

## WATER RULE 17

### DISPUTED BILL APPEAL PROCESS

- A. Customers who believe their utility bill is in error must first contact the Customer Service Division by telephone, in writing, or in person within five days after receiving their bill and initiate a complaint or request an investigation concerning the bill.

Utility Services will not be discontinued for nonpayment of a disputed bill pending the outcome of a timely requested investigation. The Utility may require that an amount equal to an average bill for a comparable period of time be deposited with the Utility pending outcome of the investigation. Failure to make the deposit as and when due shall constitute abandonment of the complaint or request for investigation. Subsequent utility bills, which are not disputed, must be paid to the Utility within the time allowed to avoid discontinuance of service.

- B. If, after contact with the Customer Service Division, the Customer believes the bill is still incorrect, the Customer must, within ten days after receiving the explanation from the Customer Service Division, contact the Customer Service Manager, Collections Supervisor, or Customer Service Supervisor by phone or send a written statement regarding the billing dispute to the Customer Service Manager, 3460 Orange Street, Riverside, CA 92501.

- C. A Review Manager will be designated to conduct an investigation of the Customer's billing dispute. The Review Manager will be the Customer Service Manager, or Customer Service Supervisor, and the investigation may involve other staff at a higher level in the organization. The investigation will include consideration of whether the Customer may amortize the unpaid balance over a reasonable period of time, not to exceed twelve months, but usually over a shorter time period.

- D. Any Customer, whose complaint or request for investigation regarding a bill for utility service results in an adverse determination by the Review Manager, may appeal such determination, after receiving the explanation from the Review Manager, by sending a written statement within 10 days of mailing the explanation setting forth the reasons why the Customer believes the investigation is incorrect. The Customer must send this statement to the Assistant General Manager, Finance of Public Utilities, 3901 Orange Street, Riverside, CA 92501.

Upon timely receipt of the written statement, the Assistant General Manager, Finance of Public Utilities or his/her representative will determine if the Review Manager's investigation was thorough and

complete, addressing the aspects of the billing dispute. The results of this determination will be communicated to the Customer in writing.

- E. If the billing dispute is not satisfactorily resolved with the Assistant General Manager, Finance of Public Utilities or his/her representative, the Customer may request a review by the Public Utilities Director by sending a written statement within five days of mailing the Assistant General Manager, Finance determination to: Public Utilities Director, 3901 Orange Street, Riverside, CA 92501. Upon timely receipt of this written statement, the Public Utilities Director will make his determination and communicate said determination to the Customer in writing.
- F. If the Customer is not satisfied with the findings of the Public Utilities Director, the Customer may appeal to the Board of Public Utilities. The appeal must be submitted in writing to the Public Utilities Director, Secretary of the Board of Public Utilities, together with the reasons for the dispute within ten days following mailing of the Public Utilities Director's determination. In the absence of a timely filed appeal, the Director's determination shall be final. Upon receipt of a timely appeal, the matter will be reviewed by the Board of Public Utilities within 45 days of receipt. A written decision of the Board of Public Utilities shall be delivered to the Customer by personal delivery or certified mail within fifteen days following the appeal hearing. The decision of the Board of Public Utilities is subject to appeal to the City Council pursuant to Section 10010 of the Public Utilities Code.