



Safety and Buildings Division of the Wisconsin Department of Commerce

Your Bill of Rights for Water and Sewer Service Provided in a Mobile Home Park

### **What is on your bill?**

All water and sewer bills shall include:

1. Service address
2. Current meter reading and date if service is metered
3. Prior meter reading and date if service is metered
4. Number of units consumed if service is metered
5. Clear itemization of the amounts included in the bill for the present billing period
6. Any unpaid balance from a previous billing period
7. Late payment charges

### **Late Payment Charges**

A mobile home park operator or mobile home park contractor can add a late payment charge if your payment has not been received within 20 days after issuance of the bill. The late payment charge shall not exceed one percent of the unpaid balance per month.

### **A Deposit May Be Required**

You may be required to pay a deposit as a condition of new or continued service. The deposit may not exceed \$40. You may pay your deposit in up to three equal monthly installments. Your deposit will earn simple interest at the rate of five percent per year. Your deposit must be refunded within 21 days of the termination of the rental agreement. If your bill is not paid, it may be deducted from the deposit.

### **Installment Plans for Overdue Bills**

You may enter into a payment plan if you cannot pay your bill in full. The payment plan cannot extend past the termination date of your lease. You will be asked to make a "reasonable down payment" and "reasonable installments."

A reasonable amount is based on:

1. The amount of your overdue bill
2. How long your bill has been overdue
3. Your payment history
4. Reasons your bill is overdue
5. Other important factors

Your mobile home park operator or mobile home park contractor may ask you to sign an installment agreement. Do not sign it unless you agree to the terms. You have a right to negotiate an installment agreement. If you do not pay the installments as agreed, your service may be shut off. Also, if you do not pay, the mobile home park operator or mobile home park contractor does not have to negotiate another installment agreement before it shuts off your service. It is up to you to let the mobile home park operator or mobile home park contractor know about important reasons to negotiate a new plan.

If you and the mobile home park operator or mobile home park contractor cannot agree on an installment plan, you can file a dispute with the Safety and Building Division of the Department of Commerce. While S&B investigates and attempts to resolve your dispute, your service should not be shut off. However, you must

pay all bills not in dispute.

### **Service Shut-offs**

A mobile home park operator or mobile home park contractor must either send, or personally serve you with, a notice before your service is shut off. This notice must include:

1. The date of the notice
2. The reason for the shut-off
3. The date when service can be shut off
4. How to contact the mobile home park operator or mobile home park contractor about the shut-off

The notice must be sent to your home or mailing address at least eight days before the shut off. If the billing address is different from the service address, notice shall be posted at the service address not less than five days before the service is to be shut off. The mobile home park operator or mobile home park contractor shall also make a reasonable effort to contact you by telephone or in person before service is shut off.

If service is not shut off within 15 days after the notice is mailed, the mobile home park operator or mobile home park contractor must leave a new notice at the site not less than 24 hours nor more than 48 hours prior to the shut off.

A mobile home park operator or mobile home park contractor may shut off service without notice where a dangerous condition exists, for as long as it exists.

Service may be shut off with a written 24-hour notice for nonpayment of a bill covering theft of water.

Your service cannot be shut off if:

1. A heat advisory or warning has been declared for a geographic area, which includes the mobile home park
2. For the purposes of eviction

Your service can be shut off if:

1. You fail to pay your bill
2. You fail to pay installments on your bill as you agreed
3. You fail to post required deposits
4. You refuse to permit the mobile home park operator or mobile home park contractor access to the meter

### **Medical Problems**

For extra time to make payment arrangements, the mobile home park operator or mobile home park contractor will delay service shut off up to 21 days if there is a medical problem or other emergency. The mobile home park operator or mobile home park contractor may ask for a letter regarding the illness from your doctor, a public health official, a social service official, the police, or sheriff. The letter must specify the medical illness, the need for water, and the expected duration of the emergency. It is also possible to extend the 21-day delay.

### **Have a dispute?**

First, contact your mobile home park operator or mobile home park contractor to solve the problem. If the mobile home park operator or mobile home park contractor cannot solve your problem, contact S&B at 608-266-1491. While S&B reviews your dispute, your service should not be shut off. However, you must still promptly pay any charge not in dispute. After S&B completes its review, a staff member will contact you and your mobile home park operator or mobile home park contractor, and will attempt to find an agreement that is acceptable to both parties.