



# BREWER WATER DEPARTMENT

223 Green Point Road  
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## **YOUR RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES AS A BWD CUSTOMER**

### **KEEP THIS INFORMATION FOR FUTURE REFERENCE**

This information sheet was prepared according to standards set by the Maine Public Utilities Commission (MPUC). It describes our billing procedures, the minimum standards we must follow for service, and how to file a complaint, if you are not satisfied.

Throughout this information, the terms “we” or “us” refer to the Brewer Water Department; the term “you” refers to the customer. The “MPUC” refers to the Maine Public Utilities Commission.

Our office hours are 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Monday-Friday (excluding holidays). Our service truck is available 7:45 a.m. - 3:45 p.m. Monday-Friday (excluding holidays). Limited emergency service is provided for nights, weekends, and holidays at the discretion of the Department and at customer expense.

### **APPLICATION FOR SERVICE**

Applying for Service: You must apply for service in writing before we accept you as a customer. You must apply as soon as you are responsible for the service, and provide all necessary information. We charge a service establishment fee of \$20.00, payable at time of application, each time you sign for service. We charge a fee of \$40.00 when it is necessary to visit the premise to connect and turn the water on. Service may be disconnected if you fail to complete the application process.

In signing for the service, you agree to abide by the Department’s terms and conditions. You are also responsible for notifying us to terminate water service and for providing complete information for a final bill. In multi-unit buildings, tenants are allowed to sign for service only if there is a separate outside shut-off for each unit.

Scheduling: We require a minimum two business-day notice to turn on a service or set a water meter, unless the service has been disconnected for non-payment. We require a minimum 2 business-day notice to discontinue service; termination of service may involve removal of the meter. We can bill you for service until you give the required notice or until we disconnect, whichever is first. These services are available during our business hours, and someone must be on the premises when we turn the water on or remove the meter.

Old Unpaid Bills: When you apply for service, we will check to see if you have had service with us before. If you have an unpaid bill, we will ask you to pay it or to sign a payment agreement. We can require you to pay bills that are up to six (6) years old. We cannot ask you to pay anyone else’s bill--only those bills in your name or bills which the court has said you are responsible for. If you dispute the old bill or you are unable to agree with us about a reasonable payment plan, see the “Complaints” section of this handout.

Non Discrimination: No matter what country you are from, what sex or race you are, whether you are married or single, young or old, we will either agree to provide the service you ask for or deny it within (1) business day after you ask for the service. If we deny service, we will send you the reasons in writing and tell you what you can do about it.

## **BILLING**

Meter Reading: The Department reads the meters on a quarterly basis in February, May, August, and November.

Billing: The Department bills on a quarterly basis, March 1, June 1, September 1, and December 1. The first water bill that you receive is what we call a Minimum in Advance. This first bill represents the first step of our rate structure. Depending on the date that you request water service for your property, this bill represents the remaining time left in the existing billing quarter. All water bills after this initial minimum in advance shall represent actual water used, except for the first 900 cubic feet of water; this is always billed in advance. If you should have the water disconnected or taken out of your name for any reason, this minimum in advance (900 cubic feet) will be subtracted from your final water bill.

Water Consumption: Water bills are based on water consumption, measured by a water meter in your basement or utility closet. Most locations are equipped with meters which can be read from the outside of the building. At locations without remote-read meters, meter readers will need access to your property every three months (about two weeks prior to billing) to read the meter. If you are not at home, the meter reader will leave a pre-paid postcard which you must return with a meter reading. The postcard is generally left in the front door; postcards cannot be left in the mail box due to post office regulations.

Water Charges: Most residential locations are equipped with a 5/8 inch meter. Currently, the minimum quarterly charge for this size meter is \$79.43. Under the minimum charge you are allowed up to 900 cubic feet, for consumption over 900 cubic feet the charge is \$4.02 per 100 cubic ft. One hundred cubic feet of water is approximately 748 gallons.

Meter Tests: We test meters periodically to make sure they are operating correctly. The MPUC approves the schedule of meter tests and the accuracy standards. If you want your meter tested for accuracy, we will do so at no cost to you, and you may witness the test during business hours, if you tell us when we remove the meter. If you ask more often than once every 18 months, we will charge you a fee of (\$50.00 based on meter size 5/8" to 1 1/2", larger meters will need to be tested at Bangor Water District at their current charge). The fee will be refunded if the meter is inaccurate. You can check the accuracy of your bill and monitor your own usage by reading the meter yourself. Ask the meter reader how to do so.

Estimated Bills: We will try to send you a bill based on actual usage. If we cannot obtain a reading because your meter is not accessible, or the remote is not functioning, we will leave a postcard and send a minimum bill. If you call in your reading or send us the postcard promptly, we will issue a bill based on actual usage.

Make-Up Bills: If we have to issue a make-up bill for past service that you were not billed for, we will offer you a payment plan. If the reason for the make-up bill is our fault (equipment failure or billing error, for example) you will be billed for only one (1) year of the past service even if the billing mistake was for a longer time.

Past Usage: If you ask for it, we will provide a record of your usage going back a maximum of 13 months.

Third Party Notice: Let us know if you want another person to get a copy of any bill or disconnection notice we send you. We will send a copy to the person you designate, but you are still responsible for payment. This service may be especially important for our elderly or disabled customers.

Water Questions: If you have any questions about the cost of water service or other services, you can call us at 989-4214. Our rates must be approved by the MPUC and we cannot change these rates without approval of the MPUC. You have the right to review and comment on proposed rate changes before the MPUC rules.



Tenant: If you are a tenant and the landlord asks us to disconnect, or if your landlord does not pay the bills, we will issue you a tenant notice and give you the opportunity to put the service in your name. You do not have to pay the landlord's unpaid bill.

Reconnection/Non-Payment: We must reconnect service again promptly provided you have paid your overdue bill or have agreed to a payment plan. We must reconnect during the same business day you settle your account, or the next business day at the latest. If our serviceman calls at your premises to collect an overdue payment, we will charge you a \$30.00 collection fee. If your water service is disconnected for non-payment, we will charge you a \$50.00 reconnection fee during business hours, 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday thru Friday, and a \$110.00 fee for a reconnection during nonbusiness hours.

We can also require a deposit equal to two quarter's service if you are disconnected for non-payment, unauthorized use, or theft of service. When both a deposit and the unpaid bill are required, you may pay the smaller amount in full and enter a payment agreement on the larger amount.

Serious Medical Conditions: Disconnection can be postponed for up to thirty (30) days if the Brewer Water Department is notified that you or an occupant of your household has a serious medical condition. Within 3 days of this notification, a registered physician or physician's agent must certify the existence of this medical condition, and that it would be seriously aggravated by the lack of water service. Initial certification may be by phone, a physician must certify the emergency in writing within seven (7) days. During this medical emergency period we will work with you to make a payment arrangement.

## **COMPLAINTS**

If you have questions or complaints, call us. We have employees available during business hours to answer you questions, set up payment agreements, and resolve disputes. We will investigate your complaint and try to resolve it. If you disagree with our answer, you have the right to appeal to the Consumer Assistance and Safety Division of the MPUC, State House Station 18, Augusta, Me. 04333-0018 or call 207-287-3831 or 1-800-452-4699. Before you write or call the Commission, you must give us a chance to respond to your complaint. We cannot disconnect you for a disputed amount, but you do have to pay that portion of the bill that is not disputed. If you contact us before the disconnection date, and we cannot agree on a payment plan or other requirements to stop disconnection, you can appeal to the MPUC as described above.

Water Rates: (effective September 1, 2021)

\$79.43 quarterly minimum (5/8" meter) based on 900 cubic feet, after the 900 the charge is \$4.02 per 100 thru the next 14,100 cubic feet.

Sewer Rates: (effective July 1, 2022)

\$102.70 quarterly minimum based on 1000 cubic feet  
\$10.27 per 100 cubic feet

Sewer rates are set by the Brewer City Council, and are not controlled by the Brewer Water Department or the Maine Public Utilities Commission. Direct sewer questions to 989-7502

Minimum Combined Quarterly bill: \$182.13

We are an equal opportunity employer and service provider.