

# MISSOURI CUSTOMER RESPONSIBILITIES AND RIGHTS

CUSTOMER SERVICE & EMERGENCIES,  
INCLUDING AFTER HOURS EMERGENCIES

1-855-426-4376

CUSTOMER SERVICE EMAIL  
[central.water@libertyutilities.com](mailto:central.water@libertyutilities.com)



## WATER/WASTE WATER



## When can a utility company refuse to provide service to an applicant?

A utility may refuse to commence service to an applicant for any of the following reasons:

1. Failure to pay an undisputed delinquent utility bill for services provided by that utility or by its regulated affiliate. To be considered to be disputed, the unpaid charge must be the subject of an open informal complaint at the Missouri Public Service Commission (PSC).
2. Failure to post a required deposit or guarantee that is being charged according to the utility's tariffs;
3. Refusal or failure to permit inspection, maintenance, replacement or meter reading of utility equipment;
4. Misrepresentation of identity;
5. Violation of any other rules of the utility approved by the Missouri PSC which adversely affects the safety of the customer or other persons or the integrity of the utility's system;
6. As provided by state or federal law;
7. Failure of a previous owner or occupant of the premises to pay a delinquent utility charge where the previous owner or occupant remains an occupant;
8. Failure to comply with the terms of a settlement agreement; or
9. Unauthorized interference or diversion of use of the utility's service by the applicant or by a previous owner or occupant who remains an occupant.

## When can a utility company NOT refuse to provide service to an applicant?

A utility may not refuse to commence service to an applicant for any of the following reasons:

1. Failure to pay for merchandise, appliances or services not subject to Missouri PSC jurisdiction as an integral part of the utility service provided by a utility;
2. Failure to pay the bill of another customer, unless the applicant who is seeking service received substantial benefit and use of the service to that customer, or unless the applicant is the legal guarantor for a delinquent bill. In his instance, the utility has the burden of proof to show that the applicant received substantial benefit and use of the service or that the applicant is the legal guarantor, provided that such burden shall not apply if the applicant refuses to cooperate in providing or obtaining information that he, she or it does or should have regarding to applicant's residence history.

To meet the burden of proof, the utility must have reliable evidence that

- a. the applicant and that customer resided together at the premises where the bill was incurred and during the period the bill was incurred; and
- b. the bill was incurred within the last seven (7) years; and
- c. the utility has attempted to collect the unpaid bill from the customer of record; and
- d. at the time of the request for service, the bill remains unpaid and not in dispute.

## After I call for service, how soon will you turn on my water?

We will commence service at an existing residential service location in accordance with the rules as close as reasonably possible to the day specified by the customer for service to commence, but no later than three (3) business days following the day specified by the customer.

## Is there a charge for turning on the water?



Yes, there is a connection charge. After you apply and are approved for service, we'll schedule a time the following day between 7:30 a.m. and 4:00p.m., Monday through Friday, except for holidays, to turn on your water. These are our normal working hours, and we make

every effort to start your service as soon as possible after your application has been approved. If waiting for your water to be connected would threaten your health or create a hardship for you, you may request that we connect your service as soon as we can, including non-business hours. For non-business hours connection; there is an additional charge.

## Do you require a deposit before you turn on the water?

Yes, we do for new customers. It's an amount that's no more than one-sixth (1/6) the annual water bill. For example, assume the annual residential water bill is \$500. Your deposit would be \$80 ( $\$500 \times 1/6 = \$80$ ).

## Are there times when a cash deposit isn't required for a residential customer?

Yes, there are a few situations when it isn't necessary.

1. If you own or are purchasing your own home where the service is rendered; or

2. If you have been regularly employed on a full-time basis for at least one (1) year; or
3. If you have an adequate regular source of income; or
4. If you can provide adequate credit references from a commercial credit source.

### If I'm required to pay a deposit, do I have to pay all of the deposit before you'll start water service?



No. You can pay your deposit several different ways. Just choose the one that's easiest for you.

1. Pay the full amount when you apply for service; or
2. Pay one-half (1/2) of the deposit at the time of application, with the balance to be included on the first month's bill. Just pay half of the deposit when you apply, and we'll put the remaining half on your first month's water bill; or
3. Pay the entire deposit on the first month's bill.

### Do I ever get my deposit back, and do you pay interest on it?

Yes, if you are a *residential customer*. Your deposit, plus interest, will be automatically credited to your account after twelve (12) months if

1. your account is paid up; and
2. has not been delinquent during a twelve-month (12) period; and
3. none of the checks you wrote to pay your bills during the previous twelve (12) months were returned because of Not Sufficient Funds (NSF), and the delinquency date has elapsed.

And, of course, if you're leaving our system and don't have an unpaid balance on your account, we'll apply your deposit to your final bill and mail the remaining balance to you.

Until your deposit is refunded to you, we'll pay you interest on your money at a rate that is approved by the Public Service Commission.

If you are a *commercial or industrial customer*, your deposit will be refunded only on termination of service.

### If I have water service, do you ever require an additional deposit or bill me a deposit after I have started service?

Sometimes, but only up to the amount of two (2) maximum billings in the last twelve (12) months. And, we'll only require that if

1. we have to discontinue your service because you haven't paid your water bills; or
2. you're late in paying your water bill five (5) times in the past twelve (12) months; or
3. you obtained, diverted or used service without authorization or tampered with utility equipment during the past five (5) years; or
4. you file for bankruptcy; in that case, we may require adequate assurance of payment in the form of a deposit or other security.

### Who approves the rates used in calculating my bill?

All rate schedules are approved by the Missouri Public Service Commission, which regulates Liberty Utilities. Copies of these rate schedules are available.

### If I own more than one house or structure at different locations, will I get more than one bill?

You'll receive bills for each separate structure, because we will meter and bill each one individually.

### How often will I be billed for water service, and how long is my billing period?

You will be billed monthly, and your normal billing period will not be less than twenty-six (26), but not more than thirty-five (35) days.

### How much time do I have to pay my bill?

The due date of bills in a particular cycle is based on when the bills are mailed. You're permitted twenty-one (21) days from the date the bill is mailed in which to make your payment. The Missouri Public Service Commission, the state agency that regulates water companies, establishes the length of those billing periods. Your bill is due upon receipt. The date that your bill is due is clearly identified by the words "DUE DATE". Your payment must be posted to your account on or before the "DUE DATE".

## Is my water payment due on the same day each month?

Probably not. Our meter readers can't read all our customers' meters at the same time each month; so, we send out bills at different times during the month. Since the due date can't be on a holiday or weekend, we extend the date to the next working day. As a result, your due date can change from month to month.

## How do I get my bill?

1. We'll mail your bill to you. You can also request that we send your bill to an address other than the service location.
2. You may also receive your bill over the Internet in an e-mail from us.
3. You can view your bill, account billing and usage history and your payment history on our Website at [www.libertyutilities.com](http://www.libertyutilities.com).

## Am I liable for my bill if I don't get it for some reason?



Yes, you are. Call us as soon as you think your bill has been lost. The failure to receive a bill does not extend the time for payment to avoid a shut-off notice if the account is overdue. Bills are considered delinquent after the due date on the bill. Service can be discontinued after a shut-off notice is issued.

## If I'm going to be away for an extended period, how can I keep from being disconnected?

First, you have two options.

**Option one** is to leave the water on while you are away for an extended period. If you are away during the winter time, you run the risk that something could happen to your heat and your water pipes will freeze and burst. If that is not the case, then you can leave the water on and we will bill you every month as usual. We will be glad to put you on paperless billing, where your bill will be sent to your email address and you can pay in your normal manner. We also provide a draw draft program where your monthly bill is drafted from your account on the due date.

You may also view your account online through our website, [www.libertyutilities.com](http://www.libertyutilities.com) and make payments online.

**Option two** is to have us turn your water off. Then you can "winterize" your home so that there will be no water in your pipes, water heater or toilets to freeze in the winter. You may want to have a plumber do this so that all the water is removed from your pipes. If you choose this option, you will be required to pay a reconnection charge that is described in this pamphlet.

## Is there a charge if my check bounces?

Yes. Because of the extra time and processing involved in returning your check, you'll be charge an additional amount for checks returned to us marked NSF (Not Sufficient Funds).

## Do you ever estimate a bill instead of actually reading the meter?

Yes. Suppose there's been a heavy snowfall and we cannot read your meter, your meter is damaged or we are unable to gain access to read the meter. In those instances and certain others, we will estimate your usage.

The fairest way to estimate your bill is to use your usage for the same period from the previous year, and that's what we do. We then consider any differences in weather and any changes in the type of service you receive.

## What should I do if I think my bill is wrong?

Please call our toll-free customer service number 1-855-426-4376. Our representatives can help you. Here are a few tips to remember if you call us about your bill:

1. State your complaint or problem as clearly as possible.
2. If you have a suggestion for settling the problem, tell that to our customer service representative.
3. If your service is scheduled to be shut off, you should contact us at least twenty-four (24) hours before the shut-off date. We will advise you of the steps necessary to avoid discontinuance of service.

## What if I'm not satisfied after talking to your customer service representative?

You may ask to speak to his or her supervisor. If they are not immediately available, please ask to have them call you.

## What if I think the bill or the proposed solution is still wrong?

Naturally, we hope to be able to solve your problem, and we have skilled employees who regularly handle these matters. But if we can't answer your question to your satisfaction, we will advise you to call or write the Missouri Public Service Commission Consumer Services Department. To avoid discontinuance of service, you must contact the Missouri PSC within five (5) days. The commission's telephone number and address are:

**Toll-free: 1-800-392-4211**  
**Missouri Public Service Commission**  
**Attention: Consumer Services Dept.**  
**PO Box 360**  
**Jefferson City, MO 65102-0360**

## What kind of information appears on my water bill?

Quite a bit. For example, you'll find the following:

1. Your name.
2. The period of service covered by the bill.
3. The beginning and ending meter readings.
4. The quantity of water used in gallons.
5. All itemized charges and credits, such as:
  - a. Charge for water service,
  - b. all taxes,
  - c. customer deposit charges,
  - d. reconnect charges,
  - e. credits due to refunding customer deposits,
  - f. charges for non-utility services.
6. Any prior balance due.
7. The date the bill was mailed.
8. The date the bill becomes past due.
9. The applicable rate schedule.
10. The name, address and telephone number for Liberty Utilities.

## What's the "Franchise Tax"?

Cities and towns – municipalities – in which we operate, are permitted and sometimes do, tax us for the use of alleys, streets and rights-of-ways to run our water lines in order to serve you. We are allowed to pass on to customers who live within the municipality any taxes that are levied by the city.

## Will my bill tell me if my meter was actually read or if my bill was estimated?

Yes. Any time we estimate usage, we clearly state that fact on the front of the bill.

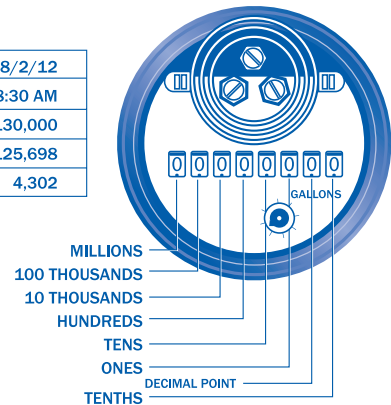
## What can I do if I think my meter is not working properly?

Call us as soon as you notice the problem. We'll visually inspect the meter. Then, if we think it might be defective or if you request that we check it more thoroughly, we'll send it in to be tested. If we find that the meter is reading too low or is accurate, the Missouri Public Service Commission permits us to charge you a nominal fee for the meter test. This fee will be charged only if your meter was tested within the last twelve (12) months. If we discover that your meter is defective and reading too high, we'll make an adjustment on your bill or make a refund to you within a reasonable time.

## May I read my water meter myself to double-check the meter reader?

Yes you can. Monitoring your meter can be an effective way to check for reading accuracy, budgeting your water or finding a leak. Here is a step by step instruction:

DATE	8/2/12
TIME	8:30 AM
CURRENT READ	1,130,000
PREVIOUS READ	1,125,698
CONSUMPTION TOTAL	4,302



1. Record the time and date.
2. Read the meter from left to right. This is your total gallons used. Mark it on your spreadsheet beside "Current Read." (On the first day, record your total gallons next to "baseline read" and stop there. On the second day continue to steps 3 and 4).
3. Fill in your previous read next to "Previous Read". Your previous read is the total, or "current read", from the last time you monitored your meter. Use your "baseline read" for the second day.
4. Subtract your Current Read and Previous Read to determine the total water use. Write this in the Consumption Total area.

## Can Liberty Utilities turn off my water without telling me in advance?

Yes, under certain circumstances. These are:

1. when we think that turning off the water is necessary to correct a situation that poses a health or safety hazard to you or others, to prevent damage to our equipment or to prevent a violation of federal, state or local laws for use of service; or
2. to prevent the unauthorized or fraudulent use or procurement of service or tampering with pipes, meters and other company equipment; or
3. if your sewer company has a contract with Liberty Utilities to do so and you are delinquent on your sewer bill and the sewer company has properly notified you by sending the proper termination notices.

## What does a shut-off notice say?

A shut-off notice contains the following information:

1. Your name and address and the address of the service location.
2. The amount of the delinquent bill and the date the bill became delinquent.
3. The reason(s) for the discontinuation of service.
4. The date on or after which your service will be discontinued.
5. If discontinuance is for nonpayment, you may contact us concerning a Settlement Agreement.
6. A statement that you may contact us about discountenance of your service by calling our toll-free telephone number. You may call us and ask questions concerning the shut-off notice, enter into a Settlement Agreement, pay the bill or make a complaint.
7. The charge for reconnecting service.

## When will I receive a shut-off notice?

If your bill is unpaid as of 4 p.m. on the due date, we'll send you a shut-off notice. This notice is either mailed or hand-delivered. If the shut-off notice is hand-delivered, you'll have ninety-six (96) hours from the date of delivery to pay your past-due bill before the water is turned off. If the shut-off notice is mailed, you'll have ten (10) days from the mailing date to pay your bill before the water turned off. A second shut-off notice will be mailed to or hand-delivered, or we will make at least two attempts to contact you by telephone within this ten-day (10) period to ensure you have received notification twenty-four (24) hours prior to discontinuance of service.

## After sending a shut-off notice, when will you actually turn off the water?

We will shut off water service on the date indicated in the shut-off notice or within thirty (30) business days thereafter between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4 p.m. We will not shut-off water on a day when we do not have personnel available to reconnect your service or on the day before such a date.

## Are there special situations that would delay my water from being turned off?

Yes, there are four (4) situations that delay a shut-off notice if the water bill remains unpaid. They are:

1. A payment plan or Settlement Agreement,
2. a certified medical emergency,
3. special plans for the elderly or handicapped, and
4. multi-dwelling accounts.

## What are "multi-dwelling accounts"?

When a landlord doesn't pay the water bill, we will notify the tenants after we send the landlord a shut-off notice. We will wait ten (10) days from the date the tenants are notified before we shut-off the water at that location. When possible we will offer each tenant the opportunity to apply for the service in his or her own name. If this isn't practical or if the tenant declines to apply for such service, we will turn off the water. Despite the shut-off notice, water service won't be discontinued if the customer pays the delinquent amount. This applies only if the reason for the discontinuation of service was

1. failure to pay a delinquent account,
2. failure to pay an installment under a Settlement Agreement, or
3. failure to post a deposit.

## Will Liberty Utilities reconnect my service after it's been discontinued?

Once the reason for the discontinuance has been resolved, we'll be happy to reconnect service to you upon payment of the reconnect charge and a deposit if one is assessed. We'll schedule the reconnection for a time during our normal business hours unless the discontinuance was our fault. In that case, we'll reconnect service as soon as possible. If the reason for the discontinuance was unlawful or fraudulent use of our service, we will require a reasonable payment of estimated service rendered before we reconnect.

## What is a "certified medical emergency"?

We won't turn off your water for a time not in excess of twenty-one (21) days if you give us a letter from a doctor or completing a form that we will provide to you, stating that shutting off the water would aggravate an existing medical emergency of the customer, a member of your family or other permanent resident of the premises where service is rendered. The letter should identify the individual, indicate the medical emergency, specify the likely effects on the health of the individual from discontinuing water service and the time during which shutting off the water would endanger the individual. Before you are disconnected, the physician may call us and give the appropriate information. Next, the physician must send a letter or complete a form that we will provide and return it to us within fourteen (14) after first contacting us.

### What does "registered elderly" or "disabled customer" mean?

A registered elderly or disabled customer means a customer's household in which at least one (1) member of the household has filed with the utility a form, approved by the utility, showing that he or she

1. is sixty-five (65) years old or older; or
2. is disabled to the extent that he or she has filed with the utility a medical form submitted by a medical physician attesting that the customer's household must have water service provided in the home to maintain life or health; or
3. has a formal award letter issued from the federal government for disability benefits.

In order to retain your status as a registered elderly or disabled customer, you must renew your registration with us annually. You should do this by October 1st of each year following your initial registration.

### Are there special provisions for elderly or disabled customers?

We have a special procedure for a registered elderly or disabled customer who files with us a form approved by the Missouri PSC attesting to the fact that he or she meets certain qualifications. If the customer qualifies for this provision, that person is eligible for the following special notices during November 1 through March 31.

1. When the first shut-off notice is mailed, our local office will attempt to contact you by telephone at least two (2) times.

2. When the first and second shut-off notices are mailed to you, the person or agency listed on your account as third-party notification will also receive the shut-off notices.
3. Prior to discontinuance of service, personal contact will be made at your premises with you or a member of your family over fifteen (15) years of age.

### What's a reconnect charge?



If you terminate your water service and then ask to restart service again at the same location, you must pay a reconnect charge. The reconnect charge is two parts, the first part is a set charge amount and the second part is calculated by multiplying the customer

charge by the months your service has been disconnected. Some areas have tariffs that limit the number of months used in calculating the reconnect charge and others do not. Aside from the other charges outlined in this pamphlet, if your service is discontinued for nonpayment, you will pay a reconnect charge approved by the Missouri PSC.

### How do I stop my water service?



Just call us. We ask that you give us at least two (2) days' notice before you want your water turned off. Until you give us that notice, you're responsible for water service costs to your location.

### What happens if someone steals water from the water company?

In addition to legal remedies available to us, we will require a reasonable payment for estimated service in addition to any damage that might be done to our equipment. The amount of the payment required will be based on the average consumption during the period before you engaged in the unlawful or fraudulent use of our water service or on the consumption of another typical customer with a similar consumption pattern. In addition, we will require a deposit equal to two (2) times the maximum consumption.

## What is the Office of the Public Counsel?



The Office of the Public Counsel is a separate state agency that represents residential customers on all the issues brought before the Missouri PSC. The Office of the Public Counsel's telephone number and address are:

**Toll-free: 1-866-922-2959**  
**Office of the Public Counsel**  
**Governor Office Building, Ste. 650**  
**200 Madison Street**  
**PO Box 2230**  
**Jefferson City, MO 65102-2230**

## Who regulates your water utility and can I take my complaint to them?

The Missouri Public Service Commission (PSC) is the regulator and they provide the customer service rules that are covered in this pamphlet. Yes, you can always talk to the PSC concerning the quality of service, billing problems, payment plans, deposits, rates and charges, termination of your service, high bill complaints and many other things. But first, give us the opportunity to resolve any issue that you may have and to answer any questions. If we have not been able to resolve the issue, you may email, call or write to the Missouri Public Service Commission at the following address:

**Email:** [pscinfo@psc.mo.gov](mailto:pscinfo@psc.mo.gov)  
**Telephone** **Toll-Free:** 1-800-392-4211  
**Mail:** **Missouri Public Service Commission**  
**Governor Office Building**  
**Attn: Consumer Services Unit**  
**200 Madison Street**  
**PO Box 360**  
**Jefferson City, MO 65102-0360**