

POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Utility Safety Net Medical Program

OBJECTIVE

The Utility Safety Net Medical Program is administered by the Utility Account/Field Services Division (UA/FS) and structured to achieve the following objectives:

1. Provide a tool for single-family residential customers with a medical condition to manage their utility bill during temporary periods of personal crisis.
2. Maintain the customer responsibility to pay for utility services received from the City.
3. Defer the City's use of water shut-off as an account collection method without undermining the City's fiduciary responsibility to recover the costs of providing utility service.

PROGRAM ELEMENT

The program consists of two components: (1) deferred water shut-off and (2) a pay plan for a utility account's delinquent balance. The program, including deferral of water shut-off, is conditioned on responsible efforts by the customer to make regular agreed upon payments towards the payoff of any account delinquent balance.

The City and the customer jointly determine the length of the deferral period and the size and number of installment payments based on the utility account balance and the depth of the medical condition.

The Utility Safety Net Medical Program is not intended to eliminate the customer's financial responsibility. Instead it is intended to be a temporary way to enable the customer to resolve a temporary crisis.

ELIGIBILITY

A single-family residential customer may be eligible for the Utility Safety Net Medical Program if the following criteria is met:

A physician must complete and return the Medical Condition Certification form to the City of Winter Haven stating that the customer must have water service at all times due to a medical condition. A sample of the form is attached.

SAFETY NET BENEFIT

Upon determination of eligibility, the UA/FS staff would offer the customer a Pay Plan, document in writing all terms and conditions worked out and agreed to by the customer, and agree that water shut-off actions would be suspended as long as the customer adheres to the agreed upon Pay Plan. Depending on the balance owed and determination that the customer is not participating or no longer in need, the City will reserve the right to remove a customer from the Program.

IMPLEMENTATION AND ADMINISTRATION

The Program will be administered and implemented through the UA/FS Division of the City of Winter Haven. Customers who qualify for this Program would be directed to UA/FS staff specifically authorized to make eligibility determinations regarding the criteria. UA/FS staff will flag the utility account with a warning notice that the customer has a medical situation in the Budget/Delinquent section of File Maintenance in the warning field by noting MEDICAL, make a note in the account note section, file the executed Pay Plan agreement with a copy of the completed Medical Condition Certification form attached, and monitor the Pay Plan for compliance.

Effective Date: 6/22/2009

UA/FS Division Director: 