

Onset Fire District
Onset Water Department
Rules and Regulations

Board of Water Commissioners

The following rules, regulations and procedures as hereby established, or as may hereafter altered or amended, will be bound in agreement with every applicant or consumer who takes water, and governs the relations between the Onset Water Department and it's consumers, contractors and developers who install water systems.

Order of contents

Application for Water Service
Installation of Water Service
Meters
Cross Connection Control
Charges and Rate Descriptions
Billing: Payment and Payment Plans
Turn-off for Non-Payment Policy
Bad Check Policy
Rights to Prohibit & Limit of Liability
Mailing Address

Application for Water Service

All applications are to be made at the Water Office, 15 Sand Pond Road between 9:00 am and 4:00 pm Monday through Friday.

All applications will be filed on the approved forms supplied by the Water Department, and must be signed by the property owner.

All applications will be reviewed by the Water Department's Superintendent and Foreman for approval at which time an "Availability of Water" form will be issued to the property owner.

All applications must be accompanied by the System Development fee. This charge covers the privilege of connection to the distribution system only, and must be paid before any work will begin.

Upon approval, the application will be issued a service number. This number will be referenced through the billing system for the life of the particular service.

Installation of Water Service

After a period of not less than ten (10) days from the approval date of the service application, the Water Department will install the water service.

The Water Department, and only the Water Department, will tap the water main, install a corporation, lay the appropriate size water service line from the main to the property line and install a stop and waste valve at the property line.

The property owner will be responsible for laying the remainder of the service from the stop and waste to the house. The service must maintain a coverage of four and one-half (4'6") feet to avoid freezing. The Water Department retains the right to inspect the installation prior to burial.

The Water Department will determine the size of the service relative to the type of building it will be servicing. In most cases a single dwelling will call for a three-quarter (3/4") inch water service. Multi-dwelling and commercial buildings may require larger size services as determined by the Water Department.

All costs incurred in the Water Department's installation of the service will be billed to the property owner as material & labor. Labor will be billed on an hourly basis at the rates outlined in the Department's rate schedule. All material & labor charges must be paid, in full, before the water will be turned on.

Any single water service will feed one and only one building or dwelling unless approved by the Water Department.

Any single dwelling that is updated to a multi-dwelling either domestic or commercial must have the existing water service upgraded to a service size determined by the Water Department. Any multi-dwelling must have an independent water meter for each unit in the dwelling. This will also apply to new construction of apartment buildings and condominiums.

No consumer, either domestic or commercial, will be allowed to supply water to other persons or properties not entitled to its' use unless special approval is granted by the Water Department.

All service owners will protect and maintain their pipes from frost, freezing or other damages at their own expense.

All electrical services that are grounded to the water service will have its primary ground through a ground rod as determined by the Wiring Inspector of the Town of Wareham.

Meters

Inside Meters

Water meters will be installed on all services, commercial or domestic, in the Onset Fire District. All installations will be performed by Water Department personnel only. Meter size and location will be determined by the Water Department.

Water meters will be installed in the cellar of a building only when conditions permit. If a meter is installed in the cellar it will be the responsibility of the property owner to maintain sufficient heat, year round, to protect it against freezing. A water meter will not be installed in a cellar where the service leading into the building is in bad condition or the service entering the building is of any type other than plastic or copper pipe. A shut-off valve must be in place at the point where the water service enters the cellar and it must be in working order before a meter will be installed inside. A second shut-off valve will be installed after the meter to allow the meter to be removed for testing or repair without draining the remainder of the service. All valves will be required to be of the quarter-turn ball type.

There will be no connections to the service line prior to the location of the inside meter. This includes, but is not limited to: service branches to other parts of the property; connections to outside sillcocks; connections to garden or yard sprinkler systems; service branches to furnaces or hot water heaters, or inside sillcocks used for seasonal or periodical drainage. Any such installations found after the installation of the meter may be judged as tampering, as covered elsewhere in these regulations.

All inside meters will be installed with radio read capabilities, allowing the meter to be read from the outside. This feature is for convenience only. In any situation where a problem with a reading or the meter itself arises, an inside reading will be obtained and used by the Water Department.

The cost of installing a radio read meter inside, along with the cost of any fittings used by the Water Department for the installation will be the responsibility of the Water Department. All water meters will remain the property of the Onset Water Department.

Any damage to a meter, readout or connecting wire, installed in a cellar, will be repaired or replaced at the expense of the property owner.

Meter Pits

Installations, other than those made in cellars, will be made in meter pits. Meter pits will be installed on the owner's side of the underground shut-off valve located on or near the property line. The cost of installing a meter pit is the responsibility of the property owner along with necessary fittings. The Water Department will be responsible for the installation and maintaining the plumbing and meter in the pit to protect against freezing. Any type of pipe, other than copper coming from the underground shut-off will be replaced with copper in the meter pit and extending

out toward the dwelling. It will be re-connected to the original service line. The property owner will be responsible for the type and condition of the service from this point on. The Water Department recommends the use of plastic or copper pipe for services connected to its' distribution system.

Meter pits and the equipment installed within them comes under the direct control of the Water Department only. No one other than Water Department personnel will be allowed to open a meter pit. This includes, but is not limited to: property owners; tenants; caretakers; or plumbing companies. Any such violations or any damages that may occur may be judged as tampering, as covered elsewhere in the regulations.

The cost of installing a meter in a pit along with the cost of the meter and any fittings used by the Water Department for the installation will be the responsibility of the Water Department.

The property owner will be billed for the cost of the pit itself. This includes the pit cylinder and the metal cover.

The Water Department will be responsible for replacing to near original conditions as possible the area surrounding the pit. This includes asphalt, concrete or loam and grass seed.

All water passing through the water meter inside or in a pit that registers on the meter will be a responsible charge to the property owner. This includes but is not limited to: consumption and waste due to leaks in the service line on the property side of the meter.

Property owners may request that their meter be tested for accuracy by contacting the Water Department. A testing fee will be charged to the property owner unless a proven problem is found with the meter during testing. After testing, a meter is found to be registering at a rate outside the Department's accepted limits it will be replaced with a new meter. When a meter tests to be inaccurate the property owner will receive the appropriate consideration and abatement to the water bill.

All customers of the Water Department will agree to allow a representative of the Department to enter on or into the property for the purpose of inspection, repairs or meter reading per General Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Chapter 165. Failure to allow access for any of the above stated reasons will mandate the immediate termination of service until access is allowed.

Cross Connection Control

The Onset Water Department serving customer premises, must comply with all provisions as provided for in the Federal Safe Drinking Water Act of 1974 (Public Law 93-523), Amended 1986, Mass General Laws, Chapter 111, Section 160A and the Drinking Water Regulation of Massachusetts (310CMR,22.22). Also the following apply: M.G.L., 41, 42A – I, Chapter 487, Chapter 21G, Sec.13-17. It is the responsibility of the Massachusetts Certified Operator holding the license to comply and enforce all of the above and any other requirements imposed by State authority and the Onset Water Department.

Any persons connecting or attaching to or from the Onset Water Department water supply system in any manner, temporarily or permanently, any device which constitutes a cross connection as listed under Chapter 111, Section 160A and 310 CMR, 22.22 or the decision of the Board of Water Commissioners will comply with all pertinent laws and regulations in effect prior to obtaining water for its use.

Whoever maintains a cross connection without a permit, or after revocation of the permit to maintain a cross connection, without installing the appropriate backflow prevention device required by these regulations and by the reviewing authority or Board of Water Commissioners, will be subject to a fine of not more than \$500.00 or imprisonment for not more than one year, or both.

Any violation of these regulations will be subject to administrative penalty provisions of 310 CMR 5.00.

Any cross connection devices installed immediately after the meter will be regarded as a “Point of Entry” or “Containment Device” and will not always be the only device required to achieve compliance. Point of Use devices only protect against cross connection for the particular appliance it serves and not the entire water system. Therefore, more than one cross connection device may be required to be installed at the premises. The Board of Water Commissioners have the authority under 310 CMR., 22.22 to require not only the mandatory devices required but any additional devices they feel best protects the Onset Water Department water supply system against contamination, pollution, backflow or backsiphonage, whether it is actual or potential. The Department of Environmental Protection and/or the Board of Water Commissioners decision will prevail.

Charges and Rates Description

Current rates are listed elsewhere in these regulations. The following is a breakdown description of rate changes. The consumer has thirty (30) days from date of bill to contest the water bill.

Minimum

Property owners will be charged a minimum rate, billed by two six month periods per year, for any active service whether or not any water is used. For a service to be considered inactive it must have been turned off by the Water Department and remain off for at least one year. Seven thousand (7,000) cubic feet of water are allowed under the minimum rate. This breaks down to thirty-five hundred (3,500) cubic feet (app. 26,250 gallons of water) for each billing period. The minimum rate for a six month period is \$180.00

Overage

Overage is water used in excess of the thirty-five hundred cubic feet minimum per billing period. Overage is not based on the yearly minimum. Overage charges are broken down into a tier rate structure and is billed as follows:

3,501 to 7,000	cubic feet @	5.26 cents per cubic foot
7,001 to 50,000	cubic feet @	5.51 cents per cubic foot
50,001 or more	cubic feet @	5.66 cents per cubic foot

Demand and Interest

Demand is a flat rate charge that is applied to any bills unpaid after thirty (30) days from the first billing. Demand covers the cost of re-billing through the past due notice. Interest is a monthly charge that is also applied to any bills unpaid after thirty (30) days from the first billing, but interest is applied monthly until the bill is paid in full or a payment plan, as outlined elsewhere, is set up. Interest is applied at a rate of one and one-half (1.5%) percent of the unpaid bill.

Liens

If a water bill should remain unpaid, a water lien may be placed on the property and the Tax Assessors are notified in accordance with Mass General Laws Chapter 487, and Chapter 40, Section 39-42I, Chapter 165, Section 11A.

Closing or Final Readings

All property owners who sell property serviced by the Water Department will notify the Water Department prior to the date of closing. On the date of closing the Water Department will take a final reading of the water meter. The original property owner will receive a bill for the amount of water used until that date. This bill will be figured on a fractional basis with the number of days usage compared to the billing period. This fraction will be applied to both the minimum and overage.

At the time of the closing the new property owner will be responsible for supplying the Water Department with the new owner's name and billing address and telephone number.

If a closing should occur and the Water Department is not notified, the person listed as the property owner in the Water Department's billing records will be responsible for the outstanding and any future bills.

When the Water Department is notified that a new owner has taken possession of a property, some type of arrangements will be made between the new owner, the old owner and the Water Department to clear any bills in arrears.

Service Charges

Any calls for service by the Water Department including, but not limited to: turn-offs; turn-ons; freeze-ups; or leaks will be calculated on an hourly basis. Billing will also be calculated at a certain rate if the service call occurs during Water Department working hours and a greater rate if the service call occurs after working hours or on a weekend or accepted holiday. Water Department working hours will normally be considered: Monday through Friday from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm.

Mark Outs

Mark-outs of Water Department pipe locations will be performed in the following manner:

During working hours: First marking of location no charge. Remarkings of previous location done at a one hour minimum.

After working hours, weekends or holidays: First marking of location done at one hour minimum. Remarkings of previous location done at two hour minimum.

The Water Department will be held minimally responsible for the accuracy of any mark-outs due to historical records of pipe locations. Care must be exercised in the construction or excavation of areas in and around water mains and services. The Water Department will not be held responsible for any damages resulting in unmarked construction areas.

Tampering

Tampering is considered the unauthorized use or removal of any equipment or property associated with the water distribution system or under the direct control of the Water Department. Tampering includes, but is not limited to the following: Turning on or off the water, either by means of the direct shut-off valve or the

valve in a meter pit; connection of service lines or branches prior to a meter set-up; reversing the direction of flow of water through a meter; removal of parts, internal or external, of a meter; cutting or disconnecting the wire connecting an inside meter to its' readout; removing a readout from the exterior of a house; removing a meter either inside or in a pit ; or removing a meter and meter pit entirely.

A property owner will be held responsible for any person or agency acting as a representative or employee of said owner. A property owner who has tampered with Water Department property will receive a penalty charge and will be subject to immediate disconnection of service until the appropriate measures are taken to remedy the situation with the approval of the Water Department.

Tampering charges will be billed separately from water billing but the charge will be added to the property owner's billing history. If the bill remains unpaid for thirty (30) days it will be subject to the related billing processes, including: Demand and interest and shut-off notification.

Billing: Payment & Payment Plans

Spring meter reading begins April 1st.

Water bills will go out no later than June 1st.

All water bills resulting from the April reading are due, paid in full, prior to the October reading.

Demand and interest (1.5%) will go into effect thirty (30) days after date of billing. Past due notices will be sent to all applicable customers.

All customers in arrears greater than the minimum billing will be scheduled for turn-off no later than sixty (60) days after date of billing. All past approved guidelines under the Department's "Turn-off Policy" will be followed. Notification to be no less than fifteen (15) days prior to date of Turn-off.

A payment plan may be set-up for a delinquent customer at the discretion of the Superintendent and the Office Manager.

A minimum of the following to apply.

Water bills scheduled in payment plans set-up prior to August 1st. will be due:

One third (1/3) total due August 1st.

One third (1/3) total due September 1st.

Final Payment due September 30th.

Water bills scheduled in payment plans set-up after August 1st. but prior to September 1st. will be due:

One half (1/2) total due September 1st.

Final Payment due September 30th.

Fall meter reading begins October 1st..

Water bills will go out no later than December 1st.. All water bills resulting from the October reading are due, paid in full, prior to the April reading.

Demand and interest and the turn-off policy apply to this billing cycle as stated above.

A payment plan may be set-up for a delinquent customer at the discretion of the Superintendent and Office Manager. A minimum of the following to apply:

Water bills scheduled in payment plans set-up prior to February 1st. will be due:

One third (1/3) total due February 1st.

One third (1/3) total due March 1st.

Final payment due March 31st.

Water bills scheduled in payment plan set-up after February 1st. but prior to March 1st. will be due:

One half (1/2) total due March 1st.

Final payment due March 31st.

Interest charge will be held during the term of the payment plan.

If during the term of the payment plan the agreed conditions are not met, the agreement will be terminated. Interest will be applied in full and the service will be immediately shut-off. Service will not be restored until payment in full is received.

Payment plans will be drawn-up, in writing, and signed by the Superintendent and the customer.

The Water Department and the Board of Water Commissioners retain the right to revise these guidelines at any time.

Turn-off for Non-payment Policy

Turn-offs for non-payment will apply to the following:

- A.) Residential services with water bills in excess of one hundred (\$100.00) dollars.
- B.) Commercial services with water bills considered excessive by the Water Commissioners on the advice of the Superintendent.

The following procedure will be observed:

- A.) Water bills will be sent to the property owners.
- B.) If water bill remains unpaid after thirty (30) days, a second copy with demand and interest will be sent.
- C.) If water bill remains unpaid after fifteen (15) days, a fifteen (15) day notice of turn-off will be sent.
- D.) Contact by telephone will be attempted, if possible, to remedy the situation. If no contact is made and the fifteen (15) day notice runs out, the following procedure will be observed:
 - A.) A Water Department Rep. will go to the property and attempt to make contact with the property owner.
 - B.) If contact is not made, the property will be “Tagged” on the front main entrance door.
 - C.) The “Tag” will notify the property owner that he/she has twenty-four (24) hours to make arrangements with the Water Department or the water will be shut off.

The Board of Health will be notified when the property is “Tagged” and when the water is shut off for non-payment.

Any water bill payment arrangements will be made by the Superintendent and Office Manager of the Water Department. If a payment plan is set-up, the terms will be in writing, signed by the property owner and the Superintendent and/or Office Manager. Arrangements will be set-up under the terms of the Water Department's policy entitled: "Payments and Payment Plans."

If at any time during this procedure, a property owner has a question or a problem, he/she will be advised to make an appointment with the Superintendent and possibly with the Board of Water Commissioners.

Bad Check Policy

Once the Water Department receives a check returned from the bank for insufficient funds, etc. the property owner will be notified for the previously billed charges plus:

- A.) Any fees or charges the Water Department receives from the bank.
- B.) A \$40.00 (forty) dollar Water Department re-handlers fee for reprocessing the bill.
- C.) Demand and interest dating back to the date of the original bill.

The property owner will have ten (10) days from the date of the returned check to handle this matter or the Water Department will be forced to implement its' Turn-off procedure.

The original check will not be returned to the property owner until the total bill has been paid either in cash, with a money-order, or bank check.

Legal action may occur at the request of the Water Department if the situation is not handled correctly by the property owner.

Right to Prohibit and Limits of Liability

The Water Department reserves the right to limit or prohibit the use of water as the public health, safety and interest may require. The Board of Water Commissioners, upon approval of the Department of Environmental Protection, has the right to restrict the use of water during dry seasons or under any other emergency conditions. Any person who violates such restriction or ban, imposed in accordance with Mass. General Laws, Chapter 21G, Section 15 and 16, may be punished by a fine not to exceed \$150.00.

No consumer will be entitled to damages or to have payment refunded for any interruption of water supply occasioned either by accident to any portion of the water system or by shutting off for the purpose of additions or repairs to the water system, or by the stoppage or shortage of supply due to causes beyond the control of the Water Department, such as excessive drought, excessive use of and waste of water by other consumers, or by leaks or defects in the pipes or appliances owned by them or other consumers.

The Board of Water Commissioners or its agents will shut off water when it becomes necessary to do so from any section of the water system because of an accident or for the purpose of making changes or repairs or anything relative thereto. The Water Department will endeavor to give timely notice to as many of the consumers affected thereby as time and the character of the repairs or the

accident will permit and will, so far as practical, use its best efforts to prevent inconvenience and damage arising from any such cause, but failure to give such notice will not render the Water Department responsible or liable for any damage that may result from the shutting off of the water or any coincident conditions.

The Water Department will not be held responsible for damages caused by dirty water resulting from opening or closing of any gates, hydrants, or repairs to any pipes or appenditures, The Water Department, whenever possible or feasible, will notify the affected consumers as best as possible that there may be an occurrence of dirty water.

The Water Department reserves the right, at any time and without notice, to shut off water in the mains for purposes of making repairs, extensions or for other necessary reasons as well as during fire fighting when water pressure drops to extremely low pressures. Persons have boilers or other appliances on their premises depending on the pressure in the pipes to keep them supplied with water are hereby cautioned against danger from these sources. Consumers are required to provide, at their own expense, suitable safety appliances and devices as required by the State Plumbing Code, to protect themselves against such danger. Failure to provide these devices can result in serious and costly damages to hot water tanks and heating systems. In case of danger, open hot water faucets and let them remain open until the water supply returns and all air in the system has escaped. In any event, it is expressly stipulated that the Water Department will not be liable for any damage resulting from having the water turned off, either by fire fighting or through accident or necessity.

The Water Department assumes no liability for conditions which exist in consumer's pipes and cause trouble coincident to or following the repairs of any

main pipe, service pipe, consumer service line, meter or other appliance belonging to the Water Department.

The Water Department accepts no responsibility or liability for any treatment added to the water supplied by the Water Department by any customer installing water enhancement devices after it leaves Onset Water Department pumping stations. A word of caution, the Department of Environmental Protection states that any person that installs or maintains water enhancements devices that service at least twenty-five (25) persons daily at least sixty (60) days of the year is considered a “Public Water Supply” and falls under the rules and regulations of the Department of Environmental Protection.

Any omission or delay on the part of the Board of Water Commissioners or its agents in exercising the rights reserved under law, rules or regulations will not constitute or be construed as a waiver of such rights.

All remittances and correspondence should be addressed to the:

Onset Water Department

P.O.Box 171

Onset, Massachusetts 02558-0171

(508)295-0603

Fax (508) 295-0606