

**CITY OF SULTAN  
SULTAN, WASHINGTON  
RESOLUTION 20-10**

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**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF  
SULTAN ADOPTING A POLICY FOR UTILITY BILLING  
DURING A PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY AND/OR  
PANDEMIC.**

WHEREAS, On January 21, 2020, Washington's State Department of Health (WDOH) confirmed the first case of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) in the United States in Snohomish County, Washington, and local health departments and the WDOH have since that time worked to identify, contact, and test people in Washington who have been potentially exposed to COVID-19 in coordination with the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC); and

WHEREAS, On January 31, 2020, US Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Azar declared a public health emergency for COVID-19, beginning on January 27, 2020; and

WHEREAS, On February 29, 2020, Governor Inslee proclaimed a statewide State of Emergency and

WHEREAS, On March 13, 2020 The President of the United States declared a National Emergency; and,

WHEREAS, On March 16, 2020, Mayor Wiita declared through Resolution 20-08 that a State of Emergency exists within the City of Sultan; and,

WHEREAS, the City Council of the City of Sultan deems it beneficial for the City to have written and adopted policies; and

NOW, THEREFORE, be it resolved by the City Council of the City of Sultan as follows:

Section 1. The attached policy regarding "*Public Health Emergency and/or Pandemic Utility Billing Policy*" is incorporated herein by this reference as if set forth in full is hereby adopted as an official policy for the City.

Passed by majority vote of the Sultan City Council in open meeting this 26<sup>th</sup> day of March 2020.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor Russell Wiita

Attest:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Tami Pevey, City Clerk



**TITLE:** Public Health Emergency and/or Pandemic Utility Billing Policy

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** March 23, 2020

**APPROVED BY:** Russell Wiita, Mayor

**ATTORNEY REVIEW:** Hillary Evans Graber, City Attorney

**REVISION DATE:** N/A

**STAFF CONTACT:** Utility Billing Clerk

**PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this policy is to allow for suspending past due/pending disconnection penalties and postponement of disconnection of water, sewer, garbage and recycling during a declared emergency related to an outbreak or pandemic illness or other Public Health Emergency.

**SCOPE:**

This policy applies to all City of Sultan utility customers.

**DEFINITIONS:**

“Public Health Emergency” means an occurrence or imminent threat of an illness or health condition, caused by bio terrorism, epidemic or pandemic, or a novel and highly fatal infectious agent or biological toxin, that poses a substantial risk of a significant number of human fatalities or incidents or permanent or long-term disability.

“Pandemic” means a disease that is prevalent over a region, country, or the world.

**POLICY:**

It is the policy of the City of Sultan to take all appropriate measures needed to address a Public Health Emergency. Protecting the community and City staff is a top priority and this policy establishes actions that the City will take during a Public Health Emergency related to City of Sultan utility bills including water, sewer, garbage, recycling, and storm drainage.

During a declared Public Health Emergency, and upon written notification by the Mayor and confirmation by City Council, it is the policy of the City of Sultan to postpone all disconnections to water service for the duration of the Public Health Emergency. It is also the policy of the City of Sultan to suspend past-due penalties (also known as “Late Fees”, “Disconnection Notice Fees” and “Reconnection Fees”) for the duration of the declared Public Health Emergency.

This policy does not suspend regular monthly utility charges for water, sewer, garbage, recycling, and storm drainage utilities.

**PROCEDURE:**

The following procedures are established to allow for citizens to continue receiving water, sewer, recycling, garbage and storm drainage utility service, without penalty, during a declared Public Health Emergency.

**Notification**

- A. The Utility Billing department will be notified when a Public Health Emergency is declared related to public health.
- B. The Utility Billing department will notify customers who are in arrears for more than 30 days to a maximum of 60 days (past due and/or scheduled for disconnection) of the policy including an explanation that all past due amounts are still owed, and that additional penalties will be suspended and disconnections will be postponed for the duration of the declared Public Health Emergency.
- C. The City Administrator will prepare a report 60 days following the declared Public Health Emergency to update the Mayor and City Council.
- D. The Utility Billing department will notify customers in arrears by phone and those outstanding by 45 days in writing of payment arrangement options once the Public Health Emergency has been lifted.

**Reporting**

- A. Utility Billing will track, by way of reports, utility accounts that go into arrears during the duration of the declared Public Health Emergency and submit the reports to Administration on a regular basis throughout the declared Public Health Emergency.

**Post-Emergency Procedure**

- A. After the Declaration of Emergency has been lifted, and upon written notification from the Mayor and confirmation by council, Utility Billing will notify customers in arrears by phone and in writing to those with past due amounts over 45 days, of their account balances, date of potential disconnection and payment arrangement options. Payment arrangement options will be reviewed by the Finance Director on a case-by-case basis with the goal to work with customers to make payments within the next 12 months to bring their account current. As long as a customer is following the payment plan, they established with the City, their services will not be disconnected.
- B. Regular penalty and disconnection timelines, as outlined in Sultan Municipal Code Section 13.04.080 "Payment of Bill-Enforcement" will be re-established the first day of the month following the Declaration of Emergency being lifted.