City of Austin’s Annual Customer Assistance Program
AFFORDABLE ENERGY SUMMIT
Collections Process & Payment Arrangements
Agenda

• Collections Overview
• Communication to Customers
• Customer Options to Stop Collections
• Other Customer Options
• Weather Moratorium
• CAP/MVR Training Hrs.
• Q&A
Collections Overview

Bill Generation to Disconnect for Non-Pay

- **Bill Generated**: Day 17
- **Bill Due Date**: Day 21
- **Reminder Letter**: Day 31
- **Letter Due Date**: Day 32
- **Eligible for Courtesy Notice**: Day 33 - 35
- **Eligible for Disconnect for Non-Pay**: Day 34 - 36
- **Disconnect for Non-Pay**: Day 36 - 38

- **Day 32**: Eligible for Courtesy Notice
- **Day 33 - 35**: Courtesy Notice Delivered (Door Hanger)
- **Day 34 - 36**: Eligible for Disconnect for Non-Pay
- **Day 36 - 38**: Disconnect for Non-Pay

- **Day 32**: Day 32
- **Day 33 - 35**: Eligible for Disconnect for Non-Pay
- **Day 36 - 38**: Disconnect for Non-Pay

- **Bill Due Date**: Day 21
- **Reminder Letter**: Day 31
- **Letter Due Date**: Day 32
- **Eligible forCourtesy Notice**: Day 33 - 35
- **Eligible for Disconnect for Non-Pay**: Day 34 - 36
- **Disconnect for Non-Pay**: Day 36 - 38
Collections Process for MVR Customers

**Specialized Case Management:**
- Phone calls
- Site visits
- Case Management Action Plan
- Assistance Agency Referrals
- Flexible Payment Arrangements

*In accordance with Medically Vulnerable City Regulation § 15-9-23 MEDICALLY VULNERABLE RESIDENTS*
Communication to Customers

• Late Payment Reminder (Letter)
• Service Disconnection Notice (Letter)
• Cancelled Payment Arrangement (Letter)
• Additional Notice of Service Disconnection (Door Hanger)
• Assistance Door Hanger (Post Disconnection)
Communication to Customers

• Letter triggered approximately 21 days after a bill is generated if no payment is received.

• Internal factors include: previous payment history and amount of debt owed.
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Communication to Customers

- Letter triggered approximately 21 days after a bill is generated if no payment is received.
- Internal factors include: previous payment history and amount of debt owed.
Communication to Customers

- No customer or account specific information
- Courtesy Final Notification
- Typically delivered 2 days before disconnection
- Information about options for customers to make a payment
Communication to Customers

- Started May 2017
- No customer or account specific information
- Information about options for customers to know about possible agency assistance.
- Delivered approximately 14 days after the Disconnect for Non-Payment
Customer Options to Stop Collections

- Payment
- Pledge
- Payment Arrangement
Pledge

- Can be for Partial Balance
- Can be for Full Balance
- Places a “hold” for the Pledge amount only
Payment Arrangement

Under City of Austin’s Payment Arrangement policy, there are 4 different Payment Arrangement options available to customers:

- Good Standing
- Account Watch
- Bonafide
- Subject to Disconnect
PA Ineligibility

There are several instances in which a customer will **NOT** be eligible for a payment arrangement.

- Disconnected for Non-Payment
- Active Tampering Alert
- Budget Billing
- Active Write-Off Process
- Stopped Service Agreements
- Bankruptcy
- Legally Extinguishable Debt
- Returned Payments*

*Returned Payments: to become eligible the account has to have been paid to a zero ($0.00) balance from the date the payment was returned.
## Payment Arrangement (PA)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Good Standing</th>
<th>Account Watch</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Customer has never had a PA, or Account brought current</td>
<td>Customer has had 1 broken PA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Account brought current</td>
<td>Arrearage is under $1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Up to 24 installments</td>
<td>Up to 24 installments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Installment is due as a down payment with next bill</td>
<td>First Installment is due as a down payment with next bill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defaults when current bill is short paid and/or behind 1 installment payment</td>
<td>Defaults when payment for total amount due is not received</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bonafide</th>
<th>Subject to Disconnect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One Bona Fide is allowed when in Account Watch status</td>
<td>Account has had 2 broken PAs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer is only eligible in these conditions:</td>
<td>Arrearage is greater than $1000, and/or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serious illness or injury, Loss of employment or facing deportation, Economic loss, Domestic Violence, or Pledge by an assistance agency</td>
<td>Account is not eligible for a Bona Fide PA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Up to 24 installments</td>
<td>50% of account balance is due within 15 calendar days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Installment is due as a down payment with next bill</td>
<td>Up to 8 installments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defaults when payment for total amount due is not received.</td>
<td>Defaults when down payment or payment for total amount due is not received.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Special Circumstance PA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CAP</th>
<th>MVR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Same Ineligibility Criteria as Residential</td>
<td>Case managed by the MVR group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Installments no greater than $48</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 3 Regular CAP PAs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 1 Bona Fide</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 1 Subject to Disconnect</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Payment Arrangements on the Bill

- Balance is broken up into **monthly installments**
- Installments appear on the bill
- Customer pays monthly usage plus an installment each month
- Customer should pay **Total Amount Due**
- Late fees are **5%** of the current bill for Electric, Water and Wastewater ONLY
Payment Arrangement: Current Standings

Residential Payment Arrangement Debt:
(Approximately)

2016 - $16,400,000
2017 - $11,200,000
2018 - $9,668,514
2019 - $9,159,770
Other Customer Options

Pay Plans
- In order to be eligible, the account must be current
- Full Balance Extension for 15 days
- Late Fees Apply
- If eligible, can be used to prevent Collections
- Will not appear on the bill
## Utility Deposit Policy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Waiver</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enrollment in Auto Pay &amp; E-Bill Programs</td>
<td>• Agrees to enrollment in AutoPay for 12 consecutive months (Customers have up to 90 days after the start date to enroll to receive the waiver)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• If the account is removed from AutoPay within the first 12 months, the deposit will be assessed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• If the customer owes a balance, they can elect to have the balance drafted on the next auto payment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Accounts with a payment arrangement do not qualify</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utility Letter of Reference</td>
<td>• Provided by a metered utility (Electric, Water, Gas)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 12 consecutive months within the last 18 months with no late payments, outstanding balances or disconnects for non-payment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Can be from more than one provider as long as same utility type and totals 12 consecutive months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Can be accepted from a FRAU, if at any point the FRAU is removed within the first 12 months the account will be evaluated for application of the deposit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Customers 65 or older, provide a signed letter from another metered utility confirming no outstanding balance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Utility Deposit Policy

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</table>
| **Landlord Letter of Reference – All Bills Paid** | • Landlord provides a signed copy of the lease for all bills paid, **All Bills Paid Residence**, and our form confirming no late payments in last 12 months and outstanding balance  
• Customers 65 or older, Landlord provides singed copy of the lease for All Bills Paid residence and confirms no outstanding balance |
| **Military Service Member Returning from Deployment** | • A copy of the U.S. Military orders documenting that the deployment dates occurred within the preceding 12 months. (Air Force, Army, Coast Guard, Marines, Navy, National Guard) |
| **Victims of Domestic Abuse** | • Certification letter from Texas Council on Family Violence  
• Letter could be provided by law enforcement, District Attorney, Legal Aid, or Domestic Violence Shelter, or community partner agency |
| **Displaced Tenants Eligible for Tenant Relocation through Neighborhood Housing** | • Identified recipient of tenant relocation assistance  
• Notification from Neighborhood House & Community Development |
| **Medically Indigent** | • Any resident at the service address qualifies as medically indigent  
• Enrolled in CAP  
• Provides a letter from a licensed health care provider confirming that the medically indigent resident is unable to perform 3 or more activities of daily living. |
Weather Moratorium

Per City of Austin’s utility regulation 15-9-109, the City shall place an extreme weather moratorium on disconnecting residential utility service for non-payment:

**Summer Months:**
If the heat index for the current day is **102** or over **AND** is forecasted to be the same for the following day, then a moratorium will be issued for the following day.

**Winter Months:**
(A)If the forecasted low temperature for the following day is or will be below **32** degrees Fahrenheit, or 
(B)If the forecasted low temperature for the following day is or will be **35** degrees Fahrenheit or lower **WITH** a **50%** or more chance of precipitation, then a moratorium will be issued for the following day.

*Information is tracked by the Collections department daily (actual and forecast) Heat Index is tracked each afternoon using the Camp Mabry location*
A) Customer demonstrates serious illness/injury, loss of employment, economic loss or domestic violence. ___ Good Standing

B) Customer has had 1 broken PA and has not brought account current since last PA + Arrearage: $958.36 ___ Account Watch

C) Account has had at least 2 broken PAs and has not been brought current + Arrearage: $1564.51 ___ Bonafide

D) Never had a PA ___ Subject to Disconnect

E) CAP Customer has had 1 CAP PA ___ CAP
Questions?