



# City of Seattle

## COMPLIANCE MANUAL

### Utility Submetering & RUBS Allocation Billing

February 1, 2004





January 1, 2004

Re: City of Seattle Third Party Billing Ordinance # 121320

Dear Community Manager,

Ordinance number #121320, regulating Third Party Billing was passed by the City of Seattle City Council and signed by the Mayor on November 13, 2003. While the ordinance takes effect 30 days from the Mayor's signature, the Chapter (provisions) shall take effect and be in force on **February 1, 2004**. This ordinance will affect communities located in the City of Seattle, with Allocation (RUBS) or submetered utility programs in place and those who plan to implement programs in the future.

The creation of this ordinance is a direct result of residents lack of understanding of their utility billing program and the rising costs of utilities (*see 2004 City of Seattle Public Utility Rate Increases included in this manual*). Our goal, using this manual as a supplement, is to provide you with additional information to better educate your residents and staff on how the billing program works and it's benefits.

Since many of the provisions are standard procedures followed by Minol, this ordinance will have minimal impact on our internal operations and systems. The ordinance does however, establish specific requirements which must be handled by the owner, or owner's representative to insure compliance and ensure your communities avoid specified penalties for violations. Most importantly, the ordinance requires that the owner provide all residents on the billing program with a copy of the new ordinance and an explanation of the billing method. Enclosed in this manual you will find a sample cover letter and suggested attachments to forward to your residents no later than 02/01/04. Notification can be delivered either via mail or to their door.

I would suggest first, that you discuss your program and the new ordinance with your Minol Account Manager. Your Utility Billing Lease Addendum will describe your specific billing method, however, if you are unsure, please request your property specific "Billing Method" worksheet from your Minol Account Manager. Second, meet with your on site staff. As any experienced manager or trainer will attest, earning staff buy-in is an educational process. When it comes to your utility billing program it means educating literally everyone. Every person on site, from Manager to Porter must understand WHY your program is crucial for conservation. Studies show that the conservation impact, or reduction in usage, run between 8%-30% when a utility billing program is in place. This equates to millions of gallons and dollars saved each year! They should also know how your program benefits the community from a business perspective. Control of this once variable expense minimizes the need for constant rent increases due to escalating utility rates and utility waste. Once your staff is trained, they in turn can effectively and accurately communicate with your residents. Also, keep in mind that most disputes can be avoided by providing thorough explanations of the program with your resident upon move in or renewal. Make sure that each new resident and renewal reviews and signs a separate utility billing lease addendum. Your addendum should explain the method of billing and serves as full disclosure of the billing program. An addendum was provided during the set up of your program, however, a revised addendum was sent to your community in December following the ordinance change. Feel free to contact your Account Manager or the Minol Implementation Department ([setup@minolusa.com](mailto:setup@minolusa.com)) if you have questions regarding your addendum. This manual will provide you with further information and material to better educate your residents and ensure that together we comply with the new ordinance enacted in the City of Seattle.

A billing fee of \$2.00 per service (with water & sewer being considered two separate services) with a \$5.00 per bill maximum has been established. The Account Activation Fee or Move In Fee can no longer be passed back to the resident per the new ordinance. Late Fees are \$5.00 + 1% with a 30-day term. The NSF fee is \$31.00.

Again, upon review of this package, I encourage you to contact your Minol Account Manager to schedule a follow up discussion of this ordinance and how it relates to your program. Minol also has additional resident material and training resources available to you. All of the information in this manual is available in file format, and can be emailed to you upon request.

In conclusion, know that your residents are as important to us as they are to you. We realize that your residents are your first priority, and in turn are ours. The Minol Customer Service Call Center and your Account Manager is available to assist with any resident concerns that need additional attention. As always, our goal is to provide prompt answers and solutions to your resident's questions and concerns.

As a reminder, please make sure copies of your community's utility bills are forwarded to Minol immediately upon receipt (via fax 877-791-4765). Minol reviews each new property bill and recalculates and reviews resident billing rates. In order to provide your residents with accurate and timely billing, we must have your bill copies to determine resident rates and cycles.

On behalf of all of our staff members here at Minol, thank you! We greatly appreciate your business and the confidence you have placed in us. It is a pleasure serving you and your valued residents.

Sincerely,

Andrian D. Seymour, CAM  
Director, Special Projects

Cc: Community Owner

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# City of Seattle

## Third Party Billing Ordinance #121320

Effective 02/01/2004

A copy of this ordinance can be downloaded from the City of Seattle's website at [www.clerk.ci.seattle.wa.us](http://www.clerk.ci.seattle.wa.us)

Section 1. A new chapter is added to Seattle Municipal Code Title 7 to read as follows:

### 7.25.010 Short title and purpose.

A. This chapter may be known and be cited as "Third Party Billing Regulation." The general purpose of this chapter is to prevent landlords, either themselves or through a third party billing agent, from billing tenants for master metered or other unmetered utility services without proper notice and disclosure of billing practices to tenants, and to protect tenants from deceptive or fraudulent billing practices, and to these ends the provisions of this chapter shall be liberally construed.

B. Nothing in this chapter shall be construed to prevent a landlord from including a tenant's cost of master metered or other unmetered utility services within the rent set forth in a rental agreement, and the practice of including such cost within a tenant's rent shall not be considered a billing practice or methodology affected by the provisions of this chapter.

C. Nothing in this chapter shall be construed to affect the practices used by Seattle Public Utilities or Seattle City Light to bill and collect residential multi-unit building owners or landlords for master metered or other unmetered utility service.

### 7.25.020 Definitions. As used in this chapter:

A. "Billing entity" means the landlord or third party billing agent, as the case may be, responsible for billing residential multi-unit building tenants for master metered or other unmetered utility service.

B. "Disclosure" means providing tenants with complete and accurate written information in a clear, concise, and understandable manner in all notices required under this chapter and on each bill presented from the billing entity to tenants.

C. "Landlord" means a "landlord" as defined in and within the scope of RCW 59.18.030 and RCW 59.18.040 of the Residential Landlord Tenant Act of 1973 ("RLTA") in effect at the time the rental agreement is executed, and shall also mean the owner of a mobile home park or boat moorage. At the time of passage of the ordinance codified in this chapter, RLTA defined "landlord" as "the owner, lessor, or sublessor of the dwelling unit or the property of which it is a part," and included "any person designated as representative of the landlord."

D. "Master metered utility service" means a utility service supplied to more than one (1) unit in a multi-unit building and measured through a single inclusive metering system.

E. "Methodology" refers to any method, technique, or criterion used to apportion to tenants charges billed to the landlord by the utility for master metered utility service or unmetered utility service, including but not limited to Ratio Utility Billing Systems, installation of submetering, and hot water metering.

F. "Multi-unit building" refers to a residential building or group of buildings (which may include a mobile home park or boat moorage) with 3 or more tenant units with a master metered utility service or unmetered utility service, such as solid waste collection, that is provided to the building or group of buildings as a whole.

G. "Personally identifiable information" means specific information about a tenant, including but not limited to the tenant's social security number, birth date, mother's maiden name, banking data or information, or any other personal or private information.

H. "Ratio Utility Billing System" or "RUBS" refers to any methodology by which the cost of master metered or other unmetered utility service provided to tenants and common areas of a multi-unit building is apportioned to tenants through the use of a formula that estimates the utility usage of each rental unit in the building based on the number of occupants in a unit, number of bedrooms in a unit, square footage of a unit, or any similar criterion.

I. "Rental agreement" means a "rental agreement" as defined in and within the scope of RCW 59.18.030 and RCW 59.18.040 of the RLTA in effect at the time the rental agreement is executed, and is deemed to include any month-to-month tenancy arrangement, whether written or oral. At the time of the passage of the ordinance codified in this chapter, the RLTA defined "rental agreement" as "all agreements which establish or modify the terms, conditions, rules, regulations, or any other provisions concerning the use and occupancy of a dwelling unit."

J. "Service charge" refers to any charge or fee imposed by the billing entity to cover the costs of providing or administering the billing practices, regardless of the label applied to such charge or fee.

K. "Tenant" means a "tenant" as defined in and within the scope of RCW 59.18.030 and RCW 59.18.040 of the RLTA in effect at the time the rental agreement is executed, and shall also mean a tenant of a mobile home park or boat moorage. At the time of passage of the ordinance codified in this chapter, the RLTA defined "tenant" as "any person who is entitled to occupy a dwelling unit primarily for living or dwelling purposes under a rental agreement."

L. "Billing practices" refers to the practices of a landlord or third party billing agent, as defined herein, that bills residential multi-unit building tenants for the purpose of apportioning master metered or other unmetered utility services provided to the building(s) as a whole, either by directly submetering tenants' usage or by otherwise apportioning such utility services among tenants, and also refers to any practices related thereto, including but not limited to collecting, using or disclosing tenants' personally identifiable information (other than name and address), attempting to collect unpaid amounts from tenants, verifying tenants' credit, and reporting unpaid balances to credit reporting agencies.

M. "Third party billing agent" refers to any entity retained or authorized by a landlord to bill tenants for master metered or other unmetered utility service on behalf of and as the agent of a landlord.

N. "Utilities" or "utility service(s)" refers to water, sewer, electric, and solid waste services.

### 7.25.030 Prohibited billing practices.

A. It is a deceptive and fraudulent business practice for any landlord or third party billing agent to bill tenants separately for utility services except as permitted in this chapter.

B. It is a deceptive and fraudulent business practice for a landlord to engage, retain, or authorize, and a landlord shall be liable for the actions of, a third party billing agent that does not comply with the requirements of this chapter.

C. As of the effective date of this ordinance, no landlord may disclose to a third party billing agent a tenant's personally identifiable information under any circumstances, provided, however, that nothing in this chapter shall prevent a landlord from disclosing a tenant's name and address to a third party billing agent for the purpose of engaging in permitted billing practices.

D. A third party billing agent who prior to the effective date of this ordinance has obtained any tenant's personally identifiable information (other than name and address) shall not use, sell, convey, or otherwise disclose that personally identifiable information to any other person, except as expressly permitted in this chapter, and must destroy all such information upon a tenant's request, when the tenancy terminates and the account is paid, or when the landlord terminates the third party billing agency relationship.

E. No third party billing agent may inform a credit reporting agency of a claim against a tenant except as expressly permitted in RCW Chapter 19.16, regardless of whether the third party billing agent is licensed by the state pursuant to that chapter.

### 7.25.040 Billing requirements.

A. Notwithstanding the prohibition against submetering electric service in SMC 21.49.100(G), a landlord may, itself or through a third party billing agent, bill tenants for master metered or other unmetered utility services, including electric service provided to tenants of multi-unit buildings, provided that the following requirements are met:

1. Notice Billing practices may be adopted only upon advance written notice to a tenant as part of a new or renewed rental agreement. Tenants must receive such written notice at least 90 days before expiration of their rental agreements, or, in the case of month-to-month tenancies, at least 90 days before any such billing practices may become effective. Notwithstanding the foregoing two sentences, if billing practices are already in place at the time the ordinance codified in this chapter becomes effective, written notice must be given within 30 days of the effective date of the ordinance codified in this chapter.

2. Methodology The notice required under section A.1 above must include a copy of this chapter and a detailed written disclosure of the methodology used by the billing agent to allocate the charges to each tenant, including the methodology used to allocate utility services for common areas of the building, along with all other terms and conditions of the billing arrangement. If submetering is used, the notice required under section A.1 shall also include descriptions of the location of the submeter and of the access requirements, if any, required by the landlord for access to tenant units for submeter installation, reading, repair, maintenance, or inspections, including removal of the submeter for testing, consistent with the provisions of RCW 59.18.150 of the RLTA. An additional written notice must also be given at least 30 days prior to the due date of the next rental payment in order to implement a change in billing agents, apportionment methodology, fees, or other terms and conditions of the billing arrangement.

#### 3. Posting of Information

a. In addition to the written notification required by subsection A.2. above, any landlord employing billing practices shall post in a conspicuous public space in the interior of the building copies of the three most current utility bills for master metered or other unmetered utility services provided to the building as a whole that are included in the bill sent to the tenant, together with a written description of the methodology used to allocate each such utility service and a copy of this chapter.

b. Where such posting is physically impracticable due to the absence of a suitable conspicuous public space, a landlord may satisfy this posting requirement by hand-delivering or mailing to tenants a paper copy of the written notification required by subsection A.2. together with a written description of the methodology used to allocate each such utility service and a copy of this chapter. In lieu of posting the three most current utility bills for master metered or other unmetered utility services provided to the building as a whole that are included in the bill sent to the tenant, the landlord must make such utility bills available upon request within 5 business days and must inform tenants in the written notification required by subsection A.2 of the method by which they may request such utility bills.

c. Landlords shall keep bills for master metered or other unmetered utility services on file in the building for at least two years and shall make such bills available to tenants for inspection and copying upon request. Where it is physically impracticable to keep such bills on file due to the absence of a suitable office or other storage space, a landlord may store the bills in another location and must make such bills available within 5 business days of receiving a request from a tenant.

4. Limitations on Charges The total of all charges for any utility service included in the bills sent to all units cumulatively shall not exceed the amount of the bill sent by the utility itself for the building as a whole, less any late charges, interest or other penalties owed by the landlord, with the exception of the following, which may be included in each bill covering an independent unit within the multi-unit building:

a. A service charge of no more than \$2 per utility per month, not to exceed a cumulative service charge of \$5 per month for all the utilities included in any bill.

b. Late payment charges of no more than \$5 per month plus interest at a rate not to exceed 1% per month, which late payment charge shall not accrue until at least 30 days after the tenant receives the bill.

c. Insufficient funds check charges for dishonored checks, not to exceed \$31 per dishonored check.

5. Licensing of Third Party Billing Agents Any third party billing agent must be properly registered and licensed to do business in the State of Washington and City of Seattle and must be in compliance with all applicable Washington state and Seattle laws and regulations, and all applicable Washington and Seattle license identification numbers, if any, must be disclosed upon request.

6. Content of Bills Each billing statement sent to a tenant by a billing entity must disclose all required information in a clear and conspicuous manner and at minimum must:

- Include the name, business address & telephone number of the billing entity;
- Identify and show the basis for each separate charge, including service charges and late charges, if any, as a line item, and show the total amount of the bill; c. If the building units are submetered, include the current and previous meter readings, the current read date, and the amount consumed (or estimated to have been consumed if Seattle Public Utilities or Seattle City Light has provided the landlord with an estimated bill); d. Specify the due date, the date upon which the bill becomes overdue, the amount of any late charges or penalties that may apply, and the date upon which such late charges or penalties may be imposed;
- Identify any past due dollar amounts;
- Identify a mailing address and telephone number for billing inquiries and disputes, identify the entity responsible for resolving billing inquiries and disputes and its business hours and days of availability, and describe the process used to resolve disputes related to bills as set forth in this chapter; and
- Include a statement to the effect that "this bill is from [landlord name] and not from Seattle Public Utilities or Seattle City Light."

7. Protection of Personally Identifiable Information a. A third party billing agent who prior to the effective date of this ordinance has obtained a tenant's personally identifiable information shall take such actions as are necessary to protect such personally identifiable information and to prevent its use or disclosure except as expressly permitted in this chapter.

b. A third party billing agent who prior to the effective date of this ordinance has obtained a tenant's personally identifiable information may disclose such personally identifiable information only to the extent necessary to render its billing services.

c. To the extent required by federal, state, or local law, a billing entity may disclose personally identifiable information in its possession (i) pursuant to a subpoena or valid court order authorizing such disclosure, or (ii) to a governmental entity.

8. Estimated Billing If Seattle Public Utilities or Seattle City Light has billed the landlord using an estimate of utility service consumed, the billing agent may estimate the charges to be billed to tenants until billing based on actual consumption resumes. Upon receipt of a corrected bill showing that the estimated bill overstated charges, the landlord must refund the difference to tenants. Upon receipt of a corrected bill showing that the estimated bill understated charges, the landlord may attempt to recover the underpayment from the tenants that actually incurred the charges during the billing period, but shall not attempt to recover an underpayment from a tenant who did not reside in the unit during the billing period in which the charges were incurred.

9. Submetering Submetering is permitted as a way of allocating master metered utility services to tenants provided the following conditions are met:

- The submeters must be read prior to each billing.
- A landlord may not enter a unit without, and a tenant may not unreasonably withhold, consent to enter the unit in order to perform submeter installation, reading, repair, maintenance, and inspection, including removal of the submeter for testing, provided, however, that a landlord may enter a unit without a tenant's consent in the case of a submeter leak or emergency related to that unit's submeter.
- If a tenant contests the accuracy of the submeter, the tenant shall have the option of demanding an independent test of the meter through the Consumer Affairs Division of the Department of Executive Administration. If the meter reads within a 5% range of accuracy, the tenant requesting the test shall pay the cost of the meter test. If the meter reads outside a 5% range of accuracy, the landlord shall pay for the cost of the meter test and within 30 days refund any overpayments for the past three months based on a recalculation of the past year's billings by correcting for the inaccuracy of the submeter. Submetering thereafter shall only be permitted with a repaired submeter.

B. Nothing in this section shall be construed to prevent a landlord from addressing billing of master metered or other unmetered utility services in a written addendum to a lease. A lease addendum may be used to give the notice required under subsection A.1 of this subsection, so long as the lease addendum is provided to the tenant with the notice required under that subsection, and so long as all other requirements of this chapter are satisfied.

7.25.050 Dispute resolution and remedies.

A. A dispute regarding the amount of charges or other terms and conditions contained in a bill shall be resolved as follows:

- The tenant must notify the entity responsible for billing disputes as identified in the bill ("Responsible Entity") of the nature of and reason for the dispute by calling the number shown on the bill or by writing a letter to the Responsible Entity within 30 days of receiving the bill. The tenant must have a good faith basis for any such dispute.
- Within 30 days of receiving notice of a billing dispute, the Responsible Entity must contact the tenant to discuss the dispute, and the Responsible Entity and tenant must determine the amount of disputed and undisputed charges. The tenant must pay all undisputed charges within 30 days of reaching agreement with the Responsible Entity.
- No late fees or interest charges shall accrue on any disputed portions of a bill while the amount is being resolved in accordance with subsections A.1 and 2, and no collection activity related to the disputed portions of a bill may be instituted against a tenant that has notified the Responsible Entity of a dispute in accordance with this chapter.
- The tenant and Responsible Entity shall continue to discuss in good faith any remaining disputed amounts and attempt to reach an agreement on the amount due, if any, within 60 days of the Responsible Entity's receipt of notice of a billing dispute. If a tenant is unable to reach a satisfactory resolution of any portion of a disputed charge within the allotted time, the tenant may exercise any of the remedies set forth in Section B below or any other available remedies, provided, however, that if within 120 days of the Responsible Entity's receipt of notice of a billing dispute, the tenant has not either exercised one of the remedies set forth in Section B or paid the remaining disputed amounts, the landlord may exercise any legal or equitable remedies available to it to collect the unpaid amounts, and provided further that nothing in this subsection shall be construed to deprive a landlord of its right to exercise any legal or equitable remedies available to it against a tenant that has not paid any undisputed charges, has not followed the procedures set forth in this section, or has not exercised good faith in disputing a charge.

B. If a tenant believes that it has been or will be subject to billing practices that violate any provision set forth in this chapter, the tenant may, at its option, file a complaint against the landlord with the Office of the Hearing Examiner or institute a civil action against the landlord, as follows:

- The Office of the Hearing Examiner is hereby vested with the authority to hear and resolve tenant complaints against landlords regarding billing practices in accordance with its rules and procedures then in force governing contested cases. The filing fee for such a case shall be set at \$5.00. Upon the finding of a violation of this chapter, the Hearing Examiner shall award actual damages (including but not limited to refund of any overpayment or other fees or charges resulting from such violation, and costs of pursuing the claim) and a penalty of one hundred dollars, and may permit the tenant to terminate the rental agreement by written notice in accordance with RCW 59.18.090. If the Hearing Examiner determines that the landlord engaged in prohibited billing practices in deliberate violation of this chapter, the penalty mentioned in the preceding sentence shall be two hundred dollars, and the Hearing Examiner shall also award attorneys' fees to the tenant. A final order or decision of the Hearing Examiner may be subject to judicial review in the King County Superior Court in accordance with the Hearing Examiner's rules and procedures.
- In the alternative, a tenant may institute a civil action against the landlord. Upon a finding that a landlord engaged in billing practices that violate this chapter, the court shall award actual damages (including but not limited to refund of any overpayment or other fees or charges resulting from such violation, and costs of pursuing the claim) and a penalty of one hundred dollars, and may permit the tenant to terminate the rental agreement by written notice in accordance with RCW 59.18.090. If the court determines that the landlord engaged in prohibited billing practices in deliberate violation of this chapter, the penalty mentioned in the preceding sentence shall be two hundred dollars, and the court shall also award attorneys' fees to the tenant.
- No late fees or interest charges shall accrue on any disputed portions of a bill while the amount is being resolved by the Hearing Examiner or court, and no collection activity or unlawful detainer action alleging default in the payment of rent related to the disputed portions of a bill may be instituted against a tenant that has filed a complaint with the Hearing Examiner or instituted a civil action in accordance with this chapter while the amount is being resolved by the Hearing Examiner or court. If the Hearing Examiner or court resolves the dispute and finds that a tenant that has not acted in good faith in asserting a billing dispute, the Hearing Examiner or court may order the tenant to pay late fees and/or interest charges on some or all of the disputed portions of the bill.
- A landlord shall not pass on, charge, or otherwise allocate to tenants, in any manner whatsoever, any damages, fine or penalty (including attorneys' fees) that the landlord is ordered to pay under this chapter.

C. The existence of an unresolved or pending billing dispute does not relieve a tenant of its obligation to pay in a timely fashion all undisputed charges, including those undisputed charges that accrue after the dispute resolution procedures of this chapter have been invoked.

Section 2. In consultation with Seattle Public Utilities, the Department of Executive Administration's Revenue and Consumer Affairs division shall, within 180 days of the effective date of this ordinance, present to Council a proposal for a meter testing program and an associated cost-recovery based fee to satisfy the meter testing requirements established in this ordinance. This proposal shall also include recommendations regarding alternative approaches to regulation of submetering, including allowing use of only certain approved meters or metering technologies, establishing minimal operational standards for meters, and requiring regular testing of all installed meters.

Section 3. The provisions of this chapter shall take effect February 1, 2004 ("Effective Date").

Section 4. This ordinance shall take effect and be in force thirty (30) days from and after its approval by the Mayor, but if not approved and returned by the Mayor within ten (10) days after presentation, it shall take effect as provided by Municipal Code Section 1.04.020.



Phone (888) 636-0493 • Fax (877) 791-4765

[www.minolusa.com](http://www.minolusa.com)

## FAQ - SUMMARY KEY PROVISIONS

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Below you will find frequently asked questions regarding the City of Seattle's new Third Party Billing ordinance. We recommend that you review the ordinance in its entirety. A copy has been provided for your reference. Your Account Manager is available to answer any questions you may have! Please do not hesitate calling.

**Q: The ordinance refers to giving a resident "Notice". What does this mean?**

A: To ensure full disclosure, the ordinance requires that the tenant be provided the following items prior to the start of the billing program (M-T-M or renewal leases must be provided this information at least 90-days prior to billing):

- A copy of the full ordinance
- Written disclosure of the Billing Methodology, terms and conditions of the billing arrangement, Location of submeter if applicable (accommodated with a signed lease addendum)

**Q: The ordinance states that I need to post my community's water bills in a public place. Is this true?**

A: The ordinance does state that the last three property utility bills should be posted in a conspicuous public space in the interior to the building, however, if this is not feasible the ordinance does allow the community to provide copies of this information upon a resident's request within 5 days.

\*In lieu of posting property utility bills, we suggest the property keep a notebook or filing system that contains the following items:

- Property utility bills by month - bills should be kept in the notebook or file for a minimum of two years. (Upon request, a resident must be provided copies within 5 days).
- Place a copy of the applicable Minol Billing Detail Report with your monthly community bills. This report can be downloaded from the Minol website at [www.minolusa.com](http://www.minolusa.com).

**Q: What fees can be billed to the resident?**

A: Service Charge/ Administrative Fee– Not to exceed \$2.00 per service per month. Water and sewer are considered two separate services. Fees not to exceed \$5.00 per month for all utilities included in any bill. Late payment charges cannot exceed \$5.00 per month plus interest at a rate not to exceed 1% per month. Late fee cannot accrue until 30 days after the tenant receives their bill. NSF Fee is \$31.00.

**Q: What are the two most important things I should do to ensure compliance?**

A: 1) Provide all residents with proper notice (both new move ins, MTM leases and renewals). Have them sign a lease addendum and provide a copy of the ordinance. Remember: After 02/01/04, MTM and lease expirations must be given advanced 90-days notice. 2) Fax copies of your property bills to Minol at **877-791-4765** immediately upon receipt! Minol must have this information to calculate resident billing rates.



## FAQ - SUMMARY KEY PROVISIONS (Cont.)

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Resident billing will be delayed if current property bills are not received. Resident billing (less billing and late fees) cannot exceed the property's bills/cost.

**Q: If a resident asks for copies of the property utility bills, what should we do?**

**A:** Effective 02/01/03, copies must be provided. However, it should always be a policy to provide the resident as much information as possible so that they may fully understand their charges and the process. If you are in doubt or need assistance with a concerned resident, please contact Minol Customer Service or your Account Manager at 888-636-0493.

**Q: Are there changes to the billing statement resident's receive?**

**A:** Yes, effective with the February billing, further information regarding dispute resolution will be printed on the statement.

**A: Our property has submeters. What happens if a resident disputes their meters accuracy?**

**Q:** If a tenant contests the accuracy of their submeter, they have the option of demanding an independent test of the meter through the Consumer Affairs Division of the Department of Executive Administration (Phone 206-386-1298). Meter must read within a 5% accuracy range. If the meter proves accurate, the resident is responsible for the cost of testing. If the meter is inaccurate, the landlord shall pay for the meter test and with Minol's assistance recalculate the past year's billing. If the meter is under a Minol warranty, then Minol is responsible for any cost associated to testing if the meter does not fall in the required accuracy range. If the meter is out of warranty, the owner is responsible for the cost of testing. Note: In most cases, meters will fall within this accuracy range. In the case of older meters, if they test inaccurately, measurement is typically understated vs. overstated. Thus, usage would be underbilled vs. overbilled.

**A: What is the dispute resolution process for a resident?**

**Q:** See Chapter 7.25.050 of the ordinance. In summary,

- Tenant must notify entity responsible for billing disputes within 30 days.
- Within 30 days, responsible entity and tenant must determine amount of disputed and undisputed charges. Tenant must pay all undisputed charges within 30 days of reaching agreement.
- No late fees or interest charges shall accrue on disputed portions of the bill while it is being resolved.
- Tenant and responsible party shall continue discussions for 60 days. If after 120 days nothing is solved the landlord may pursue legal action.
- If the tenant believes the landlord has violated any part of the ordinance, the tenant may file a complaint to the Office of the Hearing Examiner.
- If a case goes to the Hearing Examiner, the tenant pays a \$5.00 fee.
- If a violation of the ordinance is found, the examiner may award actual damages, \$100-200 penalty and may permit the tenant to terminate the lease.
- The landlord may also institute a civil action.
- Landlord may not pass on any charges associated with this event.





## COMPLIANCE CHECK LIST & QUICK REFERENCE

**Property Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Minol ID#:** \_\_\_\_\_

- ☐ Lease Addendum -Review and approve use of revised addendum. Lease Addendum should clearly explain the community's billing method.

☐ **Current Billable Residents**

Owner must provide resident notification of the billing method and a copy of the new ordinance to all residents currently on a billing program. See "Resident Notification Package", *page 10*.

Deadline: February 1, 2004. Deliver to door or via mail.

☐ **Future Lease Expirations - Renewals & Month-To-Month Leases**  
**Residents who have NOT been on the billing program in the past**

Prior to billing and lease expiration, give 90-days notice. Provide addendum and copy of Seattle Third Party Billing Ordinance.

☐ **New Leases**

Resident must sign the lease addendum and receive a copy of the ordinance.

☐ **Create a On-Site Notebook or File System for your billing program:**

- ☐ Lease Addendum
- ☐ This Compliance Manual
- ☐ Copy of the City of Seattle Ordinance (Page 1-2 of this manual)
- ☐ Beginning Jan. 2004, store copies of your property's utility bills along with the applicable Minol "Resident Billing Detail" report. Do this for each billing cycle. Keep two years of history available.

- ☐ Does Minol have your most current property utility bills?  
\*Minol must receive your property bills promptly via fax (877-791-4765) to ensure compliance.  
Always label bills with your 7-digit Minol ID#.

- ☐ Contact your Minol Account Manager Regarding any questions or concerns.

- ☐ Confirm completion of this checklist. Fax to 877-791-4765, attn: Acct Mgr.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Addr: \_\_\_\_\_

Fax# \_\_\_\_\_

## **SAMPLE RESIDENT NOTIFICATION PACKAGE**

Resident notification should be given to all residents currently on a billing program and those who are not currently on a program but will be renewing or going month to month (and will be responsible for their water & sewer) through the month of April 2004. Notification must be delivered no later than 02/01/04.

Future renewals and MTM leases must be given a similar notice 90-days prior to billing.

### **This notification should include:**

- |   |          |
|---|----------|
| ▪ Example Cover Letter                                      | Page 11  |
| ▪ Copy of City of Seattle Third Party Billing Ordinance     | Page 1-2 |
| ▪ Lease Addendum  |          |
| ▪ Information of 2004 Seattle Public Utility Rate Increases | Page 12  |
| ▪ Why Conserve?   | Page 27  |
| ▪ Conserving Water in Your Apartment                        | Page 30  |

Place on Community Letterhead

Community Name  
Community Address  
City, State Zip  
Phone Number

Date

Re: City of Seattle Third Party Billing Ordinance – Monthly Water Bill

Dear Resident:

Our most precious natural resource is water. Wasting water has come under increased scrutiny by state and local governments because drought has affected so much of our country during the past decade.

As you are aware, our community currently has a water and sewer billing system in place that bills residents for their proportionate share of utility usage. This encourages residents to report leaks (such as dripping faucets and running toilets) and conserve water.

On November 13, 2003, a new ordinance passed governing Third Party Billing in the City of Seattle. Provisions of this ordinance shall take affect February 1, 2003. For your reference, a copy of this ordinance has been attached. A copy of the ordinance can also be downloaded from the City of Seattle's website at [www.clerk.ci.seattle.wa.us](http://www.clerk.ci.seattle.wa.us).

Since many of the provisions are standard billing procedures followed by our billing company, Minol, the ordinance will have minimal impact on your actual monthly utility bill. The ordinance does, however, establish specific dispute resolution steps, resident rights, disclosure requirements and consumer protections. We encourage you to review the ordinance in its entirety. If you should have any questions, please do not hesitate contacting our office or Minol Customer Service at 1-888-636-0493.

Also, attached to this letter, you will find a Lease Addendum that explains the billing method currently in place at our community. This document is provided in an effort to better explain our billing program and to provide you with further information. If you have additional questions regarding your bill, please contact Minol Customer Service at 1-888-636-0493.

Please be aware that the City of Seattle will be raising 2004 water & sewer rates for apartment homes. This will impact your monthly utility bill. Water will increase 18.4% and sewer will increase 6.7%. For more information regarding the City of Seattle rate increases, please visit their website at <http://www.ci.seattle.wa.us/util/services/rates/2003FAQsWater.htm>.


Conservation of water requires a joint effort from everyone. We appreciate your cooperation as we work together to conserve water.

Sincerely,

The Management Team

Attachments:

Lease Addendum  
City of Seattle Third Party Billing Ordinance  
Information of 2004 Seattle Public Utility Rate Increases  
Why Conserve?  
Conserving Water in Your Apartment

City of Seattle Web	Seattle Services	City Home Pages	
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[Services](#) : [Rates](#)

## Information on 2004 Seattle Public Utility Rate Increases

**Water, Sewer and Drainage rates** are all scheduled to increase on January 1 2004. The percentage increases from 2003 rates are shown in the table below.

### Percent Changes in Water, Sewer and Drainage Rates from 2003 to 2004

	Percent Increase	Typical \$ Increase in Monthly Bill
<b>Water</b>		
Single Family Residential	6.5%	\$1.56
Multifamily and Commercial	18.4%	Varies
<b>Sewer</b>		
Single Family Residential	6.7%	\$1.92
Multifamily and Commercial	6.7%	Varies
<b>Drainage</b>		
Single Family Residential	5.2%	\$0.45
Multifamily and Commercial	14.8%	Varies

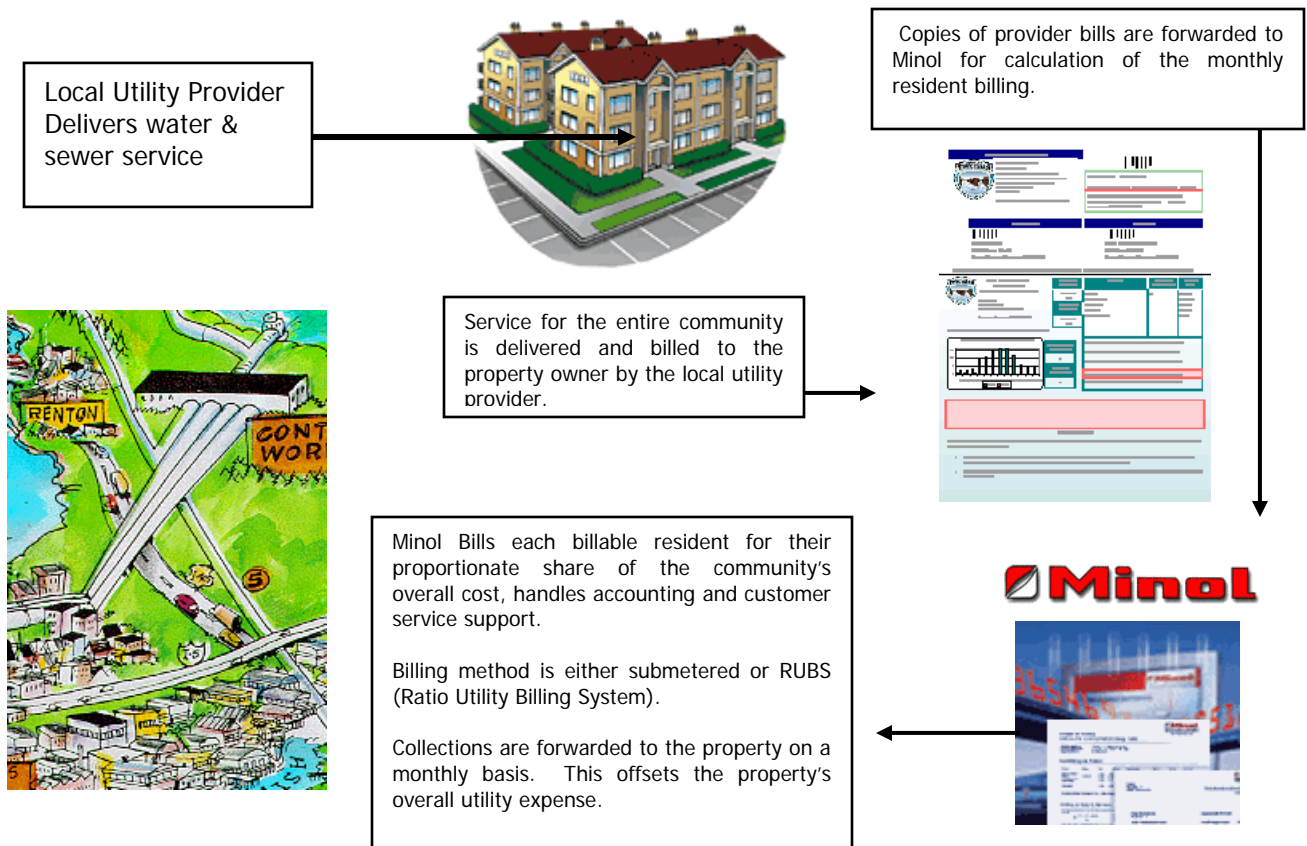
The Mayor has yet to propose new **Solid Waste** (garbage, yard waste, etc.) **rates**. However, it is anticipated that solid waste rates will be increased in the spring of 2004. The increase for all classes of customers is expected to average about **3%**.

At this time, there are no proposed increases in **Electricity rates**. For additional information on past and current electricity rates, please visit <http://www.cityofseattle.net/light/accounts/rates/> or call 684-3181.

For information on current water, sewer, drainage, and solid waste rates please visit <http://www.seattle.gov/util/services/rates/>

## BACK TO THE BASICS PROGRAM OVERVIEW

- Water & Sewer Service is provided to the community by the local utility provider.
- Local utility provider is responsible for delivery, water quality, and meter reading and billing of the property's master meter(s).
- Apartment Owner pays local utility provider's bill for the entire community.
- Minol utilizes a copy (provided by the owner) of the provider's utility bills to determine the rates and charges billed back to the resident.
- Minol generates a monthly statement/bill for residents responsible for their utility usage and in most cases, collects payments.
- Property is reimbursed for resident's proportionate cost, as it is collected from the resident, less monthly billing fee.
- Resident account information and community billing history is available on line at [www.minolusa.com](http://www.minolusa.com)
- Property is responsible for their share of common area facilities and is not reimbursed for these costs.



## Frequently Asked Questions - Community On Site Staff

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Q: Who is Minol?

A: Minol is a third party Submetering and Billing Company that provides meter reading, billing, accounts receivable, and customer service for the residents who have a lease obligating them to pay utilities.

Q: Why is my community charging the residents for utilities?

A: Minol has been contracted to provide service to residents who have leases obligating them to pay for the utilities used in their apartment home. This is the best method of encouraging conservation. Once a resident becomes accountable, they will be quick to report leaks and conserve; something they are less apt to do as long as you (the property owner) are including utilities as part of the rent. In addition Minol's program minimizes your exposure to potentially volatile utility prices since residents are responsible for their proportionate share of usage and cost.

Q: Do we still pay the providers bill? How does the financial aspect work?

A: The Property is responsible for paying the utility company directly for the entire utility bill. Minol's program is solely a reimbursement program. Minol utilizes copies of the community utility bills to determine the applicable resident utility rates. Based upon the resident move in and move out information reported by the community (Minol On Line) Minol generates and mails resident bills on a monthly basis. Payments for resident bills are processed and posted to the resident's Minol account on a daily basis. Real time utility and resident account history are available at Minol's website. A check, which includes all funds collected less, billing fees, is mailed to the community manager or corporate office on a monthly basis (delivery typically no later than the 18<sup>th</sup> of each month). Thus this reimbursement check offsets your utility expense. Typically the difference between your cost and your reimbursement can be associated to common areas, non-billable units (residents not yet on the program) or vacant units.

Q: How is a resident signed up for this program?

A: The signed lease agreement or lease addendum is between the Owner/Management Company and the Resident. Therefore Minol must be notified by the management team to begin and end service for each resident move in, transfer, and move out. This information can be easily reported at Minol's website at [www.minolusa.com](http://www.minolusa.com).

Q: How soon will a resident receive their bill after they move in?

A: Utility bills typically run 2-3 weeks in arrears. Prior to generating resident billing statements, we must receive a copy of your property utility bill (via fax at 877-791-4765). This ensures accurate rates. Therefore, new move-ins may not receive their first bill for four to six weeks. For example a statement mailed to a resident in February would typically reflect January usage.

Q: Does the resident need a utility deposit?

A: NO, there is no additional deposit required for utilities. The lease or lease addendum is required to start service. Minol, with approval from your corporate office, will supply the on-site staff with a lease that contains a paragraph or a lease addendum that obligates the resident to pay for their utilities. The dwelling deposit can be applied to any outstanding balance owed at time of move out, therefore if necessary you do have the

## Frequently Asked Questions - Community On Site Staff (Cont.)

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option to raise the dwelling deposit to ensure that there are enough funds on hand to cover any utility balance owed upon move out.

Q: How much water does the average person use at home per day?

A: Estimates vary, but each person uses about 80 - 100 gallons of water per day. High usage fixtures include toilets, baths, showers and washing machines.

Q: How are resident rates determined?

A: All utility providers have their own unique rate schedule. Provider commercial and residential rates have different pricing structures. Minol complies with all legislative regulations governing submetering and allocation billing for multifamily properties. The Provider utility bill(s) you submit to Minol is utilized to calculate the rates billed to your residents. In order to ensure accurate billing rates, it is crucial that a copy of the property utility bill(s) be faxed to Minol upon receipt (Fax # 877-791-4765).

Q: Are the residents paying for water used in the common areas such as the pool or sprinklers?

A: NO. Community Management pays for utility usage used in the leasing office, laundry rooms, pool and other common areas. If the property has a RUBS or Allocation program in place, a "common area deduction" in the form of a percentage is deducted from the property's utility cost prior to determining resident billing rates.

Q: What are the two common methods of billing?

A: Submeters- Utility cost is allocated on the basis of actual use as measured by one or more submeters installed within an apartment home. Submeters are read via computer, modem, or manual touch pad.

Allocation (RUBS)- Utility cost is based upon one, or a combination of variables. Variables include occupancy, unit square footage, partial submetered usage (hot water meter or cold water meter), number of fixtures, etc. Common area cost is deducted prior to billing.

Q: Allocation/RUBS method is used: Why are meters not installed?

A: In most cases, an automated submetering system is installed during construction since plumbing and electrical design can be planned accordingly. Because many communities were built prior to this technology being available, some are not equipped with submeters and retrofitting is not an option due to building configuration or prohibitive capital investment requirements.



## Frequently Asked Questions - Community On Site Staff (Cont.)

Q: How does water allocation work?

A: Ratio Utility Billing (RUBS) is an alternative billing method when full usage submetering is not an option. Resident bills are calculated based upon one or a combination of variables. Variables include occupancy, unit square footage, partial submetered usage, number of fixtures, etc. Common area cost is deducted prior to billing.

Q: Are unoccupied apartment homes included in the dollar amount allocated?

A: NO. The Community Owner absorbs the utility cost for unoccupied apartment homes.

Q: How are individual meters read?

A: In most cases, Minol captures data from individual meters utilizing the AMR (Automatic Meter Reading) technology. This data flows from a computer chip within the meter and is transferred to a host system via modem. Daily meter readings are captured and retained by Minol as a record of resident consumption.

Q: Will a resident's bill be more expensive because the community uses a billing service?

A: Generally no. Provider rates cannot be marked up for profit. Minol recovers the Owner's cost. Administrative Fees and/or Base Fees are typically lower than those charged by utility companies that service residential homes.

Q: How do I get a Final Bill for a resident who is transferring to a new unit or moving out?

A: An On-Demand Final Bill must be generated instantly by the property on the Minol Website (Account Access). After you enter the move-out date for a resident the On Demand Final Bill will print on your office printer. Minol will not mail a final bill to the resident. We will close the resident account, zero out the account balance and end billing service. The on-site staff is now responsible for collecting the Final Bill amount from the resident. Typically, the community deducts this amount from the security deposit (SODA) as this ensures collections. If there is not sufficient deposit to cover the utilities the resident may write a check to the community for the Final Bill. You do not need to report On-Demand Final Bill payments to Minol.

Q: How is the On Demand Final Bill amount determined?

A: The On Demand Final Bill is calculated in the same manner as the regular monthly billing statement. The Final Bill consists of any unpaid balance (if applicable) plus the current charges, which are pro-rated through the move out date.

## Frequently Asked Questions - Community On Site Staff (Cont.)

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- Q: What if resident claims to have paid Minol the previous balance reported on their On Demand Final Bill?
- A: Payments received are posted to resident accounts daily. You may view and print a resident's Account Summary for verification of payment. If Minol receives payment after the account is closed, we will process a "Request for Refund". The Community staff or Resident (via Minol Customer Service) can initiate a Request for Refund. If the resident contacts Minol directly, we will submit the form to you for approval prior to processing a refund.
- Q: What if a Minol representative sends me a "Request for Refund" forms to approve for a resident who has moved out?
- A: More than likely, this resident had a payment in route to Minol at time of Move Out. Confirm that all amounts due to the property (including cleaning, damages, repairs, etc.) were collected from the resident in full. If all obligations have been met, sign and return the "Request for Refund" form to Minol for processing. Processing time for refunds is approximately 21 days.
- Q: Can I get a copy of the On Demand Final Bill at a later date?
- A: Copies of On Demand Final Bills that have posted are available on our Web site. Click on the "Resident Archive" option. Locate the resident and click on the account number hyperlink. This will open the Resident Account Summary window, click on "Reprint Final Bill".
- Q: Whom do I contact if I have a question?
- A: If you are starting a new program you may contact [setup@minolusa.com](mailto:setup@minolusa.com) for assistance. If you currently have a billing program in place, a designated professional Account Manager is available to assist you. Your Account Manager's name and extension number is listed on the Unit Directory of your Minol web page. Our toll free telephone number is 888-766-1253.
- Q: How often is my community's Delinquency Report (Residents Aged A/R) updated?
- A: Daily! We operate in "Real Time". Payments, returned items and refunds are posted to accounts Monday through Friday as received from the bank or through credit card processing.
- Q: Why should I use the instant on line late notice feature and when is the best time to deliver these notices to residents?
- A: Since the signed lease agreement is between the owner and the resident, it is crucial that you are involved and aware of collections issues. Residents are not required to establish their account with Minol (we are not the utility provider) and Minol does not have the authority to report them to collections for non-payment. Therefore, your involvement is crucial to ensure maximum collections and recovery. Late Notices are best printed the day after the Residents Due Date. Normally, this would be the same time as you are processing delinquent rent notices, around the 5th of the month. You will find that most of the residents who are late on utilities are also late with rent. The rent and utility late notices can be delivered together.

## Frequently Asked Questions - Community On Site Staff (Cont.)

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Q: Do you ever purge the Resident Account Summary?

A: NO. The Residents Account Summary is always available for reprint should you need it.

Q: Who should the resident contact if they have questions about their bill?

A: Our toll free Customer Service telephone number is 888-636-0493. The Minol Customer Service Department can be reached Monday through Friday 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. CST.

Q: Does this program create more work for me?

A: The maintenance of your utility recovery program will be very minimal and your success high if you follow these simple steps. For maximum efficiency, utilize the Minol website at [www.minolusa.com](http://www.minolusa.com).

Q: How can I ensure the best possible program for my Community?

A: Follow these simple steps:

1. Report Move Ins weekly.
2. Print and deliver Instant Late Notices.
3. Report Move Outs as they occur and collect Final Bills.
4. Fax property's provider utility bill(s) to Minol at 877-791-4765.

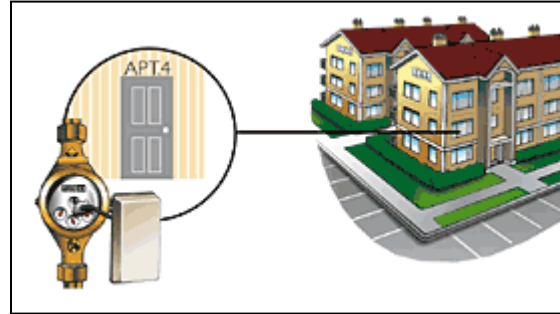
## FULL SUBMETERED BILLING METHOD

Utility cost is allocated on the basis of actual use as measured by one or more submeters installed within an apartment home. One or more individual submeters are installed to measure all utility usage for a single apartment home. Submeters are read via computer, modem, or manual touch pad. Meter readings are obtained without entering the apartment home. Full submetering is typically an application for new construction.

### Rate calculations:

**Base or Flat Charges** – If the utility provider charges base charges, meter charge or customer service charge, charges are billed back to the resident based upon the per apartment unit cost.

**Water & Sewer Consumption Charges** – An average rate per gallon cost is calculated using the utility providers total charge for service divided by the total consumption. Base or flat charges are deducted prior to the calculations.



- Resident bill based upon actual water consumption
- Meters read daily, weekly, monthly
- Promotes the report of leaks and conservation
- Provides additional information for leak detection

## RUBS (RATIO UTILITY BILLING SYSTEM) OR ALLOCATION BILLING METHOD

Ratio Utility Billing (RUBS) is an option when a property cannot be submetered due to its plumbing configuration. In other words, retrofitting with submeters is typically cost prohibitive. RUBS is the next best alternative.



Resident bills are calculated based upon one or a combination of variables. Prior to determining the resident billing calculations, cost associated to common areas is deducted. Variables include:

- Partial submetering – Partial submetering is when a submeter is installed on either the hot water line or cold water line coming into the apartment unit. Typically, if the unit is partially metered, it will be metered for the hot water. A meter can be placed just before the water enters the hot water heater. The resident's charge is based on their proportionate share of hot water usage as a ratio to the total submetered hot water usage for all units.
- Occupancy – Resident's bill is calculated based upon the number occupants living in their home (this includes children). Occupant ratio is determined by taking the total occupants in a particular unit divided by the sum or total occupants for the community.

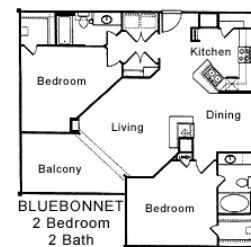
Occupancy Methods:

- 1) Straight occupancy (one for one)
- 2) Factored occupancy - Residents with more than one occupant are given consideration for shared water use, i.e. laundry, dishes, etc. *See table below.*

Factor Table:

# Occupants	Factor	
1	1.0	One person's consumption of utilities
2	1.6	Two people consume 60% more than one person
3	1.9	Three people consume 90% more than one person
4	2.2	Four people consume 120% more than one person
Each additional	.3 ea	Each additional person consumes 30% more

- Unit square footage – The billing for the resident's portion is based on the square footage in the resident's dwelling unit divided by the total square footage living area of all dwelling units of the apartment community. The owner absorbs the cost associated to vacant and non-billable square footage.



## RUBS (RATIO UTILITY BILLING SYSTEM) OR ALLOCATION WRITTEN EXAMPLE- Occupancy Factor

Your Minol Account Manager can provide you with additional material to assist with explaining your specific billing method. This information is available in file format and can be emailed to you.

Below is an example of a common RUBS method using occupancy factor. A diagram for this example is located on the next page.

---

### Billing Information:

T. Property Utility Bill	\$ 236.80
Common Area Deduction (office, laundry, pool, etc.)	<u>(23.68)</u>
T. Property Utility Bill after common 10% common deduction	\$ 213.12

Total Occupant Factor for the entire community (billable & non-billable residents)	11.6
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### **Apartment #101**

2 Occupants (Factor is 1.6) see *table on following page*

### Occupant Factor Calculation:


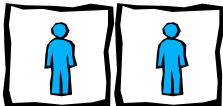
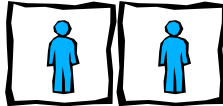

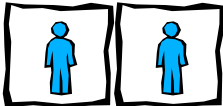

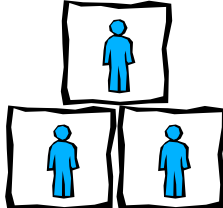


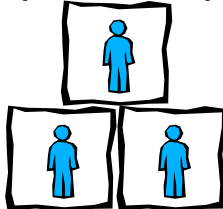
T. Billable Amount \$213.12 / T. Property Occupant Factor 11.6 = **\$18.37** per occupant

Calculate #101's Bill:

\$18.37 (cost per occupant)\* 1.6 (factor)

**TOTAL WATER BILL #101** **\$29.40**

Note: Charges are calculated on a per day basis to accommodate prorated billing for Move Ins & Move Outs.

<div>#101</div> <div>1 Occupant (1.0 Factor)</div> <div></div> <div>\$ 18.37 X 1.0 = \$ 18.37</div>	<div>#102</div> <div>2 Occupants 1.6 Factor)</div> <div></div> <div>\$ 18.37 X 1.6 = \$ 29.40</div>	<div>#103</div> <div>2 Occupants (1.6 Factor)</div> <div></div> <div>\$ 18.37 X 1.6 = \$ 29.40</div>	<div></div> <div>RUBS EXAMPLE OCCUPANT FACTOR CALCULATIONS</div>															
<div>#201</div> <div>2 Occupants (1.6 Factor)</div> <div></div> <div>\$ 18.37 X 1.6 = \$ 29.40</div>	<div>#202</div> <div>1 Occupant (1.0 Factor)</div> <div></div> <div>\$ 18.37 X 1.0 = \$ 18.37</div>	<div>#203</div> <div>3 Occupants (1.9 Factor)</div> <div></div> <div>\$ 18.37 X 1.9 = \$ 34.90</div>	<table><tr><th># Occ</th><th>Factor</th><th>Explanation</th></tr><tr><td>1</td><td>1.0</td><td>One person's consumption</td></tr><tr><td>2</td><td>1.6</td><td>Two people consume 60% more than one.</td></tr><tr><td>3</td><td>1.9</td><td>Three people consume 90% more than one.</td></tr><tr><td>+1</td><td>.3 ea</td><td>Each additional person consumes 30% more</td></tr></table>	# Occ	Factor	Explanation	1	1.0	One person's consumption	2	1.6	Two people consume 60% more than one.	3	1.9	Three people consume 90% more than one.	+1	.3 ea	Each additional person consumes 30% more
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+1	.3 ea	Each additional person consumes 30% more																
<div>#301</div> <div>1 Occupant (1.0 Factor)</div> <div></div> <div>\$ 18.37 X 1.0 = \$ 18.37</div>	<div>#302</div> <div>Vacant Unit (0.0 Factor)</div> <div></div> <div>\$ 18.37 X 0 = \$ 0</div>	<div>#303</div> <div>3 Occupants (1.9 Factor)</div> <div></div> <div>\$ 18.37 X 1.9 = \$ 34.90</div>	<div>CALCULATIONS:</div> <div>T. Property Utility Cost = \$ 236.80</div> <div>Common Area Deduction (10%) = \$ 23.68</div> <div>Amt used to calculate Bills = \$ 213.12</div> <div>Total Occupant Factor (all units) = 11.6</div> <div>Amount for one occupant = \$ 18.37 (\$ 213.12 / 11.6)</div> <div>Total billed back to residents = \$ 213.11</div>															



## **OTHER FEES & CHARGES**

**Administrative Fee (Service Charge or Billing Fee)** \$2.00 per service  
Covers costs associated to meter reading, bill processing  
and maintenance of account. Maximum \$5.00 per bill.

**Late Fee** \$ 5.00 + 1 %  
Resident Terms are 30 days

**NSF /Insufficient Funds** \$ 31.00  
Fee charged per returned item, in additional to  
Accumulated late fees and penalties.

## Frequently Asked Questions – Resident FAQ

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### **Who is Minol?**

Minol is a third party Billing Company that provides meter reading, billing, collections, accounting and customer service for your apartment community the residents who have a lease obligating them to pay utilities. Our Customer Service telephone number is 1-888-636-0493. You may also email us via at [info@minolusa.com](mailto:info@minolusa.com).

### **How soon after I move-in will I get a bill?**

Utilities are typically billed in arrears since our billing cycle follows that of the local utility provider. For example, a billing statement mailed to a resident in February normally reflects usage for the previous month of January. Your first billing statement will arrive within 4-6 weeks of your move in date.

### **What dates will I be billed for?**

The usage cycle for billing varies for each community and is based upon the local provider's normal billing cycle. Billing statements are normally generated on a monthly basis; however, there are instances where billing occurs every two months. You can call or email our Customer Service Department for more information on your specific billing cycle.

### **Why am I being billed?**

Utility costs are rapidly increasing. The owner of your community has chosen to have the residents pay for their utilities separately, which in the past were built into rent. Billing the utilities separately results in low utility bills, promotes conservation, and is the most effective way to minimize rent increase directly related to increasing the rent. Promoting conservation also lower the communities' utility bills. Billing these utilities separately results in lower utility bills and promotes conservation.

### **How often will I be billed?**

Bills are normally generated on a monthly basis; however, there are instances where billing occurs every two months. You can call or email our Customer Service Department for specifics.

### **Do I need a utility deposit?**

NO, there is no additional deposit required for utilities. The lease or lease addendum is required to start service. The community management company will supply the community with a lease that contains a paragraph or a lease addendum that obligates the resident to pay for their utilities. The apartment home deposit can be applied to any outstanding balance on a resident Final Bill.

### **Will my bill be more expensive because the community uses a billing service?**

Generally no. This program is designed only for recovery.

### **How much water does the average person use at home per day?**

Estimates vary, but each person uses about 80 - 100 gallons of water per day.

The largest use of household water is to flush the toilet, after that, to take a shower or bath.

### **Are there ways to reduce my usage?**

Yes, conservation tips are available from your management office.

### **How are individual meters read?**

In most cases, Minol captures data from individual meters utilizing the AMR (Automatic Meter Reading) technology. This data flows from a computer chip within the meter and is transferred to a host system via modem. Daily meter readings are captured and retained by Minol as a record of resident consumption.

## Frequently Asked Questions – Resident FAQ (Cont.)

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### **How do you calculate my bill if there is no individual meter in place at my apartment home?**

Ratio Utility Billing (RUBS) is an allocation option when a community is unable to be metered due to the construction configuration. Consumption is calculated using a formula to determine each resident's utility expense. The formula is based on detailed information about your community, residents and general utility usage. This formula can be based on the number of occupants and/or square footage.

### **Why do I not have a submeter?**

In older properties, often the plumbing configuration makes retrofitting with submeters cost prohibitive. Typically new construction is the best application for automated submetering systems.

### **How do I know this bill amount is fair?**

The method used has been proven for several years and is accepted by your local legislation. Studies have proven the method to be both fair and reasonable.

### **I've been out of town. Why do I still have to pay this bill?**

Residents on a RUBS, a general allocation program, are responsible for paying the pro-rated share of the utility bill on a monthly basis. Your bill includes certain basic delivery costs charged by the local provider. If you will be on vacation or away for an extended period of time, please contact your management office.

### **Why is my bill higher than last month?**

This may be caused by several reasons. Did you have any guests or change any habits that may require more water usage? The billing period may be longer than your previous bill's. You may have a leak. If the increase is significant, you may want to request your community's maintenance staff to check your apartment home for a possible leak.

### **How will my bill be affected by a leak?**

If the leak has a significant bearing on the amount of the bill, an adjustment may be made on behalf of your account. (This is determined at the discretion of the community manager). You can help us both by reporting leaks immediately. The community will respond to all service requests in a timely manner.

### **Is there a monthly service fee?**

All service providers and/or utility companies charge a service or base fee of some sort. A nominal billing administration fee is billed monthly. This is the cost of operation.

### **Are there late charges or other fees?**

A late fee, as allowed by law, will be charged to your account if your payment is not received by the payment due date noted on your statement. Please utilize the payment coupon and remittance envelope enclosed with your statement to ensure prompt payment posting. A nominal billing administration fee is billed monthly. Returned checks are assessed a current bank NSF charge.

### **Can you set up a payment plan for me?**

Unfortunately, Minol cannot negotiate payment plan options. The utility charges are due to the Community's Service Provider by a set date each month. We are unable to "disable" late fee processing.

Note: In extreme cases the On-Site Manager can coordinate a payment schedule.

## Frequently Asked Questions – Resident FAQ (Cont.)

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### **What are my payment options?**

Please review your statement. The payment coupon included with your statement will instruct you where to remit your payment. Checks or money orders can be mailed to the remittent indicated on your bill. If mailing your payment to Minol please include your payment coupon. When the payment coupon is included with your check the account posting is expedited.

Our payment address is Minol, PO Box 650320, Dallas, TX 75265-0320.

If your remittent address is to Minol (vs. your community leasing office) you may Sign Up for Online Account Access to make a Credit card payment with Mastercard or Visa. You may also contact our Customer Service Department at 1-888-636-0493 to pay with credit card. There is a \$3.00 convenience fee for this service. We are available to serve you Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time.

You can access your account or pay your bill online. Please contact Minol Customer Service at 888-636-0493 to register your account and set up a password.

### **Who should I contact if I have questions about my utility bill sent by Minol?**

The Minol Customer Service Department can be reached Monday through Friday 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. CT. Our toll free telephone number is 888-636-0493. You may Contact us via email at [info@minolusa.com](mailto:info@minolusa.com).

### **Who do I inform about my Move In or Move Out?**

Your community manager is responsible for opening and closing your account with Minol for you. The community staff will advise Minol of your moving dates and we will open or close your account accordingly.

### **How far in advance should Minol be made aware of my Move Out?**

Notifying your community management office of your intent to vacate is sufficient notice for Minol. Your Final Bill will be collected by the management office.

### **Where can I find more information about water conservation?**

Visit [www.savingwater.org](http://www.savingwater.org) or call (206) 684- SAVE (684-7283)

# Why Conserve?



SAVING WATER  
PARTNERSHIP

This fact sheet provides an overview of why water conservation is important for our region, our environment, for future generations, and for your pocketbook.



## Watersheds: The Source of Our Water

The region's fresh supply water comes primarily from two sources: the Cedar River Watershed and the Tolt River Watershed, both located in eastern King County. The watersheds are large, uninhabited areas of land that gather and store rain and snowmelt. Year-round, 26 cities and water districts (see back of this sheet) rely on a limited supply of stored water from these two sources to meet most of the daily needs of business, government, institutions, and 1.3 million people in our region. In addition to providing clean, clear, reliable drinking water, the watersheds also provide habitat for fish and wildlife.

## A Finite Supply

Around Puget Sound, you don't need to go very far before running into a source of water. However, our supply of clean drinking water is limited. Taking actions to use this precious resource wisely will ensure that we all have enough fresh drinking water for ourselves and future generations.

## Water for People, Salmon, and Other Creatures

In the Cedar River Watershed alone, over 60 animal species rely on water to sustain life. With some salmon species now listed as Endangered Species, it is important for each of us to take steps to ensure their survival. Water conservation helps achieve that goal by making sure the needs of people do not have to compete with the needs of fish.

## Supply vs. Demand:

### A Growing Population

In our region, it rains a lot more in the fall, winter, and spring than it does in the summer. People use water in the summer for activities such as watering the lawn/garden and washing the car. Every year, planning takes place to ensure that the amount of melting snow and water in the watersheds will be sufficient to meet water needs until the rains return in the fall. Year-round conservation helps guarantee there will be enough water for everyone, all year long. Since 1990, conservation has helped reduce

### How to Conserve Water

- Install a 1.6 gallon toilet
- Buy a water-efficient washing machine
- Repair leaks
- Reduce water use in the yard and garden
- Wash Full loads
- Shorten shower time
- Reduce faucet water use
- Don't waste water outdoors



the amount of water each of us uses every day. Continued efforts in water conservation will help assure water supplies through 2010 and beyond.



**BROUGHT TO YOU  
BY YOUR LOCAL  
WATER PROVIDERS**

Cedar River  
Water & Sewer District  
City of Bellevue  
City of Bothell  
City of Duvall  
City of Kirkland  
City of Mercer Island  
City of Redmond  
City of Tukwila  
Coal Creek Utility District  
Highline Water District  
King County Water District No. 20  
King County Water District No. 45  
King County Water District No. 49  
King County Water District No. 90  
King County Water District No. 119  
King County Water District No. 125  
Lake Forest Park Water District  
Northshore Utility District  
Olympic View  
Water & Sewer District  
Seattle Public Utilities  
Shoreline Water District  
Skyway Water & Sewer District  
Soos Creek  
Water & Sewer District  
Woodinville Water District

## Delaying the Need for New Water Supplies

Conserving water now can keep down the costs of developing new sources of water. Conservation stretches our water supply, helping our region sustain us during the long time-frame it takes to develop new sources of supply.

### It's in Your Hands

We all make decisions about how much water we use. Every person in the region uses an average of over 80 gallons of this precious resource each day. Be careful about your use of water by using it wisely, and help conserve whenever and wherever possible.

### It's About Money, Too

Water conservation can help in the pocketbook. Many of the simple actions you can take such as using water wisely outdoors and taking shorter showers are free, easy to do, and save you money. Other actions such as buying a resource-efficient washing machine, installing a low-volume showerhead, or a water-efficient toilet will cost you money up-front but will more than pay for themselves in just a few years (much sooner in the case of a new showerhead).

## What Global Warming Has to do With it

Global warming is the warming of our earth due to the burning of fossil fuels. Human activities such as driving automobiles and generating electricity from coal or natural gas contribute to global warming. Scientists have shown that the Earth's climate is getting warmer due to global warming, but there continues to be dispute over what the future will bring. The uncertainty of the consequences of global warming provides an additional reason to conserve water. Temperature increases in the atmosphere can impact the amount of snow and rain falling on our mountain water sources. Since our water supply relies on the collection of snow that melts throughout the spring and summer, any increase in the rate the snow melts could result in less water for our region during the critical summer months.

## About the Saving Water Partnership

The 26 local water providers listed on this page are working in partnership to help all of us conserve water. Each of us uses water a little differently; some of us water the lawn, many of our homes have water leaks, even more of us have old toilets that use more than 1.6 gallons per flush. The Partnership offers educational programs, financial incentives and special promotions to help make everyone aware of their own particular opportunities to conserve.

Thank you for everything you're doing to conserve water. For more information, please call (206) 684-SAVE (684-7283) or visit [www.savingwater.org](http://www.savingwater.org)



## CONSERVING WATER IN YOUR APARTMENT HOME

The most costly household waste of water includes leaky toilets, faucets and showerheads. Large quantities of water are lost daily due to indoor plumbing leaks. Prompt action may result in large savings of water and money. So, be leak conscious! Stop, look, and listen to the toilets, faucets and other water fixtures in your home. Problems are easier to detect than you think.

**Check for Leaky Toilets** - The most common source of leaks is the toilet. Check toilets for leaks by placing a few drops of food coloring in the tank. If after 15 minutes the dye shows up in the bowl, the toilet has a leak.

Leaky toilets can usually be repaired inexpensively by replacing the flapper.

- Toilets can account for almost 30% of all indoor water use, more than any other fixture or appliance.
- Older toilets (installed prior to 1994) use 3.5 to 7 gallons of water per flush and as much as 20 gallons per person per day.
- Newer toilets (installed prior to 1994) use 1.6 to 3.5 gallons and as much as 10 gallons per person per day.

An average of 20% of toilets leak.

Report leaks to the Management Office as soon as possible.

Don't procrastinate about fixing leaks. Your water bill may be adding up and thousands of gallons of water - our precious and limited resource - may be needlessly going down the drain.

*Thank you for conserving our most precious resource!*



## **YOU MAKE A DIFFERENCE!**

*Water conservation lowers utility bills, conserves natural resources, and helps the environment!*

### **In the Bathroom:**

- Take a five-minute shower instead of a bath.  
Amount saved = 15 gallons per shower
- Don't use toilets as a wastebasket or ashtray, flush only when you need to.  
Amount saved = 12 or more gallons per day
- When brushing teeth, use a glassful of water instead of running the tap.  
Amount saved = 3 or more gallons per brushing.
- When taking a bath, don't run the water without closing the drain first.  
The warm that comes after running the tap for a while will take care of that first cold burst of water.

### **In the Kitchen:**

- When washing the dishes by hand, fill up the sink with soap and water instead of running the water the whole time.  
Amount saved = 25 gallons per load
- Keep a pitcher of water in the refrigerator when you want a drink instead of running the tap until the water cools.  
Amount saved = 2 gallons per drink
- Thaw frozen foods in the refrigerator, not under running tap water.  
Amount saved = 5 or more gallons per meal

### **More Tips...**

- Check pipes and faucets for leaks. Report running toilets and leaking faucets to your property Management Team as soon as they are noticed!
- Check your toilet periodically for leaks. Place a few drops of food coloring in the tank. After a few minutes check the bowl; if any of the food coloring appears, you have a leak!



### **Water loss in gallons at 60 p.s.i (pounds per square inch)**

- 1/16" Leak can waste 25,000 gallons per Month
- 1/8" Leak can waste 100,000 gallons per Month
- 1/4" Leak can waste 400,000 gallons per Month