

## Water Fund Policy

### Invoices, Payments, Water Meters, Enforcement, Hardships

#### Water Invoices

1. New residential/commercial customers are not required to place a security deposit in escrow with the Town of Lake Santeetlah unless:
  - A. It is determined that the customer has a history of late payments.
  - B. The new customer is a CORPORATION, LLC, PARTNERSHIP or other form of LEGAL ENNITY.  
The security deposit shall be \$500 per water meter. The security deposit shall be returned to the customer after one year of demonstrated timely payments.
2. All invoices shall include past due and/or credit balances if applicable.
3. All invoices shall clearly indicate a due date. Records of late payments shall be submitted to the Town Council monthly for their review.
4. All invoices shall be mailed or e-mailed quarterly.
5. When known by Town personnel, invoices sent to a property/location being sold or transferred will include a request for a forwarding address.
6. A dispute of invoice(s) by the customer shall include written documentation: i.e. cancelled checks, bank statement, receipts or other form of proof.

#### Payments

1. Payments are due 30 days from the date the invoice is mailed.
2. Payments received 10 days after the due date shall be considered late.
3. The late fee is \$15 per billing cycle per meter.

#### Water Meters

1. Water meters are the property of the Town of Lake Santeetlah.
2. Water meters **should** not be turned off by anyone other than authorize personnel. Exception: **In case of a water leak between the meter and property/location the meter may be turned off to avoid damage to property and/or to avoid excessive water loss. Town Hall must be notified immediately that the water meter has been turned off. The Town Technician will be instructed to place a lock on the meter until the leak is repaired to avoid accidental re-connection prior to the leak being repaired.**
3. **All water customers are encouraged to install water shut off valves between the water meter and their property.** Water meters **should** not to be used as the “home shut off valve”.

#### Enforcement

1. Any customer not making a full payment within a billing quarter shall be sent by certified mail a Notice of Interruption of service.

A Notice of Interruption Service shall include: **“To avoid interruption of water service, you must remit payment in full to The Town of Lake Santeetlah within 30 days of this notice. Interruption of service will require a \$500 Security Deposit and a \$100 re-connection fee before service can be re-established.”**

**If you are unable to make payment in full you may contact Town Hall to request a repayment schedule that will bring your balance up to date within 90 days of this notice. A minimum of 25% of the outstanding balance must be received within 30 days of this notice to qualify for a repayment schedule.**

2. Ten days prior to the interruption of service the Town Technician shall post the following FINAL NOTICE on the property/location: (See Attachment)
3. A reconnection of service performed by the Town Technician outside of normal work hours will require:
  - A. Proof of payment approved by the Town Administrator
  - B. Proof of a security deposit being deposited with the Town Administrator.
  - C. A \$100 cash payment payable to the Town Technician
4. Anyone who attempts to reconnect service without permission of the Town of Lake Santeetlah shall be in violation of applicable State and Local statutes.
5. The Town of Lake Santeetlah shall use all methods authorized by NC State Statutes, and/or local ordinances in the collection of funds to include: Liens, use collection agencies and additional collection fees.

#### **HARDSHIP WAIVER**

1. A customer requesting a hardship waiver from this policy shall submit in writing to the Town of Lake Santeetlah a specific request for a waiver. The waiver request shall be reviewed by the **Town Administrator and Finance Officer** and a decision will be made within 10 days from the date of request and the customer will be notified of the decision. Any waiver granted that results in a reduction of the water fee shall be recorded as a "hardship credit" along with the amount of the reduction.
2. A hardship waiver may be granted for:
  - A major water leak between the meter and the property/location that results in a 300% or greater total water invoice above the average of the property/locations previous invoices during the previous 12-month billing cycle.
  - Other circumstance that in the discretion of the **Town Administrator and Finance Officer** is warranted.
  - **A hardship waiver may only be granted once in a 3-year period.**