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# Florida Public Service Commission

The Florida Public Service Commission (PSC) is responsible for the economic regulation of investor-owned water and/or wastewater facilities in certain counties throughout the state, assuring adequate service and setting just, reasonable, compensatory and non-discriminatory rates. The Commission consists of five members appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate. Environmental regulation of water and/or wastewater utilities in areas such as water withdrawal permits, sewage disposal and health and safety standards is enforced by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, the Water Management Districts and the local county health agencies.

*This brochure (required by PSC Rule 25-30.310(3), F.A.C.) is designed to explain some of the policies and procedures that relate to customers of investor-owned water and/or wastewater utilities regulated by the Florida Public Service Commission.*

## How to Contact the PSC and Its Staff

The PSC and its staff are always ready to answer questions about the regulation of public utilities. The Commission's Division of Service, Safety and Consumer Assistance provides a staff of information specialists who are available to answer questions from Florida consumers. Consumers should, however, seek information on rules, service and rates directly from the utility.

If customers have a problem regarding service, billing, or rates, they should first attempt to resolve it with the utility. After allowing the utility adequate time to correct the problem, unsatisfied customers may call the PSC at **1-800-342-3552**, or fax questions to **1-800-511-0809**. Customers may also contact the PSC via the following E-mail address:

[contact@psc.state.fl.us](mailto:contact@psc.state.fl.us)

In addition, visit the Public Service Commission's Internet home page at [www.floridapsc.com](http://www.floridapsc.com).

Or write to:

Florida Public Service Commission  
Division of Service, Safety and  
Consumer Assistance  
2540 Shumard Oak Boulevard  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0850

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Florida Public Service Commission



## Your Water and Wastewater Service





## Initiation of Water and Wastewater Service

Each utility is required to provide service without unreasonable delay to anyone in its service area who makes proper application. The utility is also required to maintain in its office for public inspection, a copy of its tariff which has been approved by the Florida Public Service Commission (PSC). The tariff contains all rate schedules, a schedule of charges, and the rules and regulations of the utility company.

## Customer Deposits

When a customer applies for water or wastewater service, the utility can ask that the customer establish credit by furnishing a cash deposit, a satisfactory guarantor to secure payment of bills, an irrevocable letter of credit from a bank, or a surety bond. Each utility requiring customer deposits must pay a minimum of 6 percent interest per year on the deposit. However, after a residential customer has established a satisfactory payment record and has had continuous service for 23 months, the utility must refund the customer's deposit. A satisfactory payment record is established when the customer has not, in the preceding 12 months, (a) made more than one late payment of a bill, (b) paid with a check refused by a bank, (c) been disconnected for non-payment, or at any time, (d) tampered with the meter, or (e) used service in a fraudulent or unauthorized manner. Under certain circumstances, such as repeated late payment of bills or continued bills in excess of the amount of the current deposit, the company may require an additional or new deposit. However, the total amount of the requested deposit cannot exceed the average of the actual charge for water and/or wastewater service for two billing periods for the most recent 12-month period. The company must give 30 days written notice of an additional deposit request. When an account is closed, the deposit can be credited to the final bill and any balance must be refunded to the customer within 15 days.

## Rate Structure

Most water and wastewater rates are developed with a base facilities charge and a gallonage charge. The base facilities charge is a flat charge that is designed to recover the fixed costs of utility service that remain the same each month regardless of consumption. The gallonage charge recovers the variable costs associated with the utility service such as electricity, chemicals, and labor involved in production and distribution of water service and the removal, treatment, and disposal of wastewater. The gallonage charge is assessed for each 1,000 gallons or 100 cubic feet of water that is registered on the customer's meter. Recognizing that all of the water used by residential customers is not returned to the wastewater collection system, a maximum (or cap) is set on the number of gallons of water consumption for which the customer is billed a wastewater gallonage charge. The cap is normally between 6,000 and 10,000 gallons. Any water consumption over that amount is generally considered to be used for purposes such as irrigation; therefore, it is not returned to the wastewater facility.

## Billing Practices

The utility company is required to read the customer's meter and send bills at regular intervals. Most utilities bill monthly for service; however, a few utilities bill bimonthly or quarterly. The customer has 20 days from the postmark date to pay the bill. If payment is not made by the due date on the bill, service may be discontinued provided the company sends a written notice that the account is delinquent and subject to interruption of service. The notice should allow the customer at least 5 business days to remedy any deficiency. Service may not be discontinued between 12 noon on a Friday and 8:00 a.m. the following Monday or between 12 noon on the day before a holiday and 8:00 a.m. the next working day, for nonpayment of a bill. Also, service cannot be discontinued or withheld because a previous occupant did not pay the bill. Each customer has the right to request and receive information from the utility as to the method of reading meters and computing bills, and be given an explanation of the utility's rates applicable to the customer's class of service. The utility is required to assist the customer in obtaining the rate which is most advantageous for the customer's service requirements.

## Meter Problems

A customer who suspects that the meter is not accurately measuring water consumption may request that the utility perform a field test of the water meter. To witness the field test the PSC advises customers to make an appointment with the utility's representative. The utility will perform the field test at no charge. If the customer is not satisfied with the results of the field test, he or she can make a written request for a bench test. The utility is allowed to charge a fee to defray the cost of the bench test. The customer also has the right to have a Public Service Commission representative observe and/or supervise the bench test. The utility is required to provide a written report of the results of the test to the customer that requested the test.

## Leaky Faucets

Leaky faucets are common and can increase a utility bill. It is important to have leaks repaired because the customer, not the utility company, is responsible for any leaks on the customer's side of the water meter. If the leak is on the customer's side of the meter, the customer can be billed for the consumption of the water and any other related wastewater charges. The company is under no obligation to show how the water was consumed once it has passed through the meter. The company is obligated to make sure the meter is working correctly and that accurate readings are being taken.

## Service Interruptions

The utility must notify customers prior to a scheduled interruption. Sometimes, service is interrupted due to circumstances beyond the control of the utility. The utility is not required to notify customers when that happens, but the utility is obligated to restore service as soon as possible.



*Wastewater is now being recycled in many locations and used for the irrigation of golf courses. Recycling will place less demand on our natural water supply.*