



# Sewerage & Water Board Of New Orleans

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## **The Sewerage and Water Board to Clear Backlog of Disputed Bills**

*Normal collections process to resume, including shutoffs as last resort*

NEW ORLEANS— The Sewerage and Water Board will launch its plan to clear the backlog of disputed customer bills and improve its billing process in advance of resuming its normal methods for collecting outstanding balances this month.

The Board will utilize a strike team of trained analysts to review each disputed bill and decide whether it is eligible for an adjustment. Should a bill qualify, the panel will adjust it based on a customer's historical water consumption and a standard bill adjustment calculation.

The Board will notify a customer of the panel's decision through a formal letter. The customer can then agree with the panel's finding and pay any outstanding balance or request a payment plan.

Should the customer disagree with the panel's decision, he or she has 10 days from receiving the letter to schedule an administrative hearing.

This expedited review process only applies to customers who disputed their bills before June 22, 2018. Customers who have disputed their bills after that date will have their cases handled through the Board's standard bill review process.

Clearing the backlog is the first step in the Board's timeline to resume its regular collections process. This will include the use of water service shutoffs as a last resort to address delinquent accounts. The agency halted the practice in November as a courtesy to customers while it improved the billing system.

"We are resuming our regular collections process in July, but water shutoffs will not start again until August 1<sup>st</sup>. We urge customers to use this time to resolve any outstanding balances," said S&WB Spokesperson D'Seante Parks. "Water shutoffs are a last resort and the agency hopes to work with customers to create a plan for payment, should they need one."

The special payment plan is available to assist eligible customers avoid having their water service shut off. Under this plan, customers must pay 25 percent of their entire outstanding balance up front. Their remaining balance will be factored equally into their next nine monthly bills. Customers must pay in full each month to avoid any future interruption in service.

"Customers' payments are critical to maintaining and improving New Orleans' water and sewerage systems to keep the city safe and healthy," Parks said.

The S&WB has spent \$82 million since the 2017 flood events and January's Hard Freeze to vastly improve the water and drainage infrastructure of New Orleans.

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*Members of the Board: ANDREW AMACKER • ROBIN BARNES • LATOYA CANTRELL • DR. TAMIKA DUPLESSIS • EILEEN GLEASON  
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