

Water Companies

WAC

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PART I—GENERAL RULES

WAC 480-110-205 Application of rules. The rules in this chapter apply to any water company that distributes, sells, or supplies water, and that meets requirements for commission regulation or jurisdiction under RCW 80.04.010 and WAC 480-110-255 (Jurisdiction). This includes investor-owned water companies that meet the jurisdictional threshold of serving one hundred or more customers or receive average revenue of four hundred twenty-nine dollars or more per customer per year.

WAC 480-110-215 Exemptions from rules in chapter 480-110 WAC. ~~(1) The commission may grant an exemption of any rule in this chapter, if consistent with the public interest, the purposes underlying regulation, and applicable statutes.~~

~~(2) To request a rule exemption, a person must file with the commission a written request identifying the rule for which an exemption is sought and giving a full explanation of the reason the exemption is requested.~~

~~(3) The commission will assign the request a docket number, if needed, and schedule the request for consideration at one of its regularly scheduled open meetings or, if appropriate under chapter 34.05 RCW, in an adjudication. The commission will notify the person requesting the exemption, and other interested persons, of the date the commission will consider the request.~~

~~(4) The commission will enter an order granting or denying the request or setting it for hearing, pursuant to chapter 480-09 WAC.~~

The commission may grant an exemption from the provisions of any rule in this chapter in the manner and consistent with the standards and according to the procedures set forth in WAC 480-07-110 (Exceptions from and modifications to the rules in this chapter; special rules).

WAC 480-110-225 Saving clause. ~~The commission may impose additional or different requirements on any water company in response to a complaint or on its own motion. These rules do not relieve any water company from any of its duties and obligations under the laws of the state of Washington.~~

Additional requirements. (1) These rules do not relieve any company from any of its duties and obligations under the laws of the state of Washington.

(2) The commission retains the authority to impose additional or different requirements on any company in appropriate circumstances, consistent with the requirements of law.

WAC 480-110-227 Severability. If any provision of this chapter or its application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the remainder of the chapter or the application of the provision to other persons or circumstances is not affected.

WAC 480-110-235 Definition of control. (1) For purposes of determining commission jurisdiction over a water company as defined in RCW 80.04.010, "control" means the water system operator or manager has discretion over the property or finances or operations of a water company which is normally exercised by an owner. Factors indicating control include, but are not limited to, whether the operator or manager:

- (a) May authorize the purchase or sale of all or part of the water system or its water rights;
- (b) May authorize capital additions or improvements to the system;
- (c) May accept contributed plant;
- (d) May authorize the expenditure or acquisition of funds ~~which~~ that encumber any asset of the company;
- (e) May authorize the expenditure of funds for nonwater company purposes;
- (f) Receives compensation of a type or amount having no reasonable relationship to the work performed or to be performed.

(2) Control does not include management by a satellite agency as defined in chapter 70.116 RCW if the satellite agency is not an owner of the water company.

WAC 480-110-245 Glossary

"Applicant" means any person, partnership, firm, corporation, municipality, cooperative organization, governmental agency, etc., that has completed a water company's application for water service.

"Commission" means the Washington utilities and transportation commission.

"Contributions in aid of construction" means any money, services or property received by a water company to fund capital investments at no cost to the company with no obligation to repay.

"Customer" means:

Anyone who has paid water company fees and/or has an accepted application for service; or

Anyone whose service connection is installed and is currently paying a ready-to-serve charge; or

Anyone who is actually receiving water service from the company with the knowledge of the company.

"Extension" means the water mains and equipment necessary to extend the company's transmission and distribution infrastructure. An extension may also be called a distribution extension, a main extension, or a line extension.

"Facilities charge" means a one-time fee that a new customer must pay, consistent with WAC 480-110-455 ([Water company funding mechanisms](#)), before the company will connect the customer's property to the water system.

"Initial tariff" means:

The tariff filed by a water company when it first becomes subject to the jurisdiction of the commission; or

The tariff filed by a water company that was formerly subject to commission jurisdiction, and has once again become jurisdictional. It does not mean a tariff filed to add a newly acquired system or company to the tariff of a currently jurisdictional company.

"Jurisdictional customer" means anyone who is actually receiving water service.

"Potential customer" means anyone to whom the water company has given a letter agreeing to provide service; and

The letter is currently enforceable and has not expired by its own terms; and

The property is not yet receiving any type of service.

"Primary contaminants" means substances that, when present in drinking water at levels exceeding designated maximum contaminant levels (MCL), may adversely affect the health of consumers. These MCLs are established as water quality "primary standards" and are based on chronic, nonacute, or acute human health effects.

"Rate increase filing" means any filing by the company that would:

Increase gross annual revenues of the company from activities regulated by the commission; or

Restructure tariffs so that one class of customer would provide more gross revenue than under the prior tariff structure. The term does not mean filings designed only to recover governmentally imposed taxes or periodic rate adjustments that have been authorized by commission order.

"Ready-to-serve charge" means the charge assessed by the water company when:

The water company has the ability to provide water service;

The water company has committed to provide water service; and

There is an installed service connection at the customer's property.

"Reconnect charge" means the charge specified in the company's tariff for restoring water service that has been disconnected:

At the customer's request; or

For nonpayment; or

For failure to comply with the company's rules.

"Service area" means the geographic area to which the company intends to provide water service using current plant.

"Service connection" means the pipes, valves, and fittings between the water company's distribution system and the customer's service line.

"Standby charge" means a charge imposed by some unregulated companies for having transmission and distribution infrastructure installed but without the current ability to provide water. The commission does not authorize this type of charge for regulated water companies.

"Surcharge" means a monthly charge or fee paid to the water company for plant or expenses. The surcharge is in addition to regular monthly service fees and typically has an expiration date or dollar limit and is subject to specific accounting requirements.

"Water company" or **"company"** means any corporation, company, association, joint stock association, partnership or person, their lessees, trustees or receivers appointed by any court whatever, owning, controlling, operating or managing any water plant within the state of Washington for the purpose of furnishing water service to the public for hire and subject to the jurisdiction of the commission. It does not include management by a satellite management agency as defined in chapter 70.116 RCW if the satellite agency is not an owner of the water company.

"Water system" means all plant, equipment, and other assets used to provide water service for a specific location.

WAC 480-110-495261 Maps. Each water company shall maintain a current map of each of its water systems showing the current service area. The company must provide the current maps to the commission for review within five business days of a request. The maps must contain enough detail to answer questions related to rates and charges and obligations to serve.

PART II—COMMON RULES

(Part II includes WAC 480-110-305 through WAC 480-110-425)

480-110-335 Establishing credit and deposits. (1) **Establishing credit - residential.** A company may not collect a security deposit if an applicant for residential service can establish satisfactory credit by any one of the following:

(a) The applicant had prior service with the company or another water company for twelve months before the application date and:

- (i) Service was not disconnected for nonpayment;
- (ii) The customer received no more than one delinquency notice; and

(iii) References with the other company (if applicable) can quickly and easily be checked. The company may request that the references from the previous company be in writing.

(b) The applicant had consecutive employment during the prior twelve months with no more than two employers and is currently employed or has a regular source of income.

(c) The applicant owns or has a legal interest in the premises being served.

(d) The applicant can furnish a satisfactory guarantor who will be responsible for payment of water service bills in the event of disconnection or default by the customer, in a specified amount, not to exceed the amount of the cash deposit required.

(e) The applicant personally produces at the company's business office two major credit cards, or other credit references that the company can quickly and easily check, that demonstrate a satisfactory payment history.

(2) **Establishing credit - nonresidential.** A company may require an applicant for nonresidential water service to demonstrate that the applicant is a satisfactory credit risk by reasonable means appropriate under the circumstances.

(3) **Deposit requirements.** A company may require a deposit if:

(a) The applicant has failed to establish a satisfactory credit history as outlined in subsections (1) or (2) of this section;

(b) The applicant's service from another water company was disconnected for failure to pay amounts owing when due during the twelve months before the application date;

(c) The applicant has an unpaid, overdue balance owing for similar service from the water company to which application is being made or from any other water company;

(d) Two or more delinquency notices have been served on the applicant by any water company during the prior twelve months; or

(e) The application is for beginning or continuing service to a residence where a prior customer still lives and owes a past due bill to the company.

(4) **Deposit amount.** Deposits required for a customer or location must not exceed:

(a) Two-twelfths of the estimated annual billings for companies billing monthly;

(b) Three-twelfths of estimated annual billings for companies billing bimonthly;

(c) Four-twelfths of estimated annual billings for companies billing trimonthly.

(5) **Transfer of deposit.** When a customer moves to a new address within the company's service territory, the deposit plus accrued interest, less any outstanding past-due balance owing from the old address, must be transferred to the new address or refunded.

(6) **Interest on deposits.** Companies that collect customer deposits must pay interest on those deposits calculated:

(a) ~~For each calendar year~~ Effective February 1 of each year, at the rate for the one-year Business Day Treasury Constant Maturity calculated by the U.S. Treasury, as published in the Federal Reserve's Statistical Release H.15 on January 15 of that year. If January 15 falls on a nonbusiness day, the company will use the rate posted on the next following business day; and

(b) From the date of deposit to the date of refund or when applied directly to the customer's account.

(7) **Deposit payment arrangements.** The company must allow an applicant or customer the option of paying fifty percent of the deposit prior to service, and paying the remaining balance in equal amounts over the next two months, on the dates mutually agreed upon between the applicant or customer and the company. The company and applicant or customer may make other mutually acceptable deposit payment arrangements.

(8) **Receipt for deposit.** A company must furnish a receipt to each applicant or customer for the amount deposited.

(9) **When refund of deposits is required.** A company must refund deposits plus accrued interest when there has been satisfactory payment, as defined in (a) of this subsection, or when service is terminated.

(a) "Satisfactory payment" means a customer has paid for service for twelve consecutive months in a prompt and satisfactory manner as evidenced by the following:

(i) The company has not started a disconnection process against the customer;
and

(ii) The company has sent no more than two delinquency notices to the customer.

(b) Termination of service. When service is terminated, the company must return to the customer the deposit amount plus accrued interest, less any amounts due the company by the customer.

(10) **How deposits are refunded.** The company must refund any deposit plus accrued interest, as indicated by the customer at the time of deposit, or as modified by the customer on a later date, using one of the following methods:

(a) A check issued and mailed to the customer no later than fifteen days following completion of twelve months of satisfactory payment, as described above; or

(b) A credit applied to the customer's account for service beginning in the thirteenth month.

(11) **Additional deposit.** If a deposit or additional deposit amount is required after the service is established, the reasons must be specified to the customer in writing. Any request for a deposit or additional deposit amount must comply with the

standards outlined in subsections (1) and (2) of this section. If the original deposit was secured by a guarantor and the guarantor does not agree to be responsible for the additional deposit amount, the customer will be held responsible for paying the additional deposit.

WAC 480-110-355 ~~Discontinuance of~~ Discontinuing service. (1) **Service may be disconnected either by customer direction or by company action:**

(a) **Customer-directed.** – Customers wanting to discontinue service must notify the water company. The company must disconnect the service as requested by the customer. If the customer fails to request disconnection of service the customer will be responsible to continue paying for water service at the company's tariff rate until the company becomes aware that the customer vacated the property.

(b) **Company-directed: Notice requirements.** – After properly notifying the customer, as explained in subsection (3) of this section, the water company may discontinue service to its customers for:

- (i) Unpaid bills, as provided for in WAC 480-110-375 ([Form of bills](#));
- (ii) Water use for purposes or properties other than those specified in the customer's application for service;
- (iii) Willful waste of water through improper or defective piping, equipment, or otherwise;
- (iv) Piping or equipment that does not meet the company's standards or fails to comply with other applicable codes and regulations;
- (v) Tampering with the company's property;
- (vi) Vacating the premises;
- (vii) Nonpayment of any proper charges, including deposit, as provided in the company's tariff;
- (viii) Refusing to allow access as required in WAC 480-110-305 ([Access to premises](#));
- (ix) Violating rules, service agreements, or effective tariffs, including violation of outdoor watering instructions given to customers in order to curtail water use during time of shortage;
- (x) Use of equipment that detrimentally affects the company's service to its other customers.

(c) **Service obtained by fraud: No notice required before termination.** – A water company may terminate service without notice when it discovers that a customer has obtained service fraudulently. Examples of fraud include: When service is connected without the company's knowledge, when service is obtained by fraudulent

means or representations, or when service is used to provide service to other persons who are required to obtain their own service.

(i) **First offense:** The company may disconnect service immediately and without prior notice when it discovers fraud, unless the customer immediately pays:

(A) The tariff rate for service that the company estimates was taken fraudulently;
plus

(B) All company costs resulting from the fraudulent use and all applicable fees;
plus

(C) Any applicable required deposit.

(ii) **Second offense:** The company may disconnect service immediately and without prior notice when it discovers further fraud. The company may refuse to reconnect service to a customer who has been disconnected for further fraud.

(iii) **Commission review:** A customer may ask the commission to review any company determination of fraud through an informal or formal complaint. The company has the burden of proving that fraud occurred. However, this rule does not relieve any person who has committed fraud from civil or criminal responsibility.

(2) **Medical emergencies.** –When a water company has cause to disconnect or has disconnected a residential service, it must postpone disconnection of service or must reinstate service for a grace period of five business days after receiving either verbal or written notification of the existence of a medical emergency. In cases of actual emergencies when service is reinstated, payment of a reconnection charge and/or deposit shall not be required prior to reinstatement of service.

(a) The company may require that the customer, within five business days, submit written certification from a qualified medical professional stating that the disconnection of water service would significantly endanger the physical health of a resident of the household. "Qualified medical professional" means a licensed physician, nurse practitioner, or physician's assistant authorized to diagnose and treat the medical condition without supervision of a physician. Nothing in this section precludes a company from accepting other forms of certification, but the maximum the company can require is written certification. If the company requires written certification, it may require that the certification include some or all of the following information:

(i) Residence location;

(ii) An explanation of how the physical health of the person will be endangered by disconnection of local service;

(iii) A statement of how long the condition is expected to last; and

(iv) The title, signature and telephone number of the person certifying the condition.

(b) A medical emergency does not excuse a customer from paying delinquent and ongoing charges. The company may require that the customer do the following within the five business day grace period: Pay a minimum of twenty-five percent of the delinquent balance and enter into an agreement to pay the remaining delinquent balance within ninety days and to pay subsequent bills when due. Nothing in this section precludes the company from agreeing to an alternate payment plan, but the company may not require the customer to pay more than this subsection prescribes. The company must send a notice to the customer confirming the payment arrangements within two business days.

(c) If within the five-day grace period the customer fails to provide an acceptable payment arrangement, the company may disconnect service without further notice.

(d) If the customer fails to abide by the terms of the payment agreement the company may disconnect service without further notice.

(e) The medical certification is valid only for the length of time the health endangerment is certified to exist but no longer than six months unless renewed.

(3) **Required notice prior to disconnecting service.** – [Water companies](#) [Each water company](#) must notify customers before disconnecting their service except in case of danger to life or property, fraudulent use, impairment of service, or violation of law. In all other cases, the company must not disconnect service until it has met the following requirements:

(a) The company must serve a written disconnection notice on the customer, either by mail, or, at the company's option, by personal delivery of the notice to the customer's address, attached to the primary door. Each disconnection notice must include:

(i) A delinquent date that is no less than eight business days after the date of personal delivery or mailing if mailed from inside the state of Washington or a delinquent date that is no less than eleven days if mailed from outside of the state of Washington; and

(ii) All pertinent information about the reason for the disconnection notice and how to correct the problem; and

(iii) The company's name, address, and telephone number by which a customer may contact the company to discuss the pending disconnection of service.

(b) In addition to (a) of this subsection, a second notice must be provided by one of the two options listed below:

(i) **Delivered notice.** –The company must deliver a second notice to the customer and attach it to the customer's primary door. The notice must contain a deadline for compliance that is no less than twenty-four hours after the time of delivery that allows the customer until 5:00 p.m. of the following day to comply; or

(ii) **Mailed notice.** –The company must mail a second notice, which must include a deadline for compliance that is no less than three business days after the date of mailing if mailed from within the state of Washington or six days if mailed outside the state of Washington.

(c) Disconnection notices must:

(i) Include detailed information pertinent to the situation; and

(ii) Include the company's name, address and telephone number by which the customer may contact the company to discuss the pending disconnection of service; and

(iii) Expire after ten business days from the first day that the company may disconnect service, unless other mutually agreed upon arrangements have been made and confirmed in writing by the company. If mutually accepted arrangements are not kept, the company may disconnect service without further notice.

(d) Except in case of danger to life or property, companies may not disconnect service on Saturdays, Sundays, legal holidays, or on any other day on which the company cannot reestablish service on the same or following day.

(e) A company employee dispatched to disconnect service must accept payment of a delinquent account at the service address if tendered in cash, but is not required to give change for cash tendered in excess of the amount due and owing. The company must credit any excess payment to the customer's account. When disconnection does not take place due to payment made by the customer, the company may assess a fee for the disconnection visit to the service address as provided in the company's tariff. The disconnection notice must describe the disconnection visit charge, the amount, and the circumstances under which the charge will be made.

(f) When service is provided through a master meter, or when the utility has reasonable grounds to believe service is to other than the customer of record, the company must undertake reasonable efforts to inform occupants of the service address of the impending disconnection. Upon request of one or more service users, where service is to other than the customer of record, a minimum period of five days must be allowed to permit the service users to arrange for continued service.

(g) When service is provided to a hospital, medical clinic with resident patients, or nursing home, notice of pending disconnection must be provided to the director of the Washington department of health, and to the customer. Upon request to the company from the Washington department of health director or designee, an additional five business days must be allowed before disconnecting service to allow the department to take whatever steps are necessary to protect the interests of resident patients who are responsibilities of the Washington department of health.

(h) Service may not be disconnected while the customer is pursuing any remedy or appeal provided by these rules or while engaged in discussions with the company's

representatives or with the commission. However, any amounts not in dispute must be paid when due and any conditions posing a danger to health, safety, or property must be corrected.

(4) **Payments at a payment agency.** – Payment of any past due amounts to a designated payment agency of the water company constitutes payment when the customer informs the company of the payment and the company has verified the payment with the payment agency.

(5) **Reconnecting water service after disconnection.** – The water company must restore disconnected service when the customer has paid, or the company has agreed to bill, any reconnection charge and:

- (a) The causes of disconnection are removed; or
- (b) The customer pays all proper charges; or
- (c) The customer pays any applicable deposit as provided for in the company tariff in accordance with WAC 480-110-335 ([Establishing credit and deposits](#)).

The commission may order reconnection pending resolution of any bona fide dispute between the company and the customer over the propriety of disconnection.

WAC 480-110-365 Service responsibilities. (1) **Customer responsibility** - Customers must notify the water company in writing prior to making a change in equipment or usage that will materially affect the service being provided by the company. The customer must:

- (a) Provide the company adequate time to install necessary additional facilities or supply; and
- (b) Pay an equitable share of the cost of necessary additional facilities, if any, as provided in the company's tariff or through a contract submitted to the commission for approval.

(2) **Water company responsibility.** – ~~Water companies~~ [Each water company](#) must:

- (a) Install and maintain all equipment at appropriate locations necessary to operate the system;
- (b) Install additional equipment as required by the commission in connection with performing special investigations; and
- (c) Notify all affected customers when changes to the service will require customers to adjust their equipment.

(i) If the customer has been advised of the needed change prior to taking service, the company has no obligation to pay for any costs in connection with making required changes to the customer's equipment.

(ii) If the change in service is required by law, the company has no obligation to pay for any costs in connection with making required changes to the customer's equipment.

(iii) Otherwise when equipment must be adjusted to permit use under the changed conditions, the cost of any necessary adjustments must be equitably shared by the company and customer.

(3) **Maintenance.** – Each water company must maintain its plant and system in a condition that enables it to furnish adequate service and meet its obligation under chapter 246-290 [Public water supplies WAC](#) or 246-291 [Group B public water systems WAC](#), as applicable.

(4) **Quality of water.** – Each water company must meet Washington department of health requirements under chapter 246-290 or 246-291 WAC, as applicable.

(5) **Protection of water supply.** – Each water company must protect its sources of supply, as required by Washington department of health under chapter 246-290 or 246-291 WAC, as applicable.

(6) **Operations and maintenance.** – Each water company must comply with Washington department of health rules regarding operation and maintenance, as required under chapter 246-290 or 246-291 WAC as applicable, and by good engineering practices.

(7) **Test records.** – Each water company must:

(a) Keep a complete record of each test made for quality and service conditions as required under these rules. The records must contain complete information concerning the test, including such items as the commission may require;

(b) Provide the records to the commission staff upon request.

(8) **Interruption of service and service outages:**

(a) ~~Water companies~~ [Each water company](#) must make all reasonable efforts to avoid outage of service but are not insurers in the event of emergency, acts of God, or similar event. When outages do occur, the company must make reasonable efforts to reestablish service with a minimum of delay.

(b) When making necessary repairs or changes to its facilities, a water company:

(i) May interrupt service for a period of time as reasonably necessary and in a manner that minimizes the inconvenience to the customers; and

(ii) Must attempt to do the work during working hours regularly maintained by the company.

(c) A water company may interrupt service without incurring any liability.

(9) **Notice of service interruptions.** – ~~Water companies~~ [Each water company](#) must:

- (a) Notify its customers of a scheduled interruption twenty-four hours in advance through newspapers, radio announcements, or other means;
- (b) Notify police and fire departments affected by the interruption individually;
- (c) Keep a record of all interruptions of service affecting a substantial number of customers, including in such records:
 - (i) The location;
 - (ii) The date and time;
 - (iii) The duration; and
 - (iv) The cause of each interruption, if known.
- (d) Provide copies of records to the commission staff, upon request;
- (e) Notify the Washington department of health.

WAC 480-110-375 Form of bills. (1) Customer bills must:

- (a) Be issued at intervals not to exceed three months and identify if the water company is billing in arrears or advance;
- (b) Show a reference to the applicable rate schedule;
- (c) Identify and show each separate charge as a line item;
- (d) Show the total amount of the bill;
- (e) Include enough information that, together with tariff rates, the customer can calculate his or her bill (a copy of the tariff is available for review at company or from the commission upon request);
- (f) Show the date the bill becomes delinquent if not paid. The minimum specified time must be fifteen days after the bill's mailing date, if mailed from within the state of Washington, or eighteen days if mailed from outside the state of Washington, after the bill's mailing date.

A customer may request to pay by a certain date that is not the normally designated payment date when showing good cause. Good cause may include, but is not limited to, adjustment of a billing cycle to parallel receipt of income. The preferred payment date must be prior to the next invoice date.

- (g) Include the water company's name, business address, and telephone number and/or emergency telephone number by which a customer may contact the company;
- (h) If the customer is metered, include the current and previous meter readings, the current read date, and the number and kind of units consumed;
- (i) Show taxes and any tax percentage rate that the taxes are computed from. Taxes must be totaled to show a total taxed amount. Upon request, the company must provide a detail of the computation of the tax amount. Taxes, as used here, represent municipal occupation, business and excise taxes that have been levied by a municipality

against the company, and are being passed on to the customer as a part of the charge for water service; and

(j) Clearly identify when a bill has been estimated.

(2) ~~Water companies~~ Each water company may prorate bills for customers who have taken service for a fraction of the billing period. If the company does not have its method of prorating bills in its tariff, the company must prorate bills in the following manner:

(a) For flat rate service, the charge must be prorated on the basis of the proportionate part of the period during which service was rendered.

(b) For metered service the charge will be equal to:

(i) The applicable minimum charge as shown in the company's tariff must be prorated on the basis of the proportionate part of the period during which service was rendered; plus

(ii) Any water usage charge computed using rates and allowances shown in the company's tariff.

(3) The water company must include its method for estimating bills in its tariff. Estimating of bills is allowed for no more than two consecutive billing cycles.

(4) When a company has cause to back-bill a customer, the company must allow the customer payment arrangements, if requested, for the same number of months to pay equal to the cumulative total of months being back-billed. (Example: If the company is back-billing for a one-year period, the company must allow the customer twelve months of equal payments to pay the total amount of the back billing.) These payments will be in addition to current billings.

WAC 480-110-385 Water company responsibility for complaints and disputes. (1) If a water company receives a complaint or dispute from a customer or an applicant for service it must:

(a) Acknowledge the complaint;

(b) Investigate promptly;

(c) Report the results of the investigation to the complainant;

(d) Take corrective action, if warranted, as soon as appropriate under the circumstances;

(e) Inform the complainant that the decision may be appealed to a higher level representative at the company, if any;

(f) Inform the complainant, if still dissatisfied after speaking with the higher level representative, of the commission's availability for review of the complaint; and

(g) Provide the complainant with the commission's address and toll-free telephone number.

- (2) Applicants, customers, or their representatives, may file with the commission:
- (a) An informal complaint against the company as set forth in WAC 480-07-910 ([Informal complaints](#)); and/or
 - (b) A formal complaint against the company as set forth in WAC 480-07-370 ([Pleadings—General](#)).
- (3) When commission consumer affairs staff refers an informal complaint to the company, the company must:
- (a) Investigate and report the results to the commission consumer affairs staff within two business days. The commission consumer affairs staff may grant an extension of time for responding to the complaint, if requested and warranted;
 - (b) Keep the commission consumer affairs staff informed of progress toward the solution and the final result.
- (4) Each water company must keep a record of all complaints concerning service or rates for at least one year and, on request, make them readily available for commission review. The record must contain:
- (a) Complainant's name and address;
 - (b) Date and nature of the complaint;
 - (c) Action taken; and
 - (d) Final result.

WAC 480-110-395 Water quality refunds. (1) ~~Water companies~~ [Each water company](#) may be required to refund water charges due to poor water quality only:

- (a) Upon commission order resulting from a formal proceeding before the commission; and
 - (b) When there are violations of the Washington department of health water quality standards in WAC 246-290-310 (~~primary contaminants~~) ([Maximum contaminant levels \(MCLs\) and maximum residual disinfectant levels \(MRDLs\)](#)); and
 - (c) If the company does not take follow up steps outlined in WAC 246-290-320 ([Follow-up action](#)).
- (2) The amount of the refund will be determined in a formal proceeding before the commission and is not recoverable through rates or charges.

[Statutory Authority: RCW ~~80.01.040~~ [80.04.110](#). 99-24-100 (Order R-467, Docket No. UW-980082), § 480-110-395, filed 11/30/99, effective 12/31/99.]

WAC 480-110-415 Meters. (1) **Water company rights and responsibilities:**

- (a) ~~The~~ [Each](#) water company must:
 - (i) Bear the cost of the meter and meter installation.

- (ii) Install water meters that are in working order and accurately measure water flow.
 - (iii) Record meter serial numbers and identify location of installation.
 - (iv) Repair or replace a malfunctioning meter at its expense unless a customer causes the malfunction.
- (b) The water company may:
- (i) Install meters and charge the tariff meter rate after thirty days notice to affected customers.
 - (ii) Install any apparatus to detect fraud or waste without notifying the customer.
- (2) Water customer rights and responsibilities:**
- (a) A customer may request that a standard residential meter as defined in the company's tariff be installed, provided that metered rates are in effect.
 - (b) When a customer requests a meter installation, the water company may charge the customer in advance for the meter cost and meter installation, if such charge is included in the company's tariff. The company must reimburse the customer, by bill credit, at least ten percent of the meter and installation charge each month until fully paid.
 - (c) The water company has thirty days from the date of request to install the meter.
 - (d) If the water company fails to install the meter within the time limit in (c) of this subsection, the customer must be charged only the meter minimum charge until the meter is installed.
 - (e) If a customer tampers with a meter, the customer will be liable to the company for any repair or replacement costs.
 - (f) If the customer requests assistance in reading a meter, the water company must provide information on how to read the meter.

WAC 480-110-425 Water company customer notice requirements. (1) Each water company must submit a draft ~~Draft~~ customer notices ~~must be submitted~~ to the commission for review at least one week ~~prior to~~ before the company's planned printing date for distribution.

- (2) At a minimum, the water company must notify:
 - (a) Customers and potential customers who may be affected by the water company's proposal; and
 - (b) The public affairs section of the commission.
- (3) Customers must receive notice thirty days ~~prior to~~ before the requested effective date when a water company proposes to:
 - (a) Increase rates;

- (b) Change terms and/or conditions of an existing service;
 - (c) Change the ownership or control of the operating company (see WAC 480-143-210 ([Transfer customer notice requirements](#)) for content of notice);
 - (d) Institute a charge for a service that was formerly provided without charge; or
 - (e) Eliminate or grandfather any service.
- (4) Content of notice for rate change - The notice to customers must contain, at a minimum, the following:

important notice

(a) Date

(b) (Insert water company name) has filed for approval from the Washington utilities and transportation commission to increase rates (insert total annual revenue). If approved, the rates will be effective on (insert effective date).

(c) (Clearly explain the reason for the proposal - be specific.)

Current Rates/Services	Proposed Rates
\$	\$

(d) If you have questions about the proposed filing and how it will affect you, please call (insert company name & office phone number). If you have questions about the rate making process, you may contact the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission at the following address: WUTC, 1300 S. Evergreen Park Drive S.W., P.O. Box 47250, Olympia, WA 98504-7250; 1-800-562-6150 (toll-free) or by e-mail comments@wutc.wa.gov.

(e) If you would like to comment on this proposal, it is important for you to do so now. Comments must be submitted in writing or presented at the commission's open meeting to be included as part of the formal record. The commission is interested in receiving your views regarding this proposal whether in favor or not. All open meetings are held in Olympia, WA. If you would like to be added to the commission's mailing list to be notified of the open meeting date, please call 1-800-562-6150 and leave your name, complete mailing address, the water company's name, and a description of the proposal you are interested in.

Sincerely,
(Company Name/Representative)

(5) Notice after commission action is permitted only when the commission approves an increase in federal, state, county or city-imposed taxes, fees or surcharges, and when credits are issued.

(a) At a minimum, notice after commission action must include the effective date, a clear description of changes to rates or services resulting from the commission's decision, and a company contact number where customers may seek additional information.

(b) Any notice after commission action may be accomplished by a bill message, bill insert, printed in a company newsletter, or mailed separately to customers.

(c) The commission may require other notification to the public as it determines necessary.

PART III—RATES AND CHARGES RULES

(Part III includes WAC 480-110-431 through WAC 480-110-455)

WAC 480-110-~~265~~431 Tariffs. Tariffs filed by a water company must conform to the rules of this section and chapter 480-80 WAC Utilities General—Tariffs, unless the commission has authorized deviation from the rules in writing.

WAC 480-110-~~295~~433 Adopted and initial tariffs. A water company must file revisions to its filed tariff within thirty days of its acquisition of new service area, whether by acquisition of another regulated water company or by acquiring one or more previously unregulated water systems.

(1) **Adopted tariffs - when a regulated company acquires another regulated company.** Any regulated water company acquiring a regulated water company must adopt the latter's tariff. An adoption form must be completed and filed with the commission by the acquiring water company within thirty days of the acquisition. The commission will supply an adoption form upon request.

(2) **Incorporate into existing tariff - when a regulated water company acquires a nonregulated company.**

(a) When a regulated water company acquires a nonregulated water company or water system, the acquiring water company must file a separate tariff page indicating the name of the newly acquired company or system with the rates and charges that were in existence before the acquisition.

(b) If the acquired nonregulated company or water system was previously subject to commission jurisdiction, the acquiring water company must file a separate tariff page indicating the name of the newly acquired company or system with the rates and charges in effect for the acquired company at the time the acquired company was removed from regulation.

(c) No other rates and charges may apply to the customers on the newly acquired system except those specifically shown on the new tariff page unless the company obtains the commission's approval to charge a different rate.

(3) Initial tariffs - when a company becomes jurisdictional.

(a) An initial tariff must be filed in a standard tariff format. The commission will provide illustrations of the standard format upon request.

(b) The tariff must be accompanied by a cover letter describing the filing as an initial tariff.

(c) Customers must be notified before the commission receives the filing.

(d) The filing must be accompanied by supporting financial data justifying the proposed rates. See WAC 480-07-530; [\(General rate proceedings—Water companies\)](#).

(4) Initial tariffs - a company that was previously subject to commission jurisdiction. If a company or water system was previously subject to commission jurisdiction and once again becomes jurisdictional, the company must file a tariff with the rates and charges in effect at the time the company was last removed from regulation.

WAC 480-110-435 Extension contracts. (1) Each water company must file, as a part of its tariff, an extension rule that states the conditions required by the company before it will extend its transmission and distribution infrastructure to provide water service to an applicant.

(2) Companies entering into any extension contract must:

(a) File the contract with the commission not less than thirty days before the proposed effective date of the contract.

(b) Conform the proposed contract to the applicable provisions of WAC 480-80-143 [\(Special contracts for gas, electric, and water companies\)](#).

(3) Extension contracts must include the documentation necessary to show that the proposed charges are fair, just, reasonable, and sufficient.

(4) An extension may also be referred to as a distribution extension, a main extension, or a line extension.

WAC 480-110-445 Service connections and customer service lines. A service connection is the pipes, valves, and fittings between the water company's distribution

system and the customer's service line. The customer's service line is the water line from the customer's points of usage to the water company's service connection.

(1) **Service connection charge and service connection length.** The length of a service connection can vary depending on where the customer's service line is or will be located. A tariffed service connection charge may be assessed for the cost of a new service connection. However, if the service connection is longer than the distance from the water distribution main to the outside edge of the right of way or easement that runs along or parallel to the water distribution main and closest to the customer's property line, the cost of such an extension may be financed as line extension, at the option of the company. The related line extension contract is subject to approval by the commission under WAC 480-110-435 ([Extension contracts](#)).

Place illustration here.

(2) Service connections may be installed when the system is built or at a later date, after the system is operational. A service connection charge may be based on the average installation cost for new service connections in subsection (3)(a) and (b) of this section. The service connection must be owned and maintained by the water company.

(3) A water company may assess a service connection charge, if named in its tariff, to recover the cost of the service connection:

- (a) Installed by the water company during construction of the water system; or
- (b) Installed after the distribution system had been buried and in service; or
- (c) When the service connection has been previously removed for good cause and must be reinstalled to provide water service.

(4) A service connection charge must not be assessed if:

- (a) The water company did not incur any cost to install the service connection (e.g., the service connection is a contribution in aid of construction);
- (b) The water company is just installing a meter; or
- (c) The water company is merely opening a valve to connect the company's distribution system to the customer's service line.

(5) The company may install the service connection to the property line, property corner, or to a location on the property mutually agreed upon. The company may install a meter or valve at any point along the service connection line or at a different mutually agreed location provided that in such event the property line will nevertheless be deemed the point of delivery.

(6) The customer's service line must be installed to provide easy access to the water company's distribution system. If there is doubt as to where the proper location should be, the customer must consult with the water company and agree on a location.

(7) The water company may request that the trench be left open and customer's service line exposed in order to inspect the connection for potential problems. The water company must complete the inspection within two business days after notification that the trench is open.

PART IV—FINANCIAL RECORDS AND REPORTING RULES

Subpart A: General Rules

WAC 480-110-456 Definitions. The definitions in this section apply to Part IV of this chapter.

“Affiliated interest” means a person or corporation as defined in RCW 80.16.010.

“Control” means the possession, direct or indirect, of the power to direct or cause the direction of the management and policies of a company, whether through the ownership of voting shares, by contract, or otherwise.

“Subsidiary” means any company in which the water company owns directly or indirectly five percent or more of the voting securities, unless the water company demonstrates it does not have control.

WAC 480-110-457 Filing information. (1) **Filing.** The commission records center will accept any filing under WAC 480-110-525 (Issuing securities) delivered in person, by mail, telefacsimile, or electronic mail message. The commission records center will accept all other reports required in PART IV in person, by mail, or when procedures are in place, electronic mail message.

(2) **Commission may require additional information.** The commission may require pertinent information in addition to that specified by statute or in this chapter.

(3) **Information by reference.** When any information required to support a filing is on file with the commission, it is sufficient to make specific reference to the information indicating the proceeding, report, or other filing that contains the referenced information.

(4) **When information is unavailable.** If any required information is unavailable at the time of the filing, the filing must include the reason why the information is not available and state when it will be available.

WAC 480-110-459 Additional reports. PART IV does not supersede any reporting requirement specified in a commission order or limit the commission's ability to request additional information.

WAC 480-110-465 ~~Political information and political education activities.~~ ~~(1) The commission will not allow expenses for political information or political education activities for ratemaking purposes.~~

~~(2) Political information and political education activities include, but are not limited to:~~

~~(a) Encouraging support or opposition to ballot measures, legislation, candidates for an office, or current public office holders.~~

~~(b) Soliciting support for political action committees.~~

~~(c) Gathering data for political mailing lists.~~

~~(d) Soliciting political contributions or recruiting political volunteers.~~

Expenditures for political or legislative activities. (1) The commission will not allow either direct or indirect expenditures for political or legislative activities for rate-making purposes.

(2) For purposes of this rule, political or legislative activities include, but are not limited to:

(a) Encouraging support or opposition to ballot measures, legislation, candidates for a public office, or current public office holders;

(b) Soliciting support for or contributing to political action committees;

(c) Gathering data for mailing lists that are generated for the purposes of encouraging support for or opposition to ballot measures, legislation, candidates for public office, or current office holders, or encouraging support for or contributions to political action committees;

(d) Soliciting contributions or recruiting volunteers to assist in the activities set forth in (a) through (c) of this subsection.

(3) Political or legislative activities do not include activities directly related to appearances before regulatory or local governmental bodies necessary for the utility's operations.

WAC 480-110-485 ~~Retention and preservation of~~ Retaining and preserving records and reports. (1) The water company must retain all records and reports for three years unless otherwise specified in subsection (2) of this section.

(2) The *Regulations to Govern the Preservation of Records of Electric, Gas and Water Companies*, published by the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners is prescribed as the requirement for the state of Washington. Information about the *Regulations to Govern the Preservation of Records of Electric, Gas and Water Companies* regarding the version adopted and where to obtain it is set out in WAC 480-110-999, (Adoption by reference).

Subpart B: Reporting Requirements.

WAC 480-110-275505 Accounting and reporting requirements, and regulatory fees.

(1) Water companies must use the uniform system of accounts (USOA) published by the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC). Information about the USOA regarding the version adopted and where to obtain it is set out in WAC 480-110-999, [\(Adoption by reference\)](#). The USOA sets out the accounting requirements for class A, B, and C water companies.

Water companies are classified by revenues.

WAC (10/9/02 3:40 PM) []

Class	Annual Gross Operating Revenue
A	\$1,000,000 or more
B	\$200,000 to \$999,999
C	Less than \$200,000

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(2) A water company may use the accounting requirements for a higher class if it chooses.

(3) The commission will distribute an annual report form that each water company must complete and file with the commission for the prior calendar year. The annual report must be filed, and the company's regulatory fee paid, no later than May 1 of each year.

(4) A written request for the extension of the time for filing the annual report can be made prior to May 1. The commission does not grant an extension of time for payment of regulatory fees.

WAC 480-110-475515 Reports of accidents. Each water company must notify the commission within seventy-two hours after every accident resulting in death or serious injury to any person occurring in its plant or through contact with its facilities. At a minimum, the report must include the name of the injured person, time and place of the accident, and an explanation of the accident. The water company may notify the commission by phone, but must provide a written report within five business days.

WAC 480-110-525 Issuing securities. (1) At least five business days, as defined in WAC 480-07-120 (Office hours), before a water company issues stocks, stock certificates, other evidence of interest or ownership, bonds, notes, or other evidences of indebtedness, or assumes any obligation or liability as guarantor, the company must file with the commission:

(a) A description of the purposes for which the issuance will be made, including a certification by an officer authorized to do so, that the proceeds from any such financing is for one or more of the purposes allowed by RCW 80.08.030;

(b) A description of the proposed issuance, including the estimated terms of financing; and

(c) A statement as to why the transaction is in the public interest.

(2) Before issuance of the proposed security, the company must file with the commission the terms of financing.

(3) A commission order is not required for such a filing. The company may request a written order affirming that the company has complied with the requirements of RCW 80.08.040. The company must submit the request for a commission order, along with the information required in subsection (1) of this section, at least fifteen business days before the requested effective date for the order. The company must file the information required in subsection (2) of this section with the commission before the commission enters a written order.

(4) Filing a Registration Statement with the Securities and Exchange Commission using a shelf registration process does not constitute undertaking the issuance of a security, and therefore a filing with the commission is not required under the provisions of RCW 80.08.040. A shelf registration filing is defined under the General Rules and Regulations promulgated under the Securities Act of 1933, Rule 415 - Delayed or Continuous Offering and Sale of Securities.

(5) An authorized representative must sign and date the filing and include a certification or declaration that the information is true and correct under penalty of perjury as set forth in RCW 9A.72. The certificate or declaration must be in substantially the following form:

“I certify (or declare) under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of Washington that the foregoing is true and correct.”

(6) Within sixty days after the issuance of any securities, except for dividend reinvestment and employee benefit plans, a company must file with the commission a verified statement:

(a) Outlining the final terms and conditions of the transaction; and

(b) Setting forth actual proceeds from the issuance and the disposition of proceeds stating the final amount to be used for each purpose allowed by RCW 80.08.030.

WAC 480-110-535 Transferring cash or assuming obligation. (1) At least five business days, as defined in WAC 480-07-120 (Office hours), before a water company or the subsidiary of a water company transfers cash to any of its affiliated interests or subsidiaries or assumes an obligation or liability of any of its affiliated interests or any of its subsidiaries, the company must report to the commission an estimate of the amount to be transferred and the terms of the transaction when the transaction will exceed thresholds, which are based on the prior calendar year gross operating revenue, as described in (a) or (b).

(a) The company must report if the cumulative transactions to a subsidiary or affiliated interest for the prior twelve months exceed a threshold of five percent.

(b) When the threshold in (a) has been reached, the company must report each subsequent transaction exceeding a threshold of one percent for the prior twelve-month period.

(2) The reporting requirement in this section does not include payments for:

(a) Federal and state taxes;

(b) Goods, services, or commodities;

(c) Transactions, attributed to the regulated entity, previously approved or ordered by the commission, other regulatory agencies, or the court; or

(d) Dividends to the extent the level of such dividends over a twelve-month period do not exceed the larger of:

(i) Net income during such period; or

(ii) The average level of dividends over the preceding three years; or

(e) Sweep or cash management accounts used to transfer funds to or from a subsidiary or affiliate as part of the customary and routine cash management functions between or among the company and its subsidiary or affiliate.

WAC 480-110-545 Affiliated interests—Contracts or arrangements. Prior to the effective date of any contract or arrangement described in RCW 80.16.020, each water company must file a verified copy or a verified summary, if unwritten, of contracts or arrangements with any affiliated interest. Prior to the effective date of any modification or amendment, the company must file verified copies of the modifications or amendments to the contracts or arrangements. If the contract or arrangement is unwritten, the company must file a verified summary of any modification or amendment. The commission may institute an investigation and disapprove the

contract or arrangement if the commission finds the company has failed to prove that it is reasonable and consistent with the public interest.

WAC 480-110-28555 ~~Securities, affiliated interest, transfer~~ Transfers of property. (1)

~~Prior to a water company issuing stock, evidence of indebtedness, or any other securities, the company must comply with the requirements of chapter 80.08 RCW and chapter 480-146 WAC.~~

~~(2) Prior to a water company entering into a contract or arrangement with an affiliated interest, the company must file a copy, or summary if unwritten, of the contract or arrangement with the commission in accordance with chapter 80.16 RCW and chapter 480-146 WAC.~~

~~(3) Prior to transferring, selling, leasing, or assigning any of its property or facilities, or before acquiring property, facilities, stock, or bonds of another public utility, a water company must apply for and obtain commission approval in accordance with chapter 80.12 RCW and 480-143 WAC.~~

Before selling, leasing, or assigning any of its property or facilities which are necessary or useful in the performance of its duties to the public, or before acquiring property or facilities of another public utility, a water company must obtain from the commission an order authorizing such transaction in accordance with chapters 80.12 RCW (Transfers of property) and 480-143 WAC (Commission General—Transfers of Property).

WAC 480-110-565 Securities report. Each water company that has issued securities must file with the commission an annual securities transaction report. The report is due ninety days from the end of the company's reporting period, whether a fiscal or calendar year. At a minimum, the report must contain:

(1) A schedule of the securities issued during the reporting period including a detailed description of the final agreements;

(2) A description of the use of proceeds stating the amounts used for each purpose allowed by RCW 80.08.030;

(3) The level of expenses for each of the securities transactions for the reporting period;

(4) A schedule of securities retired, refunded, repurchased, or otherwise removed from the company's capitalization; and

(5) A schedule of securities scheduled to mature in the fiscal or calendar year following the reporting period.

WAC 480-110-575 Affiliated interest and subsidiary transactions report. (1) Each Class A water company must file an annual report summarizing all transactions that occurred between the company and its affiliated interests, and the company and its subsidiaries. The report is due one hundred twenty days from the end of the company's reporting period, whether a fiscal or calendar year. The report must include a corporate organization chart of the company and its affiliated interests and subsidiaries.

(2) When total transactions with an affiliated interest or a subsidiary are less than twenty-five thousand dollars (\$25,000) for the reporting period, the company must provide the name of the affiliated interest or subsidiary participating in the transactions and the total dollar amounts of the transactions. When total transactions with an affiliated interest or subsidiary equal or exceed twenty-five thousand dollars (\$25,000) for the reporting period, the company must provide:

(a) A balance sheet and income statement for such affiliated interest;

(b) A description of the products or services provided to or from the company and each such affiliated interest or subsidiary;

(c) A description of the pricing basis or costing method, and procedures for allocating costs for such products or services, and the amount and accounts charged during the year;

(d) A description of the terms of any loans between the company and each such affiliated interest or subsidiary and a listing of the year-end loan amounts and maximum loan amounts outstanding during the year;

(e) A description of the terms and total amount of any obligation or liability assumed by the company for each such affiliated interest or subsidiary;

(f) A description of the activities of each such affiliated interest or subsidiary with which the company has transactions; and

(g) A list of all common officers and directors between the water company and each such affiliated interest or subsidiary, along with their titles in each organization.

(3) The report required in this section supersedes the reporting requirements contained in previous commission orders authorizing affiliated interest transactions pursuant to chapter 80.16 RCW.

(4) The company is obligated to file verified copies of affiliated interest contracts and arrangements as stated in WAC 480-110-545 (Affiliated interests—Contracts and arrangements).

PART V—ADOPTION BY REFERENCE

WAC 480-110-999 Adoption by reference. In this chapter, the commission adopts by reference all or portions of regulations and standards identified below. They are available for inspection at the commission branch of the Washington state library. The publications, effective date, references within this chapter, and availability of the resources are as follows:

(1) The *Uniform System of Accounts for Water Utilities* is published by the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC).

(a) The commission adopts the version in effect in 1996.

(b) This publication is referenced in WAC 480-110-~~275~~ [505](#), (Accounting, and reporting requirements and regulatory fees).

(c) The *Uniform System of Account for Water Utilities* is a copyrighted document. Copies are available from NARUC, in Washington, D.C.

(2) The *Regulations to Govern the Preservation of Records of Electric, Gas, and Water Companies* is published by the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC).

(a) The commission adopts the version in effect in 1985.

(b) This publication is referenced in WAC 480-110-485, (~~Retention and preservation of~~ Retaining and preserving records and reports).

(c) The *Regulations to Govern the Preservation of Records of Electric, Gas, and Water Companies* is a copyrighted document. Copies are available from NARUC, in Washington, D.C.