



# Regulatory/Policy Committee

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THURSDAY, MAY 9, 2024





# Call Meeting To Order

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# Public Comments

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# Items for Presentation and Discussion

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1. Presentation and Discussion of Revisions to the Brownsville Public Utilities Board Personnel Policies & Procedures, Policy No. 1 Policy, Business Ethics & Conduct Statements - Dr. Emilia Guerra
2. Presentation and Discussion of Revisions to the Brownsville Public Utilities Board Personnel Policies & Procedures, Policy No. 21 Retirement - Dr. Emilia Guerra
3. Presentation and Discussion of Updates to the Accounts Receivable Policy - Jorge Santillan
4. Presentation and Discussion of Revisions of the Brownsville Public Utilities Board Deposit and Credit Policy - Estrella Solorzano
5. Presentation and Discussion on the Implementation of the Brownsville Public Utilities Board Payment Arrangement Policy - Estrella Solorzano
6. Presentation and Discussion on the Implementation of the Brownsville Public Utilities Board Installment Plan Policy - Estrella Solorzano
7. Presentation and Discussion of Revisions of the Brownsville Public Utilities Board Safety Hazard Complaint Policy - Estrella Solorzano



# Policy No. 1 – Policy, Business Ethics & Conduct Statements

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF REVISIONS TO THE BROWNSVILLE PUBLIC UTILITIES BOARD PERSONNEL POLICIES & PROCEDURES – DR. EMILIA GUERRA

● ● ● R E G U L A T O R Y / P O L I C Y C O M M I T T E E

# Current Policy

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Last revised & approved by the Board on December 8, 2003.

Establishes the guiding principles and provisions for promoting employee integrity, honesty, and ethical behavior to safeguard that BPUB's business is conducted in a consistently legal and ethical manner and that builds trust from key BPUB stakeholders.

# Proposed Policy Changes

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## Name Change:

- Current Name: Policy, Business Ethics & Conduct Statements
- Proposed Name: Business Ethics and Conduct

## General Changes:

- The policy was reviewed and updated to ensure it is current and in compliance with federal, state, and local regulations
- Added new sections to clearly set standards in terms of personal conduct and behaviors that affect others.

# Proposed Policy Changes

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## Main Changes:

- Outlined general guiding norms, which all employees must follow.
- Stated BPUB's commitment for individual respect in the workplace.
- Provided examples of standards of conduct.
- Established reporting expectations for employees who witness a violation of this policy.
- Included a general anti-retaliation clause.





# Policy No. 21 – Retirement

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF REVISIONS TO THE BROWNSVILLE PUBLIC UTILITIES BOARD PERSONNEL POLICIES & PROCEDURES – DR. EMILIA GUERRA

● ● ● R E G U L A T O R Y / P O L I C Y   C O M M I T T E E

# Current Policy

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Last revised & approved by the Board on December 8, 2003.

Establishes the provisions and criteria for retirement and the continuation of health benefits eligibility.

# Proposed Policy Changes

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## General Changes:

- The policy was reviewed and updated to ensure it is current and in compliance with federal, state, and local regulations.
- Policy sections were updated and reorganized to align with the most recently updated policies.
- Retirement eligibility provisions were rewritten to simplify and streamline language.
- Added language to clarify retiree benefits eligibility and insurance premium payment obligations.
- Included a new section establishing the health benefits provisions for retiree re-employment.



# Accounts Receivable Policy

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF UPDATES TO THE  
ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE POLICY– MONICA G. CAVAZOS

● ● ● R E G U L A T O R Y / P O L I C Y C O M M I T T E E

# Accounts Receivable Policy

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- Current policy approved by the Board on June 13, 2016.
- Policy establishes summary guidance of the non-utility service accounts receivable process.
- Current updates include:
  - Department name update
  - Definitions updates



# **Presentation and Discussion of Revisions of the Brownsville Public Utilities Board Deposit and Credit Policy**

**MAY 9, 2024**

● ● ● R E G U L A T O R Y / P O L I C Y C O M M I T T E E

# Current Policy

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The Brownsville Public Utilities Board (BPUB) Deposit and Credit Policy establishes the standards to comply with City of Brownsville Code of Ordinances (Code 1971, § 34-41; Ord. No. 94-983-J, § 1, 11-2-1994, Code 1971, § 34-41; Ord. No. 94-983-J, § 1, 11-2-1994, Code 1971, § 34-69; Ord. No. 94-983-J, § 8, 11-2-1994) regarding deposits for residential and non-residential customers requesting Water, Wastewater or Electric services by establishing and implementing Credit Rules and Regulations concerning initial deposit amounts, acceptable forms of deposit for non-residential customers, reduced deposit requirements based on payment method and refunding of deposits.

**Board Adopted:** June 13, 2019

# Proposed Changes

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1. Updated Policy number to CSR-1000.
2. Added City of Brownsville Code of Ordinances numbers.
3. Removed roles and responsibilities for Management section.
4. Updated Program Manager to Director of Customer and Support Services.
5. Added “residential deposit” and “non-residential deposit” definitions.



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# Questions?



# **Presentation and Discussion on the Implementation of the Brownsville Public Utilities Board Payment Arrangement Policy**

MAY 9, 2024

● ● ● R E G U L A T O R Y / P O L I C Y C O M M I T T E E

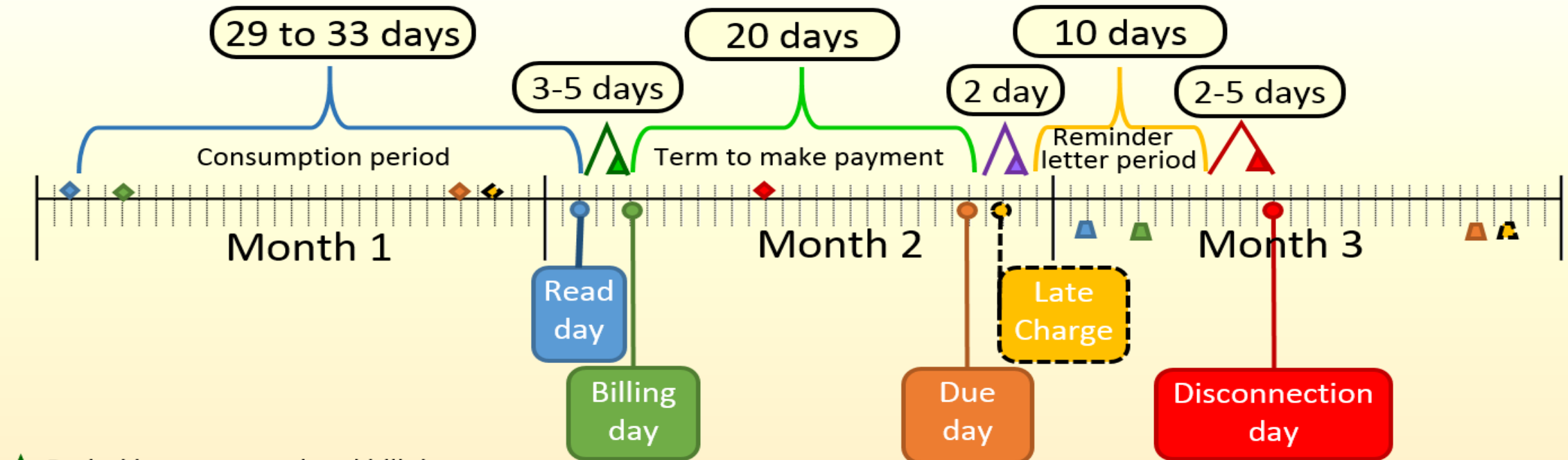
# April 3, 2023

## Committee Meeting Action Items

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1. Created Installment Plan Policy (Draft Policy Attached)
2. Updated the Payment Arrangement Policy – Summary of Changes based on recommendations are as follows:
  - Updated Policy to Include “Applicability” section: To outline who qualifies and who does not qualify for a payment arrangement.
  - Under “General Provisions for Residential Customers” changed guideline #8 to “a payment arrangement can be made the following billing cycle after assistance has been exhausted” instead of “3 months after assistance has been exhausted”.
  - Included a new exception: “If a residential account has been placed on a payment arrangement for a balance that includes charges for more than one billing cycle, prior to the inception of this policy, BPUB will allow 60 days for the account to become current.”
  - Added “or their designated representative” to Emergency exception
  - Added “Definitions” section to the policy and included “authorized individual” and “senior account”
3. Included Account Cycle graph in presentation
4. Included Ordinance to provide information on Section 102-75 to 102-78: “Date when payment for Service is due”, “Penalty for delinquent payment”, “Disconnection for nonpayment”, “Reconnection for Disconnection” (Ordinance Attached)
5. On April 17, 2024 presented to PUBCAP members “Implementation of the Brownsville Public Utilities Board Payment Arrangement and Installment Plan Policies”
  - No changes were recommended.
  - Video presentation has been posted on BPUB’s website and is available to view at: [PUBCAP 4/17/24 \(youtube.com\)](#)

# Account Cycle



▲ Period between read and bill date

▲ Reminder letter must be mailed 2 day after bill is due for disconnection.

▲ Disconnect will occur after the 10 day reminder letter has expired, but before the next bill due date.

Elapse days from 1st day of consumption to disconnect:

\* Max total days = 75

\* Min total days = 66

# Code of Ordinances, Part II

## Chapter 102 – Utilities

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Sec. 102-75. - Date when payment for service due. All bills for utility services are due and payable when rendered (issued). (Code 1971, § 34-31)

Sec. 102-76. - Penalty for delinquent payment. The net due date of the utility bill will be 15 calendar days after issuance. A bill not paid on or before the net due date will be considered delinquent, and a penalty will be assessed in an amount equal to six percent of the total net amount. (Code 1971, § 34-32; Ord. No. 2007-983-BB, § 2, 9-18-2007; Ord. No. 2010-1534, § 1, 9-27-2010)

Sec. 102-77. - Disconnection for nonpayment. If bills for utility services shall not be paid when due, the public utilities board shall have the right after proper notice to disconnect and discontinue all utility services furnished by the public utilities board to the consumer so in arrears. (Code 1971, § 34-33)

Sec. 102-78. - Reconnection after disconnection. If the utility service is disconnected for any reason, the consumer thereof shall have the right to have the service reconnected only upon the payment of all rates, charges and penalties due thereon and, in addition thereto, a reconnection charge at actual cost thereof. Such rates, charges and penalties shall be calculated, charged and collected in advance of such reconnection.

# Payment Arrangement Policy

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**Payment Arrangement:** a customer request for additional time to pay off an amount owed on an account, or when the customer is going through a hardship and is unable to pay their bill by the due date.

# Applicability

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This policy applies to Residential Customers who need additional time to pay off an amount owed on an active residential account and meet the guidelines based on the General Provisions established in the Payment Arrangement Policy.

- **Commercial accounts do not qualify for payment arrangements**
- **Senior accounts do not qualify for payment arrangements**
- **Write Off Accounts do not qualify for a payment arrangement**
- **Accounts with an installment plan do not qualify for a payment arrangement**
- **Instant Bills do not qualify for a payment arrangement**

# Current Payment Arrangement Guidelines

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The following terms and conditions will apply to all residential accounts:

1. Residential accounts may qualify for one payment arrangement per account.
2. Payment arrangements can only be requested by the account holder or an authorized individual.
3. Payment arrangements not paid on or before the established due date by 5:00 p.m. will be subject to service interruption.
4. The due date for the payment arrangement will be 20 days after the date the account is declared past-due by BPUB.
5. Closed or write-off accounts do not qualify for a payment arrangement.
6. If an active account has a payment arrangement and a transfer of services is requested, the payment arrangement must be paid in full before the transfer is processed.



# Proposed General Provisions for Residential Customers

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1. Residential accounts may qualify for one payment arrangement per account, per billing cycle.
2. If a payment arrangement is suspended or terminated, the account holder or authorized individual will be responsible for the past due balance (not including the late fee which will be added to the next bill) to avoid service interruption.
3. Customers who have tampering fees or an NSF on the account can request a payment arrangement after the following have been paid:
  - Tampering fees and related charges
  - NSF returned item and fees
4. If a residential account has received aid through an assistance program, a payment arrangement can be made the following billing cycle after assistance has been exhausted.
5. A payment arrangement cannot be made if the previous bills have not been paid in full.

# Proposed Exceptions

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1. If a Residential account has been placed on a payment arrangement for a balance that includes charges for more than one billing cycle, prior to the inception of this policy, BPUB will allow 60 days for the account to become current.
2. If a Commercial account has been placed on a payment arrangement prior to the inception of this policy, the payment arrangement will be honored through the due date.
3. In the event of an emergency, included but not limited to; natural disaster the payment arrangement policy may temporarily be amended or expanded as directed by the General Manager and CEO or designated representative.

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# Questions?



# **Presentation and Discussion on the Implementation of the Brownsville Public Utilities Board Installment Plan Policy**

MAY 9, 2024

● ● ● R E G U L A T O R Y / P O L I C Y C O M M I T T E E

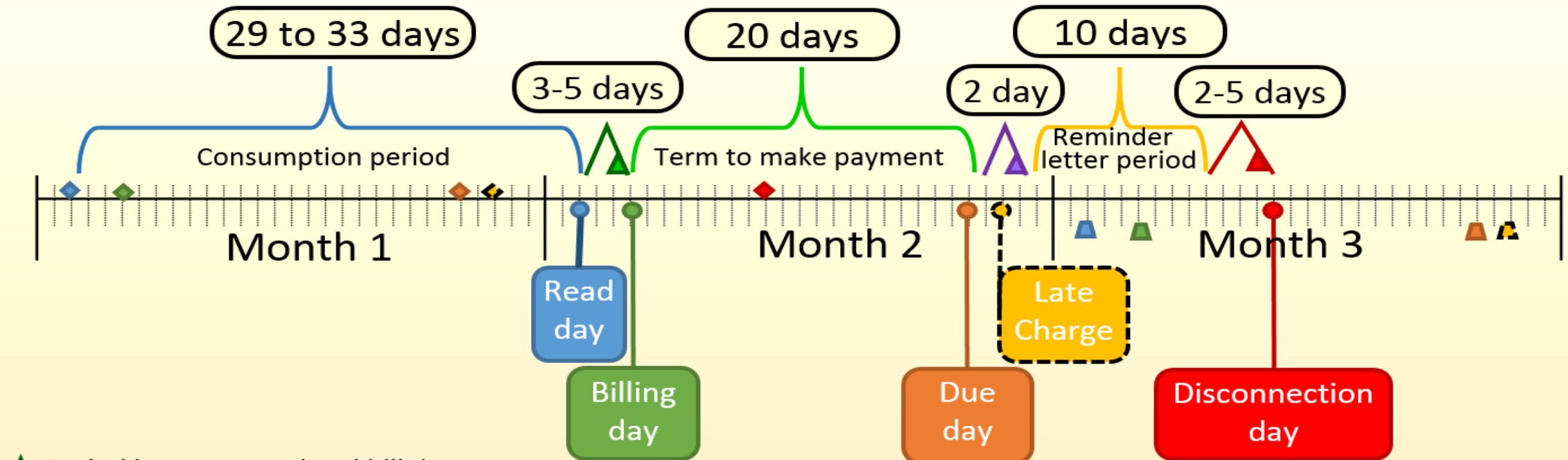
# April 3, 2023

## Committee Meeting Action Items

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1. Created Installment Plan Policy (Draft Policy Attached)
2. Included Account Cycle graph in presentation
3. Included Ordinance to provide information on Section 102-75 to 102-78: “Date when payment for Service is due”, “Penalty for delinquent payment”, “Disconnection for nonpayment”, “Reconnection for Disconnection” (Ordinance Attached)
4. On April 17, 2024 presented to PUBCAP members “Implementation of the Brownsville Public Utilities Board Payment Arrangement and Installment Plan Policies”
  - No changes were recommended.
  - Video presentation has been posted on BPUB’s website and is available to view at: [PUBCAP 4/17/24 \(youtube.com\)](#)

# Account Cycle



▲ Period between read and bill date

▲ Reminder letter must be mailed 2 day after bill is due for disconnection.

▲ Disconnect will occur after the 10 day reminder letter has expired, but before the next bill due date.

Elapse days from 1st day of consumption to disconnect:

- \* Max total days = 75
- \* Min total days = 66

# Code of Ordinances, Part II

## Chapter 102 – Utilities

---

Sec. 102-75. - Date when payment for service due. All bills for utility services are due and payable when rendered (issued). (Code 1971, § 34-31)

Sec. 102-76. - Penalty for delinquent payment. The net due date of the utility bill will be 15 calendar days after issuance. A bill not paid on or before the net due date will be considered delinquent, and a penalty will be assessed in an amount equal to six percent of the total net amount. (Code 1971, § 34-32; Ord. No. 2007-983-BB, § 2, 9-18-2007; Ord. No. 2010-1534, § 1, 9-27-2010)

Sec. 102-77. - Disconnection for nonpayment. If bills for utility services shall not be paid when due, the public utilities board shall have the right after proper notice to disconnect and discontinue all utility services furnished by the public utilities board to the consumer so in arrears. (Code 1971, § 34-33)

Sec. 102-78. - Reconnection after disconnection. If the utility service is disconnected for any reason, the consumer thereof shall have the right to have the service reconnected only upon the payment of all rates, charges and penalties due thereon and, in addition thereto, a reconnection charge at actual cost thereof. Such rates, charges and penalties shall be calculated, charged and collected in advance of such reconnection.

# Installment Plan Policy

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**Installment Plan:** a customer request for a pending balance to be broken up into 2-6 months to accommodate the following special circumstances, on a case by case basis:

- Write-off balance
- Transferred balance
- Water leak
- Radio Frequency (RF) meter fee
- Back billed charges



# Applicability

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This policy applies to active Residential Customers who need additional time to pay off an amount owed on an active residential account and meet the guidelines based on the General Provisions established in the Installment Plan Policy.

- **Commercial accounts do not qualify for an installment plan**
- **Senior accounts do not qualify for an installment plan**
- **Write Off Accounts do not qualify for an installment plan**
- **Instant Bills do not qualify for an installment plan**

# Current Installment Plan Guidelines

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The following terms and conditions will apply to all residential accounts:

1. Residential accounts may qualify for one installment plan per account
2. The installment plan can only be requested by the account holder or an authorized individual
3. Installment plans can be set up for customers with special circumstances, on a case by case basis for the following situations: write-off balance, water leak, transferred balance, RF meter fee, back billing, tampering fees
4. If an active account has an installment plan and a transfer of services is requested, the installment plan will automatically be moved to the new location/address and will resume without interruption.
5. Closed or write-off accounts do not qualify for an installment plan.
6. An installment plan cannot be made on instant bills.

# Proposed Exceptions

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If a Commercial or Senior account has been placed on an installment plan prior to the inception of this policy, the installment plan will be honored through the end date.

In the event of an emergency, included but not limited to; natural disaster the installment plan policy may be amended as directed by the General Manager and CEO or their designated representative.

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# Questions?



# **Presentation and Discussion of Revisions of the Brownsville Public Utilities Board Safety Hazard Complaint Policy**

**MAY 9, 2024**

● ● ● R E G U L A T O R Y / P O L I C Y C O M M I T T E E

# Current Policy

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- The Brownsville Public Utilities Board (BPUB) Safety Hazard Complaint Policy establishes a method for employees to report safety hazards to the Safety and Security Manager for appropriate action by filing a complaint when safety hazards are not resolved using the established lines of authority.
- Board Adopted: August 1, 2017
- Due to recent changes in organizational structure, the Safety and Security Operations Department has made revisions to this policy.

# Proposed Changes

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1. Changed document to new policy format.
2. Changed Policy Number to reflect change in department name from HSF-1110 to SSO-1100.
3. Changed manager title, throughout document, from Health and Safety Manager to Safety and Security Manager.
4. Changed department name, throughout document, from Health and Safety Department to Safety and Security Operations Department (SSOD).
5. Removed Scope (Section 2.0)
6. Removed Roles and Responsibilities section (Section 5.0 not needed since it is presented in the corresponding procedure document).
7. Removed 6.2 Maintaining Policy section.
8. Removed words, 4.1, 4.2, and 4.4, under section 4.0 Definitions that are no longer in the document.
9. Added subheading “Date Last Reviewed and by” and “Effective Date” with corresponding information.

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# Questions?





# Adjournment

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