



News Release

For Immediate Release: August 6, 2020

Durham Water Prepares to Resume Regular Billing Practices Offers Support to Water Customers

DURHAM, N.C. – In early March, the City of Durham Department of Water Management stopped disconnecting customers regardless of ability to pay. That quick action—which guaranteed all residents would have the drinking water they needed for cooking, washing, and hygiene—has supported the health of our community since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. On March 31, Governor Roy Cooper issued an Executive Order suspending utility disconnects statewide. When the Order expired on July 29, utilities across North Carolina began shifting back toward regular billing practices, including cutoffs for nonpayment.

The City’s ability to provide safe drinking water to Durham’s residents and visitors is dependent on the revenue received from water and sewer bills. This is why all customers have continued to receive monthly statements showing how much water they have used and the amount they owe. The City has encouraged customers to pay what they could to avoid future large bills. Although we are not yet disconnecting customers, we are in the process of resuming regular billing practices.

“At this time, approximately 3,600 residential water customers have accounts that are delinquent,” said Water Management Director Don Greeley. “We know these are trying times, so we are reaching out to those residents with letters and phone calls. Our knowledgeable Customer Billing Services staff are standing by to assist people who qualify for our Water Hardship Fund and to help arrange payment plans for others. We really want our customers to take advantage of this assistance right away to avoid being disconnected.”

Customers can apply online for the Water Hardship Fund or to arrange a Payment Plan Agreement at <https://durhamnc.gov/944>. Cutoffs are scheduled to resume in mid-September.

Request a Payment Plan

The Department of Water Management wants to help customers with overdue bills manage their delinquent accounts before cutoffs resume. Staff are available to help arrange a monthly payment plan of up to six months. To streamline the process, the department recently launched an online payment application form which customers can find by visiting <https://durhamnc.gov/FormCenter/Water-Management-16/Payment-Plan-Agreement-237>. For information, please contact Customer Billing Services at 919-560-1200 (select Option 2).

City of Durham Water Hardship Fund

This fund provides up to \$240 in assistance for customers in danger of losing water service due to documented hardship. It helped 610 account holders in the 2020 fiscal year and more than 300 have applied for assistance since the outbreak of the pandemic. Residents can contact Durham One Call at 919-560-1200 (select Option 2) or apply online at <https://durhamnc.gov/FormCenter/Water-Management-16/Water-Hardship-Fund-227>.

North Carolina COVID-19 Information Hub

Find assistance through this online resource for those in need. To reach out for help with food, shelter, or community needs call 2-1-1- or 888-892-1162. If you're searching for mental health support the number is 855-587-3463 and the line is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. You can also visit online at <https://www.nc.gov/covid19>.

Central Piedmont Community Action, Inc.

As mobilizers of resources for those in need, Community Action Agencies (CAAs) are for people who are earning below the poverty line and not receiving welfare benefits. Our state's CAAs have begun to receive flexible funds that can be used to help low-income families and individuals meet a variety of needs. To contact your area CAA, visit the agency online at <https://www.ncdhhs.gov/csbg-contacts>.

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