



National Weather Service Heat-Related Weather Alert Payment Plan Policy

1. Engrossed Substitute House Bill 1329 (ESHB 1329) was passed on February 27, 2023 during the 2023 legislative session. This bill prohibits utilities from terminating electric or water service on a residential customer during a period of time when the National Weather Service has issued a heat-related weather alert in our service area. ESHB 1329 also mandates that the utility must reconnect electric or water service upon request from a residential customer who has been disconnected due to non-payment. The utility may require the residential customer to enter into a payment plan prior to restoring electric or water service.
2. National Weather Service Heat-Related Weather Alert Payment Plans will only be offered to residential customers who have been disconnected due to non-payment and have requested their service be reconnected during a period of time when a heat-related weather alert is active in our service area.
3. The City of Centralia will resume their normal procedures regarding past due balances and disconnection of service once the heat-related weather alert has expired.
4. The length of repayment offered on the National Weather Service Heat-Related Weather Alert Payment Plan shall be no longer than May 15th of the following year.
5. The contracted payment amount shall be no greater than 6% of the residential utility customer's monthly income. The residential utility customer may agree to pay a higher percentage during this period but will not be in default on their payment plan unless their payment is less than 6% of their monthly income.
6. Contracted payments are in addition to the current charges due on the residential customer's utility account and must be paid by the 25th of each month to avoid late fees being assessed to the account. No additional bill will be mailed for the contracted payment amount.
7. Failure to make the payment as outlined in the signed contract will result in the balance becoming due and payable in full and the account will be subject to the City's normal disconnection and/or collection policies.
8. Approval of a National Weather Service Heat-Related Weather Alert Payment Plan does not forgive any balance due on the residential customer's utility account; it simply allows the residential customer to make payments over a period of time without incurring penalties.
9. A minimum of one account holder is required to sign the application. Whomever signs the application will be the City's point of contact regarding the payment plan and will be responsible for ensuring payments are made on time.
10. Residential tenants who are seeking to sign up for a National Weather Service Heat-Related Weather Alert Payment Plan do not need to obtain their landlord or property owner's approval.
11. All National Weather Service Heat-Related Weather Alert Payment Plans require approval by the Customer Service Supervisor.
12. Any residential customer who is not able to repay their past due balance under the terms offered will need to put in writing the reason why they cannot make the proposed repayment terms. Circumstances such as this will be reviewed by a panel of managers and recommended for either approval or denial of a different repayment arrangement.
13. In the event of the sale of a property that has an established National Weather Service Heat-Related Weather Alert Payment Plan, the City of Centralia will request the outstanding balance be paid in full through the escrow process per usual City policy.