



Customer Service Standards of Practice

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Customer Service Standards of Practice

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SECTION ONE –Customer Rights and Responsibilities

a) Office and Service hours

Standard

The JWSC shall publish and conspicuously post the hours of operation for regular business hours and shall make the customer aware of the method of contacting the JWSC after business hours for emergencies.

Practice Guidelines

The JWSC and all of its customer service related employees should maintain availability between the hours of 8:00am and 5:00pm, Monday through Friday, where possible. In the event of a holiday during which the offices may be closed, the JWSC shall publish notice or post notice at the office no less than five business days prior to the holiday.

Field Operations:

Wastewater Collection 7:00am - 3:30pm 912-261-7151

Water Distribution 7:00am - 3:30pm 912-261-7159

Water Production 7:00am - 3:30pm 912-717-1005 (On-Call Technician)

After Hours Emergencies: AnswerNet 912-634-0258

b) Accommodating Special Customer Needs

Standard

Every reasonable effort shall be made by the JWSC to assist in the communication with and accommodation of special needs customers.

Practice Guidelines

The JWSC shall seek to provide the means necessary to assist in providing quality service to customers whom hearing or sight impaired, non-English speaking, those possessing mobility impairments, or any other special needs that make contact with the JWSC difficult.

Medical Alert Program

We currently do not have a Medical Alert Program. No special accommodations are made to exempt any particular customers from late fees or the cutoff process based on medical needs.

Customer Payment Assistance Program

Standard

In addition to opportunities made available by community partners the JWSC will contract with a local agency to provide management of assistance funds voluntarily donated by ratepayers.

Practice Guidelines

Customers will be directed to communicate with the administrator of the customer assistance program for approval and disbursement of funds.

c) Conflict Resolution

Standard

In an effort to expedite customer conflict fairly, we have established an escalation process to transition disputes from the customer service team to the management team.

Practice Guidelines

Conflict identification may come in the form of a verbal request, an email, online, or a letter. In any case, efforts will be made to gather as much information possible to resolve the conflict upon first contact. There will be an expectation that all fact-finding will be completed as thoroughly as possible before escalating to the next level.

d) Safeguarding Confidential Information

Standard

The JWSC will take precautionary steps in order to protect confidential information given by the customer allowing for minimal risk and safeguarding our customer information at all times.

Practice Guidelines

The JWSC gathers, stores, retrieves and analyzes a wide range of data. Ready access to this data is essential for exceptional customer service. As the list of laws enacted to safeguard personal information is growing, several of these allow for civil penalties against individuals and/or companies found to be in violation of safeguarding customer's information.

The JWSC limits access to personal information to those employees responsible or otherwise involved in opening or restoring accounts, accepting payments, or billing. All access to customer accounts is to be password protected and limited to authorized JWSC personnel. Personal Identifying Information includes but is not limited to:

- Credit Card Information
- Debit Card Information
- Bank Account Information
- Drivers' License Information
- Social Security Number
- Mother's Birth Name
- Date of Birth

Here are some ways to help protect confidential information:

- On the telephone, be mindful of who can hear you. If you cannot speak directly to the person you need, leave a generic message.
- Keep your fax machine in a safe location. Check the fax machine at the end of the day to retrieve and deliver all material containing confidential information.
- Remain at the copy machine if confidential information is being copied. Check before leaving to make sure you have all documents.
- Safeguard your computer password.
- Lock your workstation (password protect) when you are away.
- Don't throw sensitive information in the trash. Shred it!
- When the office is unattended, lock away files containing protected information.
- Always confirm the identity of your caller.
- Report any suspicious or inconsistent information provided by the customer.

Care should be taken on the telephone to verify that you are speaking to the account holder. Each account will contain personal identification information, such as the last four digits of the account holder's social security number, date of birth, or driver's license number. Only after verification can you release any information or make any changes to the account.

The Executive Director or his designee has the responsibility of oversight and training. Any request or demand for personal identifying information should be immediately forwarded to the Executive Director or his designee. Any unauthorized access to or other breach of customer accounts is to be reported immediately to the Director of Administration and the password immediately changed.

More records retention details can be found in Appendix C.

SECTION TWO- Managing Accounts

a) Identification of Service Availability

Standard

The JWSC will seek to provide service to all citizens where available.

Practice Guideline

The JWSC staff will identify the availability of service in the billing system. If not present, will advise the applicant to communicate with Planning and Construction Division staff to determine availability and cost to connect.

b) Establishing Services

Standard

All citizens within the JWSC infrastructure that can prove ownership of property are able to establish services, where available.

Practice Guidelines

Customers that want to establish services with us must fill out the proper “start service form” associated with the type of account they desire (types of accounts listed below). Start service forms can be submitted via e-mail, fax, mail, or in person at our local office.

Red Flag Compliance Rules

As per the “Red Flag Rule” statutes enforced by the Federal Trade Commission, customers seeking to start new service must have their background checked through the Online Utility Exchange system. The Online Utility Exchange is a background review service that is used to verify identity, reveal outstanding bills, and help us determine a deposit amount.

Red Flags

A customer can be “red flagged” for many reasons. If a customer is red flagged, the customer service representative must verify their social security number (SSN) before services are started.

The most common include:

- Deceased – A red flag is shown stating that a customer has a SSN of a deceased citizen.
- SSN matched to different name – Customers may use nicknames, middle names, or shortened names when they apply for service.
- Pin required – Customers that have put extra security on their credit may require a pin to view their credit report. Bypass this by verifying their SSN.

Recovery of Balances Sent to Collection

The JWSC has a responsibility to current ratepayers to recover debts previously sent to collections by customers wanting to establish another service. If a customer comes in to sign up for service and a balance has been previously sent to our contracted collection agency, follow these guidelines:

- The CSR will determine if the customer had a balance or had defaulted on a payment plan that resulted in the debt being sent to collections.
- If the customer had defaulted on payments or payment plans, the full balance will need to be paid before a new application for service will be accepted.
- If the customer had not previously been on a payment plan, a 12 month plan can be established. The highest deposit rate will be paid along with the required down payment on the payment plan.
- If any payments have been made, we will require the customer to bring in a statement from the collection agency indicating the balance due.

In both cases, the balance will be pulled from the collection agency and the JWSC will be responsible for paying the collection agency their commission fee for their efforts.

Services Established at Vacant Account Address

Standard

Customers are able to start services at an address that has been previously vacant.

Practice Guidelines

Applications to start or transfer service to an address that was previously vacant must be reviewed by a representative before services are established to determine if the vacant account has been flagged for usage or the meter has been pulled.

No flags or fees on vacant account

If there has been no usage or service orders on the vacant account, the new application can be processed as normal.

Usage flag or fees on vacant account

If the vacant account has been noted to have usage or a service order that has been created, the customer service rep must check the applicants lease/closing agreement date and the utility bill date to determine if the new applicant was responsible for the usage or fees associated with the vacant account.

If the new applicant is found to have been responsible for the property during the time of usage or generated service order they will be responsible for back billed water usage or fees generated from service orders.

If the new applicant is found to have not been responsible for the property during the time of usage or generated service order the application can be processed as normal.

Types of Account

Residential Accounts

Residential accounts are the most frequently utilized accounts in the utilities' day-to-day operations. They are defined as an account for a customer who uses water and/or sewer services for domestic and/or irrigation purposes. When a customer is requesting service for a residential account, Customer Service must be aware of the following items.

Master Metered Account

If this account is servicing more than one residential unit, the account must be in the name of the property owner.

Irrigation Meters

If a property has a domestic meter and a separate irrigation meter, the customer must sign up for both meters. A separate deposit and connection fee is required for each meter.

Unbilled Consumption on a Vacant Account

The CSR will seek to determine the beginning of the customer's tenancy date from an unaltered lease or rent receipt. Concessions related to the unbilled consumption may be authorized by the Customer Service Manager, if the loss can be defended as belonging to a previous tenant.

Payment History

Does the customer have a derogatory payment history with the JWSC? The deposit may be increased up to 250% of the base deposit if there is a negative payment history or if a prior account has gone to our contracted collection agency.

Commercial Accounts

A Commercial Account defined as an account utilized for non-residential purposes. Commercial accounts require special attention in a number of areas. Customer Service will open the accounts once the following items are or have been identified and satisfied.

- Is there a change of use at this property? Was this a bookstore that is now being remodeled to become a restaurant? An R.E.U. (Residential Equivalent Unit, or REU) evaluation will be completed by the Service Review Specialist in the Planning & Construction Division. This is necessary to ensure that no capacity issues exist in the service area that may prohibit occupancy.
- Deposit Requirements - Minimum of \$150 per REU.

- Irrigation Meter - If a property has a meter for indoor use and a separate irrigation meter, the customer must be signed up for both meters. A separate deposit and connection fee is required for an irrigation meter.
- A backflow preventer may be required to be installed by the determination of the Planning & Construction Division staff or the Backflow Compliance Coordinator.
- Grease Trap Inspection may be required.
- Interceptor System for lint or amalgams may be required.

Landlord Accounts

Landlord accounts are used to provide uninterrupted service to an address when there is no tenant occupying the property or a tenant vacates the property. They are defined as a property owner/manager who wishes to be responsible for water and/or sewer service when the property is vacant. When a customer is requesting service for a landlord account, they must be aware of the following items. Property owner must complete a “Landlord Application” and satisfy all proper documentation.

Master Account

The account will be identified as a “Landlord Account”. A landlord account assures there will be no interruption of services between occupied and vacant gaps. When a tenant transfers or disconnects service the account will be automatically transferred to the landlord account holders name without the need to pay a deposit or connection fee. When a tenant starts service, the account will be automatically transferred into their name without the need for a disconnection request or deposit refund.

Deposit and Fees

A one-time deposit plus a connection fee will be needed to satisfy each account, based on the terms of the approved Rate Resolution; we allow only one account per property. The deposit will be retained on file for the duration of the landlord agreement.

Blanket Deposit

A blanket deposit is available for property owners wishing to establish a landlord account for a minimum of 5 properties or more. The application must include an initial listing of properties for which financial responsibility is assumed. The blanket deposit will remain on the predetermined account for the landlord. Additions or deletions of properties will be processed by the JWSC upon receipt of a completed and signed “Managed Property Form”.

5 – 10 Properties	\$750.00
11 – 20 Properties	\$1500.00
21 – 50 Properties	\$3500.00

51 or more Properties

\$5000.00

Tenant Responsibility

The tenant must sign up for service when they take occupancy of the unit. The tenant must close their account when they move out in order to transfer service back into the landlord account holder's name.

If a landlord disputes the charges based on their belief that a tenant has used the service without setting up an account in their own name, the landlord is responsible for the usage and must communicate with the tenant regarding account setup and settlement of charges.

It is the landlord's responsibility to ensure that the tenant has opened or closed an account at the appropriate time.

Multi-Residential Accounts

Accounts that are paid by one owner but provide services to multiple addresses/units. Residence receive their services through rent paid to the owner. Multi-residential accounts must stay in the name of the owner.

Vacant Accounts

An account that is Vacant is defined as not having a customer of record for the specified service address. When a customer sells their home and closes their account, the account will go into a vacant status. Regular monthly readings will be taken to ensure that there is no significant consumption on a vacant account. Water will be turned off and locked at the meter when the service address goes into vacant status.

Disconnected Accounts

An account that is disconnected has had services provided by the utility at one point in the past, but no longer is supplied services. An example is when a customer installs an irrigation well and has their irrigation meter pulled. A Disconnected account has been deactivated in the billing system and can no longer be billed or re-opened. A new physical connect must be built in the billing system should the property owner request and pay for services at the location.

Customer Deposits

Residential deposits will be paid according to the terms of the currently adopted Rate Resolution. Non-residential deposits will be calculated following REU evaluation.

A higher deposit will be required on any new account with an unsatisfied balance in collections that has been sent within the last two years.

Refunding of Deposits

Deposits will be credited to the account if the balance is paid as agreed for a period of 36 continuous months.

c) Transfer of Services

Standard

Customers are able to transfer service from one service address to another service address if needed.

Practice Guidelines

Customers wanting to transfer services with the JWSC must file a “Transfer service” form. Transfer service forms can be submitted via e-mail, fax, mail, or in person at our local office. Only customers responsible for the account or the sponsor of the account holder can transfer the services of an account to another address.

d) Ending Services

Standard

Customers are able to end their services with us at any time.

Practice Guideline

Customers wanting to end services with the JWSC must file a “stop service” form. Stop service forms can be submitted via e-mail, fax, mail, or in person at our local office. Only customers responsible for the account or the sponsor of the account holder can end the services of an account.

Exceptions:

Account Holder Deceased

If an account holder has been pronounced deceased while having an open account, a death certificate or power of attorney will be needed to close the account or switch account(s) into a family member’s name.

Account holder Incarcerated

Parties wishing to close the account of a customer that is incarcerated are able to do so if the party brings in proof of incarceration and a valid state issued ID of the informant.

Deposit refunds are only issued to the account holder and sent to the billing address on file.

JWSC Right to End Service

The JWSC reserves the right to close accounts in order to protect ratepayer interest and reduce potential debt to the organization, upon proper investigation. (No usage on accounts, anonymous tips, etc.)

e) Connection Scheduling

Standard

Customers wishing to establish a connection are given time windows.

Practice Guidelines

Connection Request - Customers requesting to schedule service to be connected have a choice of three different time windows for their convenience.

Window 1 – 8:00 AM – 11:00 AM

Window 2 – 11:00 AM – 2:00 PM

Window 3 – 2:00 PM – 5:00 PM

Customer service will direct Utility Services as to which window to place customers in.

Any customer that signs up for service during a current window hour will be moved to the next window period. (For Example, customers that sign up for service between the hours of 8:00 AM to 11:00 AM would be moved to the next window, which would be “Window 2” where the work order will be completed.) Any customer that comes in to establish service between the hours of 2:00 PM to 5:00 PM will have a work order scheduled for “Window 1”.

After Hours Connection Request – Customers that come in to establish service between the hours of 2:00 PM – 5:00 PM wishing to have the service order generated for the same day must pay an after-hours fee, as per the adopted Rate Resolution.

Early/Late Arrival – If we will arrive to the customer’s house to establish service earlier or later than the service window, the service tech will contact the customer and notify them accordingly.

f) Billing of Accounts

Standard

All customers will be billed every 30-calendar days with allowances made for holidays and staffing needs.

Practice Guidelines

Particular processes regarding the monthly billing of customers can be found in the related document, *Billing Standards of Practice*.

SECTION THREE – Account Maintenance

a) Customer Contact

Standard

Each customer shall be treated fairly, equitably and with courtesy. Any request made by a customer shall be promptly and appropriately addressed, according to the standards within this manual and any related sections with the appropriate City of Brunswick or Glynn County ordinance.

Practice Guidelines

Customers are able to maintain their accounts through customer service representatives via phone or in the office. Requests and work orders will be handled in the most effective and time efficient way possible.

First Call Resolution

The JWSC shall make every effort to handle each contact with a customer on the first attempt, involving as few employees as possible. All customer service personnel will be required to have proficiency and understanding in the navigation and content of the utility billing software and operating procedures of the JWSC in order to resolve a customer's inquiry. Examples of typical first call resolutions are:

FAX OR EMAIL

The JWSC shall make every effort to retrieve and respond to each customer contact within two (2) hours.

Shared Voice Mail Boxes

The JWSC will retrieve and respond to all calls within two (2) hours.

Individual Voice Mail Boxes

The JWSC will retrieve and respond to all calls within four (4) hours.

A planned period of time out of the office of eight (8) hours or longer will require that the greeting on the individual's voice mail box be changed to reflect that the party is out and extension where urgent calls are to be routed. Email should be set up to send an automatic response that the individual is out of the office, expected date of return, and who to contact for assistance.

In the case of an unplanned absence of eight (8) hours or more the System Administrator will either have the voice mail box checked or forward the calls to another staff member. Email may also be monitored for urgent messages.

Note: A record of all passwords is to be maintained by the System Administrator. Employees receiving voice mail, FAX, or email on JWSC property shall have no expectation of privacy.

FOLLOW-UPON CALLBACKS

If a customer's request requires follow-up, the following criteria must be met:

Work Orders

1. Acknowledge receipt of inquiry.
2. Respond to all inquiries within twenty-four (24) hours of completion of work order or next work day.

Request for historical data, retrieval of copies, or research of electronic or hard copy files

1. Acknowledge receipt of inquiry.
2. Electronically available data respond within two (2) working days.
3. Written or hard copy data respond within three (3) working days.

Replies from the JWSC to a written appeal

1. Acknowledge receipt within three (3) working days.
2. Respond within seven (7) working days after acknowledgement.

Request by a customer with a written damage claim

1. Notify the customer that the JWSC has received the claim within three (3) working days.
2. Forward information to the Liability & Claims Manager
3. Notify the customer of the outcome of the internal review or referral to insurance company within seven (7) working days.

CUSTOMER CALL ROUTING

Standard

The JWSC staff will make every effort to connect customers with the correct individual or team that can satisfy the request appropriately.

Practice Guidelines

Whenever possible calls received will be answered by an available representative will be announced and transferred to the appropriate party when required, or a call returned within 24 business hours when a voicemail has been left.

CALL HANDLING TECHNIQUES

Standard

All employees responsible for handling telephone calls shall be courteous and professional at all times.

Practice Guidelines

Customers shall be identified initially in order to discuss specific account details, customer shall be referred to last name unless otherwise directed, and seek to personalize the conversation where appropriate.

Identification

The customer service representative charged with customer communication must give his or her name to the customer, whether communication is in person or by telephone. The representative must have immediate access to the most current detailed information available concerning the customer's account and previous contact with the JWSC and shall be properly qualified and instructed in the screening and prompt handling of requests and complaints. Once a customer is identified, the representative is required to address the customer by their last name, unless instructed to do otherwise.

First-call Resolution

The customer service representative shall be empowered to make decisions pertinent to the proper operation of the JWSC, as outlined in this manual, except in those cases requiring specific authority for the sake of accountability. Examples where the Customer Service Representative may use judgment in dealing with customers are: verifying personal identifying information on disconnects, adjustment of late fees, billing of connect fees on transfers and emergency dispatch.

Announcing Call Transfers

If satisfying the customer is beyond the capability of the customer service representative and the call must be transferred within the phone network, the customer shall be advised to hold while the appropriate representative is contacted. The person to whom the call is to be transferred to shall be given any available information necessary to handle the customer's request without further delay, if possible. The receiving representative shall then advise if they are willing to accept the call, at which time the sending representative shall bring the customer in from the call hold and announce the name of the receiving representative.

Call Transfers to Voicemail

If the intended recipient of a call transfer is unavailable, the customer service representative must break the hold with the customer and ask if they are willing to leave a message on the receiving representative's voicemail. If so, transfer the call to voicemail. If not, follow normal procedures by following up with appropriate staff and responding to the customer.

Dumping Calls

Every transferred phone call within the telephone network shall be announced as outlined above. Blindly transferring calls to another representative within the JWSC shall be considered misconduct and may result in personnel action.

Callbacks

Intentionally disregarding a customer's request for a return call shall be considered misconduct and may result in personnel action. All such requests shall be handled as per section: Customer Contact.

Voicemail

As outlined in the Customer Contact section, all associates must update the default voicemail message when out of the office during regular business hours. The message must include the following information in order:

1. Employee Name
2. Date and Time expected to be back in office.
3. Alternate contact person
4. Emergency contact number

Non-business dialogue is prohibited on all JWSC voice mail messages.

Telephone Etiquette

1. All incoming calls should be answered timely.
2. Return calls promptly that have been left on voice mail.
3. Smile when you answer the phone. Callers can hear the smile in your voice.
4. All calls should be answered with a phrase like, "Good morning, Joint Water & Sewer, _ _ _ _ speaking. How may I assist you?"
5. Always have something available to write on and take notes.
6. Practice good LISTENING skills.
7. Speak clearly and slowly when you answer. Do not mumble. Speak with confidence.
8. Never, never eat, drink or chew gum while on a call.
9. Never interrupt the caller while they are speaking.
10. Never be rude to a caller, no matter how nasty they are. Respond in a calm, cool manner.
11. Try to never put a caller on hold, but if you have to, be sure to check back with them frequently to let them know that they have not been forgotten.
12. Remain enthusiastic and respectful.

13. If there is a problem, be concerned, empathetic, and apologetic.

14. Thank the caller for calling.

b) Changes to Customer Information

Standard

Customers are able to change their personal information with the JWSC when needed.

Practice Guidelines

Customers wishing to change any personal information must submit the change in writing only.

c) Payment Processing

SOURCES

Standard

Customers will have the ability to make payments in convenient and time effective ways.

Practice Guidelines

Customers are able to make payments in person in the office, through the office drop box, through mail, via pay-by-phone service, or via our online system.

COUNTERFEIT MONEY

Standard

The JWSC will take full legal action against customers using counterfeit currency.

Practice Guidelines

Counterfeit money is imitation currency that is produced without the legal sanction of the government. Counterfeiting money is a crime in the US and should be taken seriously. All customers are innocent until proven guilty.

Received Counterfeit Currency

When a customer service representative receives a counterfeit bill they are to call police immediately (use the non-emergency number 912-267-5559). The customer service representative should withhold the currency. Discretely let the customer know that they have given currency that is believed to be counterfeit and they need to withhold it (remember some customers may not know the bill is counterfeit and are innocent until proven guilty). When police arrive, surrender the believed counterfeit currency and cooperate with the investigation in any way possible, investigators may need date, time,

any information on the suspect if they have left the vicinity, and access to security cameras.

Processed Counterfeit Currency

When a customer service representative receives currency believed to be counterfeit that has already been processed in the system, they are to call police immediately (use the non-emergency number 912-267-5559). The customer service representative should withhold the currency. Do not removed the funds from the account at this time. Funds are only removed when a customer is found guilty of using counterfeit currency. When police arrive surrender the believed counterfeit currency and cooperate with the investigation in any way possible, investigators may need date, time, any information on the suspect if they have left the vicinity, and access to security cameras.

Guidelines

- Do not put yourself in danger.
- Do not return the currency to the customer.
- Observe the customers description, account info, name, and write that information down.
- Contact local police department (non-emergency 912-267-5559).
- Do not handle the counterfeit currency. Place it inside a protective cover, plastic bag or envelope until police arrive.
- Surrender the note to police upon arrival.

There is no financial remuneration for the return of the counterfeit bill to the customer, but it is doing the "right thing" to help combat counterfeiting.

RESTRICTING PAYMENT METHODS

Standard

The JWSC reserves the right to restrict account payment methods to minimize debt loss.

Practice Guidelines

Accounts that are put on restricted payment methods must make payments in the office with US currency, money order or cashier's check online.

Cash only restrictions are placed on accounts for a 12-month period. After the 12-month period, upon request the accounts receivable and customer service departments will review the account and determine whether they will lift the cash only restriction or not.

MISAPPLIED PAYMENT

Standard

The JWSC will take all necessary steps to ensure payments are not misapplied.

Practice Guidelines

A misapplied payment is defined as a payment made to the JWSC, but by customer or representative error, is applied to the wrong customer account or not applied to an account at all. The JWSC has a responsibility to perform proper research in order to correct a misapplied payment and minimize customer debt.

If a customer or representative suspects that a payment has been misapplied:

- Review the receipt of the transaction if possible
- Check payments made with the believed representative for the dollar amount and date of payment if the information is available
- Check all payment batches, online payments, and deleted payments for the dollar amount and date of payment if the information is available
- Check the surveillance camera footage of the believed date to confirm a payment was made and to which representative

If the JWSC staff finds a payment was misapplied but has no information that leads to correctly applying the payment, it will be placed in the general revenue account by the billing team until information is presented with the corrected payment details.

CASH OVER AND SHORT GUIDELINES

Standard

Employees who handle cash are expected to be careful and accurate and to settle their funds each day without overages or shortages. We recognize the possibility that differences may occur from time-to-time, and we have developed the following guidelines.

Practice Guidelines

The following are within tolerable error levels: (dollar amounts stated in absolute value)

- Less than \$25 accumulative error per month
- No more than 3 occurrences of over/short of \leq \$10.00
- No single occurrence of \$20.00 or more

Cash Settlement & Balancing Out

Customer Service Representatives will settle their payment postings to customer accounts on a daily basis at the appointed change over time. Accuracy in accepting payments and handling cash is critical in order to successfully balance their drawer each day.

Guideline

- Run your settlement report for your credit card terminal. It will give a total of your credit/debit card transactions.
- Add your payment receipts by payment type (cash, check, credit /debit) and review them for accuracy.
- Run your settlement report for your payment receipts. Your credit card settlement report should match the amount on your settlement report for your payment receipts. Your checks should match your settlement report and the cash on your settlement report should match what you have in your drawer, which does not include the \$200.00 your drawer started with.
- Provided all your payment types are all entered correctly, finalize all your payments in your batch and print off a copy of your payments report and a deposit report and in place all your payment receipts, check, and cash (minus your beginning \$200.00) into the locking deposit bag. Lock the bag and place it in the vault drawer inside the main vault. This will be verified for accuracy and deposited into the bank by Accounts Receivable.

Cash Overages/Shortages

For Cash Payments

- Verify work performed so far.
- Re-add all figures on your reconciliation sheet using an adding machine.
- Verify all transactions are coded to the correct tender.
- Re-count money, making sure that no bills or checks are stuck under the cash drawer, all denominations are together, and no bills are commingled in the wrong slot (i.e., \$10 bill in \$1 slot, etc.).
- Check the office area (trashcans, behind the counter, the floor area around the drawer) to see if a check or cash was dropped or misplaced.
- If any other employees were using the drawer, ask them if they had any over/under rings, or unusual transactions that could have resulted in the discrepancy.

If any unauthorized office employees may have had access to the receipts, check with them to see if they used the receipts in any way.

NOTE: If this is the case, the matter should be discussed with your supervisor immediately so that this situation does not re-occur.

- If the shortage still has not been reconciled, follow specific written and communicated office procedures that were established for reporting and recording shortages and overages.

NOTE: These procedures should include at least the following:

- Notify your supervisor immediately upon substantiating the shortage.
- The supervisor should follow the steps above.
- Follow the specific office procedures for recording and reporting the discrepancy. For overages or shortages, refer to the list below.
- If over \$10.00 but less than \$100.00 Notify Customer Service Supervisor and;
- If over \$100.00 but less than \$250.00 Notify the Director of Administration and;
- If over \$250.00, Notify the Executive Director.
- Error frequency and/or severity beyond the above limits may be subject to corrective and/or disciplinary action pursuant to Section 7.4 of the JWSC Human Resources Standards of Practice.
- Shortages or overages must be officially documented and recorded in the departmental accounting records.
- Customer Service Representatives volume of transactions and accuracy will be taken into consideration on employee performance evaluations.

NSF Guidelines

Standard

NSF, also called nonsufficient funds, indicates that a demand for payment cannot be processed or satisfied due to insufficient funds available in the account/credit line being drawn upon.

Practice Guidelines

Accounts that make NSF payments will be charged a fee and possibly have their account restricted.

First Time NSF

Accounts that receive a NSF alert will be charged a NSF fee, as per the adopted Rate Resolution.

Reoccurring NSF

Accounts that receive a second NSF alert will be charged the NSF fee, as per the adopted Rate Resolution, and have their accounts restricted to cash only payments. (Cash only payments must be paid in the office with US currency, money order, or cashier's check only.)

Restored Service NSF Payments

First Time NSF

Payments that are used to restore delinquent service that are NSF'd for the first time will be charged the NSF fee, as per the adopted Rate Resolution, If service was restored prior to the NSF'd payment(s), service will be disconnected again without being charged an additional cut off fee, as per the adopted Rate Resolution.

Reoccurring NSF

Payments that are used to restore delinquent service that are NSF'd for a second or reoccurring time will be charged the NSF fee, as per the adopted Rate Resolution, and restricted to cash only payments (cash only payments must be paid in the office with US currency, money order, or cashier's check only). If services were restored prior to the NSF'd payment(s), the service will be disconnected again with a second cut off fee applied, as per the adopted Rate Resolution.

d) Adjustment Processing

Standard

The JWSC reserves the right to adjust accounts accordingly within a timely manner.

Practice Guidelines

Adjustments will be made if needed because of leaks, billing errors, meter errors, or a removal of a charge.

Leak Requests

Upon receipts of a "leak adjustment packet" the management team will place the account on exempt in order to review the account. Account reviews take 30-90 days at which point an approval or denial letter will be sent out with details of the review and remaining balance. The customer has 10 days from the receipt of the letter to resolve the issue before disconnection may be enforced. (See Workflow Map)

Billing Errors

Back billing process

Customers are responsible for establishing services before services are used. If services are found to have been used while a customer is in possession of the property without establishing services all water flow will be back billed on the next statement.

If services are not billed due to staff error or hardware failure, specific flow or particular services are not billed the customer will not be penalized and services will begin on the next billing cycle.

Inaccurate Reads

In the event that misreads are not discovered by billing staff before statements are generated, the representative that receives first communication regarding the error will generate a work order to confirm the reading and communicate with the management team to identify solutions and communicate with customer to identify the resolution.

Add or remove services

Upon identification of unbilled services by Operations staff, Planning and Construction Division staff, or the Field Service Investigator, the customer will be notified concerning the billing of services on the next billing cycle.

Upon discovery by the customer of services billed incorrectly (i.e. sewer but not on sewer connection), the JWSC will credit up to 36 months and only for the current account holder.

Removal of Charges

Following the successful evaluation of a leak adjustment request, late fees billed during the leak adjustment review period will be removed.

Refunding of Customer Credits

Upon request, customers with a credit balance over \$100.00 are able to have a refund check mailed to their billing address on file. If requested, the most recent unpaid bill will be deducted from the credit and the customer will be sent the remainder. Requests can be submitted in person, via e-mail, or through our customer service call center.

e) Service Order Requests

Standard

In order to maintain assets and investigate issues, customer service representatives are able to dispatch service orders via customer request or discretion.

Practice Guidelines

Customers and representatives are able to request service orders to investigate issues. Customers can request service orders in person in the office or via our call center representatives. Representatives are able to dispatch service orders to their discretion.

Customer Waived Fee Service Orders

A customer may reserve the right to waive service order fees once a year for the following service orders:

- Re-read
- Turn on request
- Turn off request

On the second service order request of the above items within a 12 month period the account holder will be responsible for the service order fee.

f) Delinquent Account Actions

Standard

The JWSC expects full payment of billed charges by the due date listed on the monthly statement.

Practice Guidelines

Utility billing provides 20-days from the statement generation for the payment to be received. In cases where the past due amount exceeds \$100.00 the customer may be at risk of disconnection at a date no sooner than 10-days after the due date. No additional notification will be giving aside from a red cutoff date generated on the bill stating the account is delinquent.

Obstacles in Fulfilling a Service Order

Upon identification of service theft or obstacles blocking access to the meter box in order to process the service order, such as an animal or car on meter, legal remedies will be taken depending on the situation and the customer will be notified.

Disconnection Follow-Up

If no payment has been made to satisfy the balance following the disconnection, a service order will be generated to follow-up on service status.

Reconnection of Service

Following payment of arrears balance, not including any billed amount generated but not yet due, a work order will be created to restore service. Requests that come in prior to 2:00 PM will be processed the same day. Requests after 2:00 PM will be processed the following business day, unless the customer elects to pay the after-hours fee, which

shall be waived if the arrears balance paid is \$300.00 or greater, including the disconnection fee.

Cut Off and Late Fee Exemptions

The following conditions must be met to be exempt from cut off or late fees:

- Official federal and state government accounts approved by Executive Director
- Leak adjustment pending
- Billing or meter reading error review pending

g) Payment Plan Arrangement Program

Standard

Customers that qualify are able to enter the payment plan arrangement program to avoid being disconnected from our services.

Practice Guidelines

- An account can only be on one payment plan for the debt on that account.
- Residential account holders can only be on one payment plan at a time.
- Commercial and landlord account holders can have multiple payment plans on separate accounts.
- Payment plans are only set up on active accounts with a balance of \$300 or greater.
- The payment plan down payment is calculated using the total balance forward and the current charges due on the most recent bill even if the due date has not yet arrived.
- A pay plan installment is due by the bill due date, not due by the pay plan due date in the system. The pay plan due date in the system is for decoration only.
- Pay plan due dates are entered in the system as close as possible to the next bill due date to aid in monitoring pay plan statuses.
- The first pay plan payment is due the next time we send out a bill, no months can be skipped.
- Balances on closed accounts will be sent to collections within 90 days of a final bill being sent, thereby ending the payment plan. *See PAYMENT ON CLOSED ACCOUNTS section for more details.*

Residential Payment Plan Arrangement

Residential account holders are limited to a 12 month payment plan, this includes payment plan arrangements for leak adjustments.

Non-Residential Payment Plan Arrangement

Non-residential payment plans are limited to 90 days including the current month in which the down payment is collected.

Failure to Pay as Agreed

If an account on a pay plan is disconnected for non-payment of the current charges plus the pay plan amount by the due date, the pay plan will be considered to be

broken. If a cutoff date was listed on the most recent bill, a service order will be generated to disconnect. If no cutoff date had been listed, a letter must be mailed providing five business days of notice prior to disconnection. If the balance has not been satisfied by the terms of the letter, service will then be disconnected.

[COB Section 22-64 (b)(5);

GC Section 2-16-64 (b)(5)]

The customer must then pay the cut off fee and the amount needed to get caught back up, minus any charges that are not yet due, within three days of the interruption of service to return to “active pay plan” status.

Three days after the cutoff date listed on the bill or five days after the follow-up letter, the pay plan will be cancelled in the system. A service order shall be issued to remove the meter. Payment in full is expected at this point.

Renegotiation of Payment Plan Arrangement

Renegotiating of existing payment plans is not permitted. Once set up, an existing plan must be paid in full with the original terms.

If a consumption spike, an anomaly increase or a leak increase appears within the repayment period, the original balance from the first leak must be paid in full before another leak adjustment can be made.

Transfer of Services on a Payment Plan Arrangement

If a customer wishes to transfer an account that is on a payment plan from one location to another in our system, the balance must be current. If the payment plan is current, the balance will transfer but the terms will remain the same.

Ending of Services on a Payment Plan Arrangement

If a customer closes their account before the payment plan balance is paid in full, the remainder of the balance will be sent to the collection agency within 90 days of the closure of the account if not paid.

Recurring Payment Plan

Once a payment plan has been satisfied in full, the customer will be able to utilize a payment plan in the future on that account.

Disconnection of Payment Plan

- Payment plan customers are not exempt from cutoff.
- Payment plans are confirmed as following the collection engine rules, all accounts that go in to a delinquent state showing as broken will receive a red date on their billing statement of the scheduled cutoff date.
- Payment plans which are not paid to date will be cancelled.

h) Payment on Closed Accounts

Standard

Accounts must be paid in full when closed.

Practice Guidelines

Following account closure, any remaining balance is to be satisfied no later than 90 days of the closure of the account.

Post 90-Day

Customers that do not satisfy a remaining balance on an account within 90 days are sent to the JWSC contracted collection agency. Payments after 90 days must be paid directly to the contracted collection agency, so long as the customer does not have an active service account with the JWSC.

If a customer has multiple accounts active at the point of closing one, the remaining balance may be transferred to an active account and a pay plan may then be set up, if the customer meets the qualifications.