

8. Budget Billing Plan

- 8.1 Stoughton Utilities offers a budget payment plan under which the customer can make equal monthly payments based on the estimated consumption and estimated applicable rates for the year.
- 8.2 The amount is subject to change twice a year, in January and in July in order to reflect current usage and costs. If a customer's budget is changed or if they are removed for noncompliance, they will be notified on their next billing statement. Participating customers shall be notified of this at the time they enroll.
- 8.3 Customers can opt-in to the budget billing program at any time, regardless of the time they have resided at their address. If a customer wants to start prior to us having historic usage, we should use the previous tenant's history to calculate the budget amount.
- As always, the customer should be informed that their monthly payment will be reviewed and adjusted in January and July to reflect their actual usage.
- Under no circumstances** should a customer service employee tell a customer that they cannot enroll in budget billing or that they should/must wait until they have lived there longer.
- 8.4 If a customer is past-due and requests a budget, we should create a DPA for the arrearage, and setup the budget at the average monthly rate. The customer is then expected to pay the DPA installments per the DPA schedule, plus the budget amount by the monthly due date. The DPA is considered separate, and failure to follow the DPA does not negate the budget billing.
- 8.5 Budget billing customers shall be subject to late payment penalties at 1% of the monthly billed amount.
- 8.6 If a budget payment is not paid, a 10-day disconnection notice shall be issued for the amount of the missed payment. If the payment is still not made within those 10-days, the customer is subject to disconnection of service.
- 8.7 If a budget payment is not paid, the customer shall be notified with the next billing by bill-print comment that if proper payment is not received subsequent to this notification, the next regular billing may effectuate the removal of the customer from the budget plan and reflect the appropriate amount due. Use bill-print comments 8 & 9.
- 8.8 Customers who have been removed from the budget billing program shall be eligible to re-enroll at SU's discretion. Items such as past payment history, household income, and/or the circumstances of the missed payment(s), etc. shall all be taken into account. See 9.4 for details on handling any outstanding balances as a result of removal.
- 8.9 Please remember that we cannot refuse a budget billing plan to any residential customer, or to any commercial account that provides for residential living (apartment buildings).
- 8.10 To calculate a budget, click on the Monthly Average button from the Balance History screen within Northstar. If the customer has been there a partial year, manually adjust to account for seasonal consumption differences.

Effective: *Thursday, November 15, 2012*
Brian R. Hoops
Utilities Office & Information Systems Supervisor