plan prior to any service interruption; once service is interrupted, any balance not covered by an existing payment plan must be paid in full to restore service.
- C. During the twelve-month pay arrangement period, customers must also remain current on new billings.
- D. No collection action (late fee, lien, or service interruption) will take place as long as customer is current with both current billings and payments being made under an approved payment plan.
- E. If applicant is a tenant, property owner permission must be obtained prior to approval of a payment plan.
- F. Valid identification for the property owner (if applicant is a tenant) must be presented for the payment arrangement application to be processed. Identification may be presented electronically. Forms of identification that are acceptable are Driver's License, State Issued ID, or passports.
- G. Extended payment plans are limited to one per account.
- H. Non-compliance with extended payment plan. For customers who enter into an approved Extended Payment Plan hereunder, the terms of this policy shall control where otherwise inconsistent with SMC 13.24.350(D)
 - a. Upon timely notification to the customer of a late or missed arrangement installment, the City may, at its discretion, offer a one-time courtesy to allow the

payment plan to continue pending payment of the missed/late installment within fifteen (15) days of late or missed payment.

- b. Upon two missed payment installments, the account will be scheduled for interruption.
- c. Once a service interruption is placed, the account will be assessed a \$40.00 restoration fee and the customer will be required to pay all current charges plus all missed/late payment plan installments to restore service.
- d. The City reserves the right to place a lien on the property for all arrearages incurred during the Covid pandemic upon default of the payment arrangement; for example:
 - i. Unpaid arrearages at the conclusion of the twelve month period;
 - ii. Cessation of installment payments;
 - iii. Tenant vacates property and arrearages remain unpaid at time of new tenant move-in.

3.3.0 Other Resources:

If customers require additional resources beyond a Deferred Payment Arrangement or the Financial Support Program, the City will refer customers to other organizations, including:

- [Pierce County Human Services](#) (provides assistance for utility and rental costs);
- [WA Department of Commerce](#) (provides mortgage assistance to homeowners);
- [Department of Commerce Disaster Cash Assistance Program](#);
- 211 United Way Worldwide
- Local churches;
- Local social or service organizations.



REQUEST FOR EXTENDED PAYMENT ARRANGEMENT

The Deferred Payment Arrangement will grant customers a two month payment deferral, during which time no late fees or service interruptions would be imposed. After the expiration of the payment deferral period, customer may request up to a twelve month extended payment plan to spread out the cost of outstanding balances and/or apply to other customer support programs, in coordination with the City of Sumner.

Utility Account Number:	
Account Holder Name:	
Service Address:	
Property Owner Name (if different)	
Deferral Request Date	
Total Amount Deferred	
Monthly Payment	
First Payment Plan Installment Due Date	
Payment Plan Due Date*	

*All Payment Plan payments should be made at City Hall during business hours or in the City Hall dropbox.

ATTESTATION OF APPLICANT:

- Yes**, I attest that, due to impacts directly caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, I have been financially impacted and am unable to timely pay my outstanding utility balance.
- Yes**, I have been advised of the Covid-19 Financial Support program offered through the local Community Action Agencies.
- Yes**, I understand that by defaulting on this payment plan, my service may be scheduled for interruption, and full payment of any missed/late payments together with a restoration fee may be required to restore any interrupted service.

Under penalty of perjury, We/I declare that we/I have examined this application and policy, and to the best of our/my knowledge and belief, it is true and correct and accurate.

Applicant Signature	_____	Date	_____
Owner Signature <i>if Applicant is tenant</i>	_____	Date	_____
		ID confirmed	_____
Finance Signature	_____	Date	_____