

CASTLEWOOD COUNTY SERVICE AREA (CSA) POLICY ON DISCONTINUATION OF RESIDENTIAL WATER SERVICE FOR NONPAYMENT

(Adopted on November 16, 2023)

This CASTLEWOOD CSA Policy on Discontinuation of Residential Water Service is adopted in accordance with the requirements of the California Water Shutoff Protection Act, California Health & Safety Code Section 116900 *et seq.* This policy is for nonpayment and does not apply to termination of a service due to an unauthorized action or in response to an emergency.

I. CASTLEWOOD CSA Billing and Collection Process Overview

The CASTLEWOOD CSA bills customers bi-monthly for their residential water service. A CASTLEWOOD CSA water bill will be considered a proper charge unless a protest is made by the customer to CASTLEWOOD CSA Administrator within fifteen (15) days from the bill date. If customers have questions about their bills or wish to dispute charges, they may contact the CASTLEWOOD CSA Administrator:

By Phone: (510) 670-5241
By Email: claudiac@acpwa.org
By Mail: CASTLEWOOD CSA
Administrator
951 Turner Court, Rm 300
Hayward, CA 94545

The CASTLEWOOD CSA reviews water service accounts routinely to determine whether they have a past due balance that is delinquent. When an account has a past due balance that is at least 60 days old, it is considered delinquent. At this stage, the CASTLEWOOD CSA initiates a severance process for the delinquent account that may include the discontinuation of water service.

At least seventeen (17) calendar days after the account is deemed delinquent, and before the discontinuation of a customer's residential water service for nonpayment, the CASTLEWOOD CSA will send a written notice by U.S. mail to the customer of the residence to which service is provided. If the customer's mailing address is not the address of the property to which service is provided, the CASTLEWOOD CSA will also send the written notice to the address of the property to which service is provided. The CASTLEWOOD CSA will inform the customer of their payment delinquency and the impending discontinuation of their residential water service, and it will provide the customer with information about the options to avert discontinuation of water service, as set forth in this policy below.

II. Options to Avert Discontinuation of Residential Water Service for Nonpayment

Customers who have received a notice of discontinuation of residential water service for nonpayment from the CASTLEWOOD CSA have several options to avoid discontinuation of water service. These options include: (1) paying the delinquent amount to the CASTLEWOOD CSA; (2) participating in a plan for deferred payments; (3) participating in an alternative payment schedule; and (4) contesting or appealing the bill amount.

A. Pay Delinquent Amount to the CASTLEWOOD CSA

Customers can pay the delinquent amount on their residential water service account through one of the following options:

1. Pay by U.S. Mail

- Customers may send the bottom portion of their bill with a check payable to "BRACEWELL ENGINEERING, INC. (CSA), 115 Mast St #114, Morgan Hill, CA 95037."
Customers should not mail cash.

2. Pay Online

- Castlewood Residents may make online payments at <https://bracewell.epayub.com/>. If unable to setup an account, please provide a phone number and email it to info@bracewellengineering.com.

B. Participate in a Plan for Deferred Payments

Customers who are unable to pay the delinquent amount on their bills may participate in a plan for deferred payments to avoid discontinuation of residential water service for nonpayment. A plan for deferred payments allows customers to defer paying the delinquent amount on their bills and will defer collection action on the account for a period not to exceed thirty (30) days. Customers may contact CASTLEWOOD CSA by phone at **(510) 670- 5241** to request a plan for deferred payments.

C. Participate in an Alternative Payment Schedule.

The CASTLEWOOD CSA offers two (2) types of alternative payment schedules for customers with a delinquent account balance to avoid discontinuation of residential water service: (1) a "Pay Plan," and (2) "Payment Arrangement," described in further detail below. Customers who are unable to pay the delinquent amount on their bill may contact CASTLEWOOD CSA by phone at **(510) 670-5241** to discuss these options and enroll in an alternative payment schedule to avoid discontinuation of their residential water service.

a. A "Pay Plan" is an alternative payment schedule established by a written agreement between the CASTLEWOOD CSA and a customer in which the customer agrees to make payments of their delinquent account balance on a customized schedule with specific due dates. Pay Plans allow customers to pay the delinquent charges with different or equal amounts in installments due on scheduled dates that are independent from the customer's subsequent regular bill due date and selected by the customer.

- Pay Plans are suitable for customers who would like flexibility on the amount and due date of their payments.
- A Pay Plan installment amount will not appear as a separate line item on the customer's regular monthly bill. The delinquent amount is included in the previous balance amount on each bill until the customer pays the final installment on their Pay Plan.
- The customer should pay the Pay Plan installments on the

scheduled due dates and remain current on future charges to avoid discontinuation of water service.

b. A “Payment Arrangement” is an alternative payment schedule established by a written agreement between the CASTLEWOOD CSA and a customer in which the customer agrees to pay the delinquent charges on their account with equal payment installments of a dollar amount selected by the customer that are due on the same due date of their subsequent regular monthly bills.

- Subsequent monthly bills sent to customers with Payment Arrangements will contain both the current charges for utility services and the Payment Arrangement installment amount that the customer has selected to pay in its agreement with the CASTLEWOOD CSA.
- Payment Arrangements are suitable for customers who prefer to have one due date to pay both their current charges for utility services and their past due delinquent charges.
- Payment Arrangement installments must be paid on the customer’s regular monthly bill due dates in addition to the current charges to avoid discontinuation of service.

D. Contest or Appeal Bill Amount

Prior to termination of service, in accordance with ordinance 13.32.230, customers may request a hearing. Such hearing shall be conducted by the building official on a date not more than thirty (30) days nor less than fifteen (15) days after the mailing of said notice to the customer in order to present the customer the opportunity to explain failure to comply with this ordinance. After the hearing, the building official may terminate service if he or she concludes that the customer has not complied with this chapter.

Customers can contest or appeal their bill in writing by contacting CASTLEWOOD CSA (1) by mail at CASTLEWOOD CSA, 951 Turner Ct, Room 300, Hayward, CA 94545, or (2) by email at claudiac@acpwa.org.

- Customers should provide CASTLEWOOD CSA with specific information and details as to which bill they are disputing, which charges on the bill they are disputing, and the reason for the review or appeal.
- CASTLEWOOD CSA staff will review the customer’s account, the bill and charges the customer is disputing, and the information and details the customer provides.
- Field visits and meter inspections may also be required on a case-by-case basis.
- CASTLEWOOD CSA will evaluate a customer’s contest or appeal of their bill based on the review of the account, the information and details provided by the customer, and the results of any field visits or meter inspections, and adjust the bill, if warranted.
- CASTLEWOOD CSA will communicate its decision in writing to the customer.

Suspension during review and appeal: If an authorized adult at the residence appeals the water bill, the CASTLEWOOD CSA will not discontinue residential water service for nonpayment while the appeal or the high bill review is pending.

E. Contact the CASTLEWOOD CSA for Information

Customers may contact the CASTLEWOOD CSA to discuss options for averting discontinuation of residential water service for nonpayment.

CASTLEWOOD CSA ADMINISTRATION information is as follows:

By Phone: (510) 670- 5241
By Email: claudiac@acpwa.org
By Mail: CASTLEWOOD CSA
951 Turner Ct, Room 300
Hayward, CA 94545

III. Special Circumstances

Section 116910 of the Health & Safety Code provides special procedures and options for customers who satisfy **all** three of the following conditions:

(1) The customer, or a tenant of the customer, submits to the CASTLEWOOD CSA the certification of a primary care provider, as that term is defined in subparagraph (A) of paragraph (1) of subdivision (b) of Section 14088 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, that discontinuation of residential service will be life threatening to, or pose a serious threat to the health and safety of, a resident of the premises where residential service is provided.

(2) The customer demonstrates that he or she is financially unable to pay for residential service within the CASTLEWOOD CSA's normal billing cycle. The customer shall be deemed financially unable to pay for residential service within the CASTLEWOOD CSA's normal billing cycle if any member of the customer's household is a current recipient of CalWORKs, CalFresh, general assistance, Medi-Cal, Supplemental Security Income/State Supplementary Payment Program, or California Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children, or the customer declares that the household's annual income is less than 200 percent of the federal poverty level.

(3) The customer is willing to enter into an amortization agreement, alternative payment schedule, or a plan for deferred or reduced payment, consistent with this written policy, with respect to all delinquent charges.

Customers who believe that they qualify should contact the CASTLEWOOD CSA at (510) 670-5241 or claudiac@acpwa.org for more information.

IV. Restoration of Water Service

If the CASTLEWOOD CSA discontinues a customer's residential water service for nonpayment, the CASTLEWOOD CSA will provide the customer with information on how to restore residential water service, pursuant to Section 116912 of the Health & Safety Code.

To restore water service, customers may either (1) pay the full delinquent amount through one of the specific payment methods listed below, or (2) enter into a Pay Plan or Payment Arrangement, as described in Section C of this Policy, by contacting CSA Administration at (510) 670-5241. Reconnection fees may apply.

Once a customer pays the full delinquent amount or enters into a Pay Plan or Payment Arrangement, CASTLEWOOD CSA will restore the water service.

Payment Method to Restore Water Service:

- Contact CASTLEWOOD CSA, through its service provider, Bracewell Engineering, Inc. at (831) 673-5508.

V. Availability of Policy on CASTLEWOOD CSA Website

This policy is available on the CASTLEWOOD CSA website at <https://www.acpwa.org/programs-services/County-Service-Areas/CastlewoodAR.page?>