

# **Pend Oreille Public Utility District Water Service, Rates and Credit Policy**



*Effective January 1, 2023*

## **What is a Public Utility District?**

Public Utility Districts were initiated in the 1930s by the granges to electrify rural areas. The law reads, “The purpose of this act is to authorize the establishment of public utility districts to conserve the water and power resources of the State of Washington for the benefit of the people thereof and to supply public utility service, including water and electricity, for all uses.”

Public Utility District No. 1 of Pend Oreille County (the “District”) is governed by a three-member Board of Commissioners, elected in staggered six-year terms from three districts within the county, which sets policy and appoints a General Manager who is the Chief Executive Officer of the District.

As a new customer, please take time to familiarize yourself with the information contained in this booklet.

## **Application for Service**

Customers may apply for service at the District’s offices located in Newport or at Box Canyon Dam. Applications may be also found on the District’s website at [www.popud.org](http://www.popud.org). Completed applications can be returned by mail, email, fax, or in person. Water accounts for Community Water Systems must be in the name of the current property owner. In Metaline Falls, the property owner or occupant may apply for service.

Each prospective customer requesting a new account or changes to an existing account for water service shall furnish the District, upon request, any pertinent information relating to name; corporate or partnership information if applicable; proof of identity; service address; mailing address; lease, ownership agreement, or other proof of right to occupy the property.

As part of the District’s Identity Theft Prevention program that is required by law and approved by the Board, the District uses Social Security Numbers (SSN) to validate the identity of Customers who open Accounts. Customer SSNs are maintained in a secure environment. Customers wishing to use other government- issued identification are welcome to apply for service in person at the District’s offices.

When an application for service is received for a location where water service has been disconnected between occupants, the property owner or owner’s authorized agent will be asked to approve connection of water service for the applicant in order to ensure that it is safe to do so. Service will not be started if the owner or owner’s authorized agent does not grant approval to connect water service. The District may require the owner or owner’s authorized agent to provide proof of ownership or proof of authority to act in this regard.

The District requires customers to make payment arrangements covering any unpaid balances from previous account(s) as a precondition to establishing a new account. If the payment arrangement is not honored, or if the current account becomes past due, the full balance of the inactive account will be due immediately.

Where two or more persons join in one written or oral application or contract for water service, such person(s) shall be jointly and severally liable and shall be billed by means of a single periodic bill mailed to the primary applicant.

Whether or not the utility obtained a joint application, where two or more persons are living in the same residence and benefit from the water service provided by the District, they shall be jointly and severally liable for the bill for water service supplied and may be provided with account information, such as balance, payment activity, etc. proof of residency is required.

In the event a person or business (account holder, co-applicant, spouse, domestic partner, roommate) is occupying or residing at a premise receiving water service from the District, that person or business is presumed to have used the

water service and is considered a customer of the District. Such person or business will be equally responsible for payment of the bills for water service accumulated during the period of residence. It is the customer's responsibility to notify the District when they have moved from the premise and are no longer using water service at that location.

## **Security Deposit**

A security deposit may be required of all customers. The deposit amount is based upon prior credit history and usage and is determined at the discretion of the District. If the account is kept in good standing for a minimum period of one year, the security deposit will be credited to the account. Interest will not be paid on security deposits. At the discretion of the District, should an established account's credit become unsatisfactory, a security deposit will be required.

If a deposit is required due to an unsatisfactory credit assessment, a customer has the right to disclosure of their credit report due to the fact that adverse action was taken because of the contents of their credit report. The fact that adverse action, in the form of a deposit or denial of service, has been taken entitles the customer to a copy of their credit report free of charge by writing to the applicable credit bureau within 60 days from the date the adverse action was taken and requesting a copy.

## **Privacy Waiver**

As required by the Federal Privacy Act, the District does not disclose customer account information without customer consent.

When the account is a rental property, it makes it difficult, and often expensive, for landlords, in the event that the District must disconnect water service.

If the landlord wishes to have an account established in the tenant's name, the landlord shall be responsible until the tenant has applied for, and has made, the necessary arrangements for service. Until the foregoing is complied with, the account will remain in the landlord's name, and the landlord shall be responsible for the service.

The landlord and tenant may elect to sign a Privacy Waiver, Release and Consent Form and provide a copy of the signed form to the District. With a Privacy Waiver, Release and Consent Form on file, the District will be able to contact the landlord regarding the tenant's water account.

## **Sub-Division Agreements**

The Agreements signed by the developers of each District water system, with the exception of Metaline Falls, (The Community Water Systems) established a covenant with the developer and attach to every lot or portion thereof from that date forward. Therefore, the covenants and obligations therein stay with the land and apply to each and every future lot owner(s). The Agreements provide for monthly water service billings, regardless of whether or not the customer takes physical delivery of any water, and stipulate that unpaid customer balances are to be recorded as liens on the property. Boundary Line, Lot Line, Segregation, Aggregation or Subdivision Replat approved by the Pend Oreille County Community Development Department Process does NOT relieve or reduce the first and paramount liens held by the PUD and recorded against each of the prior existing lots in the water system. The PUD reserves the right to enforce the liens against the property regardless of any change approved by Pend Oreille County.

A "Non-Metered Account" refers to customers who do not have a water meter installed and do not take physical delivery of water. If a non-metered lot is sold, then a meter shall be installed at the expense of the new lot owner.

## Billing

It is the policy of the District to collect on water accounts in a timely fashion to keep the water system operating in a fiscally sound manner. Bills will be processed on the last business day of each month. Bills are sent by first class mail from St. Louis, Missouri, or via email upon customer request, are due and payable upon receipt, and considered delinquent after the 20th day of each month. On the 25<sup>th</sup> day, a Late Fee will be assessed on all accounts with a missed payment or past due balance.

## Multiple Lots for Community Water Systems

Customers in Community Water Systems who have multiple lots may choose to combine the usage for billing purposes. Each lot will still be charged the Base Fee for the minimum gallon charge, regardless of whether the lots have meters installed, and the minimum gallons will be combined.

## How to Pay Your Utility Bill

- Pay Online using SmartHub, the PUD's free online account management system.
  - Register at <http://popud.smarthub.coop> or download the SmartHub app on your mobile device.
  - To register you will need the last name on the account, the account number and an email address.
- Enroll in Auto Pay for an automatic withdrawal from your checking account or credit card; enroll through your SmartHub account.
- Pay Online using the Quick Pay option at <https://popud.smarthub.coop/PayNow.html>. No registration needed.
- Pay by Phone by calling 1-855-875-7209, available 24 hours a day.
- Mail payment to P.O. Box 190 Newport, WA 99156.
- Pay in person at 130 N. Washington Avenue Newport, WA 99156, open daily Monday–Friday 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. or at Box Canyon Visitor Center at 7492 Hwy 31 Lone, WA 99139, a payment kiosk is available 24 hours a day.

Forms of payment accepted: Cash\*, Check, Money Orders, Visa or MasterCard

\*Cash is defined as currency, coin, money orders or cashier's checks. The District will report cash payments of \$10,000 or more to the Internal Revenue Service by filing IRS Form 8300.

## Energy Assistance

### Neighbors in Need Grants

The District offers Neighbors in Need grants residential to customers who are having financial hardship and need emergency energy assistance based on the following criteria:

- Water service must be in the name of Applicant and be the primary residence of the Applicant.
- The water service must be eligible for disconnection due to non-payment.
- Total household combined income from all sources, shall be 150% or less of the Federally Established Poverty Guidelines for the prior calendar year.
- Applicant must pay a co-pay to bring the account balance current or a minimum of \$50 to show good faith in accepting the grant.
- Applicant must submit a completed and signed application to the District along with necessary income verification documentation for approval.

Qualifying applicants will receive a maximum of a \$250 grant or the total amount owed (prior to co-pay), whichever is less. Grants are applied to customers' accounts in the form of a credit. Grants will NOT cover reconnect fees, collection fees or deposit.

Neighbors in Need Grants are awarded a maximum of one time per household every two years.

## **Collection Events**

A bill that is unpaid 20 days after billing is considered past due. At that time, the District may begin collection and/or termination of service procedures as follows:

1. A Reminder Notice will be issued to the customer.
2. If any portion of the bill is unpaid 20 days after billing, a Late Fee may be assessed.
3. If satisfactory arrangements for payment are not made, a Disconnection of Service Notice occurs. The notice states the customer has 3 days to pay the full amount due or make and keep satisfactory payment arrangements. The Disconnection Notice, which includes the address and phone number where arrangements for payment can be made or disputes resolved, is printed in the message block on the customer's monthly billing statement
4. Service will be discontinued at the approximate date stated in the disconnection of service notice if satisfactory credit arrangements are not made. Disconnects are normally made between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.
5. Accounts, for all water systems except Metaline Falls, will continue to be billed the monthly minimum after disconnection. The District reserves the right to take foreclosure action on any account which becomes delinquent.

In order to service your account or to collect any amounts you may owe, we may contact you by telephone at any telephone number associated with your account, including wireless telephone numbers, which could result in charges to you. We may also contact you by sending text messages or emails, using any email address you provide us. Methods of contact may include using pre-recorded or artificial voice messages and/or the use of automatic dialing device, as applicable.

## **Collections of Unpaid Closed Accounts**

Unpaid closed accounts and unpaid miscellaneous accounts are referred to an agency for collection. In accordance with RCW 19.16.500, agency fees are payable by the customer. The District may provide customer account information to the collection agency for purposes of collecting past-due amounts.

## **Disconnection, Reconnection and Transfer of Water Service**

The District requires a minimum of 24 hour notice for all reconnects, disconnects and/or transfers of service. Reconnection and disconnection of service is processed Monday through Friday between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. All fees must be paid before service is reconnected.

If service is disconnected, a service Reconnection Fee will be charged for reconnecting service to this customer or a new customer taking over the service.

When a Customer's meter has been removed or water is shut off at a premises for nonpayment of water charges, or for any lawful or proper cause, it shall be against District regulations for such customer to again connect such premises with

water until all past due payments have been paid, including a reconnect charge, and other cause or causes corrected to the satisfaction of the District.

Temporary service disconnection of less than 30 days for purposes such as repair of customer's water system will be performed as a courtesy.

## **Foreclosure and Legal Action**

1. In those systems in which the District has liens and foreclosure rights, the District may foreclose.
2. In the event action is taken by the District to foreclose or collect any delinquency in payment, venue shall rest in Pend Oreille County, Washington, and the applicant(s) agree(s) to pay, in addition to all amounts found due, interest thereon at the highest rate permitted by law from the date of such delinquency, a reasonable sum as attorney fees, plus costs of any such action.

## **System Operation**

The District reserves the right at any time, after following its current notification procedures, to shut off the water supply for repairs, extensions, nonpayment of bills, or any other reason; and the District shall not be responsible or liable for any damage resulting from interruption of water supply.

Any customer who connects to the water service without authorization by the District, will be responsible for paying the full amount of the service as determined by the District due to the meter tampering, alteration, or replacement. Meter tampering charges, as determined by the District, will be added to the estimated billing for unauthorized service to cover the expense of District equipment restoration.

By signing the application for service, the applicant (customer) agrees to indemnify and hold harmless the District from all claims directly or indirectly arising out of the customer's service installation.

The District must have access to all meters. The customer will allow and facilitate access to meters by District personnel and agrees to locate all meters in accessible locations.

## **Dispute Resolution**

Customers having question about or disputing the application of these policies and/or District billings may request an informal conference with a District Representative by calling the District's Customer Service Manager. The informal conference may be conducted by telephone or in person at the Customer's request.

## Administrative Charges

1. Returned Payments	\$25.00
2. Late Fee Charged each month on missed payments and past-due balances owing that are greater than or equal to \$5.00	The greater of 1.5% or \$5.00 per month
3. Field Service Fee	\$80.00
4. Field Collection Fee Charged when District personnel are required to make a special trip to collect funds in lieu of disconnect	\$80.00
5. Reconnection of Service With the exception of Metaline Falls Water System, the Reconnect Fee will be waived if reconnect is scheduled during normal system maintenance	\$200.00
6. Past Due Reconnection	\$200.00
7. Meter Tampering / Water Diversion Fee	\$500.00
8. Inspection fee (for new water hook-up)	\$50.00
9. System Connection Fee	\$2,500.00
10. Line Extension Fees	Contact office to determine amount

## Construction Water Use Agreement

All construction water tank trucks (road cleaning, dust control, compaction, hydroseeding, etc.) shall only be filled from the designated connection located by the District's main office. All tanks or vessels shall have approved cross connection control, preferably an approved air gap. Cross connection control must be approved by PUD Water personnel. All Contractor vehicles must be inspected, or show PUD permit based on an earlier inspection, prior to any filling. On-site construction water will only be allowed under special arrangement with PUD management. Refer to the 'Water Policy, Cost of Service'. The unauthorized use of water will result in the following penalties;

- (a) First offense will result in a written warning
- (b) Second offense will result in \$500 fine and notification to Pend Oreille County Sheriff department regarding theft of water
- (c) Outstanding fines will prevent final water system approval and acceptance (new construction)

## Cross Connection Inspection Form

### Vehicle Permit:

I, \_\_\_\_\_, as representative for:  
Printed name of signer

\_\_\_\_\_  
name of company

\_\_\_\_\_  
company billing address

\_\_\_\_\_  
company office address

\_\_\_\_\_  
City, State Zip Code

(\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_  
phone number

have received from Pend Oreille cross connection inspection approval for the following vehicle;

\_\_\_\_\_  
Vehicle Make Model License Number

A signed copy of this permit shall be kept in the inspected vehicle at all times, to be made available to Pend Oreille County PUD personnel upon request.

## Construction Water Use Charges

- |                              |                               |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Tank Truck inspection fee | \$80.00                       |
| 2. Water Use Fee             | \$77.00 plus<br>\$50 per load |



## EXHIBIT A WATER RATES

### Metaline Falls

*Residential:* Single-family dwellings, condominiums and apartment units that are metered individually.

<u>Base Rate</u>	<u>Minimal Gallons</u>	<u>\$0.50 per 1,000</u>	<u>\$4.00 per 1,000</u>
\$80.00	10,000	Next 5,000	Over 15,000

*Multi-family:* Apartments, condominiums, townhouses, manufactured home parks or any multi-family facility that is not separated metered for each living unit.

<u>Meter Size</u>	<u>Base Rate</u>	<u>Minimal Gallons</u>	<u>Unit Charge</u>
5/8" - 3/4"	\$ 80.00	3,500	\$0.0055 per gallon
1"	\$135.00	5,900	\$0.0055 per gallon
2"	\$185.00	8,200	\$0.0055 per gallon
4"	\$365.00	16,100	\$0.0055 per gallon
6"	\$630.00	27,800	\$0.0055 per gallon

*Non-residential:* Service to customers served through a water meter that is not a residential or multi-family service.

<u>Base Rate</u>	<u>Minimal Gallons</u>	<u>Unit Charge</u>
\$80.00	3,500	\$0.0055 per gallon

*Industrial: manufacturing and processing facilities. All charges negotiated by contract.*

### Community Water Systems

<u>Water System</u>	<u>Base Rate</u>	<u>Minimal Gallons</u>	<u>\$0.50 per 1,000</u>	<u>\$4.00 per 1,000</u>	<u>\$8.00 per 1,000</u>
Sandy Shores	\$50.00	10,000	Next 5,000	Over 15,000	
Riverbend	\$100.00	10,000	Next 5,000	Next 15,000	Over 30,000
Green Ridge	\$88.00	10,000	Next 5,000	Over 15,000	
River View	\$75.00	10,000	Next 5,000	Over 15,000	
Sunvale	\$60.00	10,000	Next 5,000	Over 15,000	
Lazy Acres	\$59.00	10,000	Next 5,000	Over 15,000	
Holiday Shores	\$60.00	10,000	Next 5,000	Over 15,000	
Granite/Sacheen	\$89.00	10,000	Next 5,000	Over 15,000	