**WATER SHUT OFF POLICY**

**FOR NON-PAYMENT OF RESIDENTIAL WATER SERVICE**

**1. Purpose and Application**. This policy has been established to comply with the Water Shutoff Protection Act (Health & Safety Code, §§ 116900, et seq.). This policy will be made available on the City of Dorris website at <https://www.dorrisca.us>. The City's utility billing office can be contacted by phone at 530-397-3511 to discuss options for averting termination of residential water service for nonpayment. Customers can also visit City Hall in person during regular business hours. The City will not discontinue water service due to nonpayment on a Saturday, Sunday, legal holiday, or at any time during which the City's office is not open to the public.

**2**. **Notice Requirements.** The City shall not discontinue water service for nonpayment until a customer has been delinquent for at least 60 days. Notice of discontinuation shall be given to the customer named on the account by telephone or written notice at least 7 days prior to discontinuation.

The City shall offer to provide a copy of this policy and shall offer to discuss options to avert discontinuation of residential service for nonpayment, including, but not limited to, alternative payment schedules, deferred payments, minimum payments, procedures for requesting amortization of the unpaid balance, and petition for bill review and appeal.

In addition to an attempt to contact the customer by telephone, the written notice of payment delinquency and impending discontinuation shall be mailed. If the customer's address is not the address of the property to which residential service is provided, the notice also shall be sent to the address of the property, addressed to “Occupant.” The notice shall include all of the following information in a clear and legible format:

a. The customer's name and address.

b. The amount of the delinquency.

c. The date by which payment or arrangement for payment is required in order to avoid discontinuation of residential service, which shall be 60 days from the date the bill became delinquent.

d. A description of the process to apply for an extension of time to pay the delinquent charges.

e. A description of the procedure to petition for bill review and appeal.

f. A description of the procedure by which the customer may request a deferred, reduced, or alternative payment schedule, including an amortization of the delinquent residential service charges.

g. The City's telephone number and a web link to this policy.

**3. Good Faith Noticing Requirements.** If the City is unable to make contact with the customer or an adult occupying the residence by telephone, and written notice is returned through the mail as undeliverable, the City shall post the Notice and a copy of this policy in a conspicuous place on the property.

**4. Investigation And Appeal.** If the customer seeks review of the water bill the customer shall contact the City before the payment due date and the City will investigate. If the investigation does not result in a resolution acceptable to the customer, the customer may appeal to the City Council

by filing a notice of appeal with the City Clerk within seven days. The decision of the City Council shall be the final decision. The City shall not discontinue residential water service while the appeal is pending.

**5. Prohibited Conditions And Alternative Payment Agreement.** The City shall not discontinue residential service for nonpayment if all of the following conditions are met:

a. The customer, or a tenant of the customer, submits to the City the certification of a primary care provider that discontinuation of residential service will be life threatening to, or pose a serious threat to the health and safety of, a resident of the premises where residential service is provided.

b. The customer demonstrates that he or she is financially unable to pay for residential service within the City's normal billing cycle. The customer shall be deemed financially unable to pay for residential service within the City's normal billing cycle if any member of the customer's household is a current recipient of CalWORKs, CalFresh, general assistance, Medi-Cal, Supplemental Security Income/State Supplementary Payment Program, or California Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children, or the customer declares that the household's annual income is less than 200 percent of the federal poverty level.

c. The customer is willing to enter into an amortization agreement, alternative payment schedule, or a plan for deferred or reduced payment with respect to all delinquent charges.

d. If the conditions listed above are met, the City shall offer the customer one or more of the following options:

(1) Amortization of the unpaid balance.

(2) Participation in an alternative payment schedule.

(3) A partial or full reduction of the unpaid balance financed without additional charges to other ratepayers.

(4) Temporary deferral of payment.

The customer must request an amortization, deferred, or reduced alternative payment agreement prior to the disconnection date. Amortization or alternative payment agreements cannot be requested after discontinuation for nonpayment. A request for an amortization or alternative payment agreement can be made in person by visiting City Hall at 307 S Main St, Dorris, CA 96023 during regular hours of Monday to Friday 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. or by submitting a request in writing. The City may choose which of the payment options described above the customer undertakes and may set the parameters of that payment option. Ordinarily, the repayment option offered should result in repayment of any remaining outstanding balance within 12 months. The City may grant a longer repayment period if it finds the longer period is necessary to avoid undue hardship to the customer based on the circumstances of the individual case.

**6. Failure To Meet Optional Payments.** Residential service may be discontinued no sooner than 5 business days after the City posts a final notice of intent to disconnect service in a prominent and conspicuous location at the property under either of the following circumstances:

a. The customer fails to comply with an amortization agreement, an alternative payment schedule, or a deferral or reduction in payment plan for delinquent charges for 60 days or more.

b. While undertaking an amortization agreement, an alternative payment schedule, or a deferral or reduction in payment plan for delinquent charges, the customer does not pay his or her current residential service charges for 60 days or more.

**7. Restoration of Water Service.**

a. The City shall set a reconnection of service fee for reconnection during normal operating hours at fifty dollars ($50), but not to exceed the actual cost of reconnection if it is less. For the reconnection of residential service during nonoperational hours, the City shall set a reconnection of service fee at one hundred fifty dollars ($150), but not to exceed the actual cost of reconnection if it is less. Reconnection fees shall be subject to an annual adjustment for changes in the Consumer Price Index beginning January 1, 2021.

Payment options include:

(1) Full balance

(2) Past-due amount

(3) Severance amount with payment arrangements

(4) Payment arrangement

b. For a residential customer who demonstrates to the City household income below 200 percent of the federal poverty line, the City shall do both of the following:

(1) Set a reconnection of service fee for reconnection during normal operating hours at fifty dollars ($50), but not to exceed the actual cost of reconnection if it is less. For the reconnection of residential service during nonoperational hours, the City shall set a reconnection of service fee at one hundred fifty dollars ($150), but not to exceed the actual cost of reconnection if it is less. Reconnection fees shall be subject to an annual adjustment for changes in the Consumer Price Index beginning January 1, 2021.

(2) Waive interest charges on delinquent bills once every 12 months.

c. The City shall deem a residential customer to have a household income below 200 percent of the federal poverty line if any member of the household is a current recipient of CalWORKs, CalFresh, general assistance, Medi-Cal, Supplemental Security Income/State Supplementary Payment Program, or California Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children, or the customer declares that the household's annual income is less than 200 percent of the federal poverty level.

**8. Services Involving Landlord-Tenant Relationships.** The City shall make every good faith effort to inform the residential occupants, by means of written notice, that service will be terminated at least 10 days prior to the termination. The written notice shall further inform the residential occupants that they have the right to become customers, to whom the service will then be billed, without being required to pay any amount which may be due on the delinquent account.

**9. Notice Regarding Language.** This policy and notices required shall be made available in English, Spanish, Chinese, Tagalog, Vietnamese, Korean, and any other language spoken by ten percent or more of the customers in the City's service area.

**10. Discontinuation for Other Violations.** The City reserves the right to discontinue water service for any violations of City ordinances, rules, regulations other than nonpayment.