



## UTILITY BILLING

### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**Q: WHO DO I CONTACT IF I HAVE A CHANGE OF MAILING ADDRESS?**

**A:** All property address information must be changed with [BC Assessment](#) and [Land Titles](#).

**Q: I RECENTLY BOUGHT A HOUSE, WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE UTILITY CHARGES?**

**A:** Utilities are a charge against the property; any outstanding amount incurred by the previous owner stays outstanding against the property where the service was delivered. The notary/lawyer handling the sale should have adjusted for utilities on the Statement of Adjustments. Please check with them to see if a payment was made for the utility charges.

**Q: I SOLD MY HOUSE, WHAT DO I DO WITH THE UTILITY BILL?**

**A:** We receive our property information from BC Assessment in the form of weekly uploads, therefore you are not required to inform us when the property changes hands.

Please make sure your lawyer/notary is aware that you pay the SCRCD for utilities as they will need to make an adjustment on the Statement of Adjustments to account for your portion of the charges. They can obtain this information directly from us by emailing [utilitysearch@scrd.ca](mailto:utilitysearch@scrd.ca).

**Q: I AM BUILDING A NEW HOME WITHIN THE SCRCD OR DOS. WHEN DOES THE UTILITY BILLING COMMENCE?**

**A:** Water will commence the month following the installation of a water connection. The water user rate will be pro-rated. Most times water is used during the construction phase hence the water charge being applied right away.

If applicable, garbage and wastewater service charges will commence the month following issuance of final occupancy.

**Q: WHAT ARE THE CURRENT RATES FOR WATER AND GARBAGE?**

**A:** Please visit <https://www.scrd.ca/utility-rates> for current utility service rates.

**Q: HOW OFTEN AM I BILLED?**

**A:** Residential utility customers will receive one utility bill per year, for the billing period of January 1 – December 31 of the current year. The invoice is issued at the end of April and is payable by 4:30 pm June 15<sup>th</sup> unless otherwise stated.

New construction may receive more than one bill in the first year for pro-rated services. The water charge will commence the month following the installation of a water connection. If the property is within the

garbage collection service boundary and/or wastewater boundary the service charge will commence the month following issuance of final occupancy from the Building Department.

Metered utility customers will receive a quarterly invoice. Although most properties on the Sunshine Coast recently had water meters installed, there are only a small number of properties that are being billed based on their metered water consumption. These properties fall in the industrial, commercial or institutional classification. The quarters end March 31, June 30, September 30 and December 31.

**Q: WHEN CAN I EXPECT TO RECEIVE MY UTILITY BILL?**

**A:** Annual utility bills are mailed out at the end of April and are payable by 4:30 pm on June 15<sup>th</sup> (unless otherwise stated).

If your property is on our metered billing system you will receive your bills on a quarterly basis. The quarters end March 31, June 30, September 30 and December 31. Invoices are typically issued by the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month following the end of the quarter (i.e. quarter ends March 31, invoice will be issued by April 15).

**Q: WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I DON'T RECEIVE MY ANNUAL UTILITY BILL?**

**A:** If you haven't received your annual utility bill by late May, please contact us at [infrastructure@scrd.ca](mailto:infrastructure@scrd.ca) or 604-885-6806 and we will provide you with a copy.

If you are a new owner, our records may not yet reflect the change of ownership and the utility bill may have been sent to the previous owner.

**Q: HOW CAN I PAY MY UTILITY BILL?**

**A:** The SCRD offers 6 ways to pay your utility bill:

Here are 6 ways to pay your bill on time:		
<b>1. mySCRD</b> Pay with Visa or MasterCard through our website at <a href="http://www.scrd.ca/myscrd">www.scrd.ca/myscrd</a> .	<b>2. Online / Telephone Banking</b> Offered through your financial institution.	<b>3. In Person at the Bank</b> Available at most Canadian financial institutions.
<b>4. By Mail</b> **Postmarks are not accepted as date of payment.	<b>5. After-hours Drop Box</b> Located at the east entrance of the SCRD Administration Office or the front entrance of the Pender Harbour Satellite Office.	<b>6. In person at the SCRD</b> 8:30 am to 4:30 pm Monday to Friday (excluding holidays) using credit card, debit card, cheque or cash.
<b>Payments received after 4:30 pm of the due date receive a 2% penalty per month outstanding</b>		

**Q: CAN I PAY MY UTILITY BILL MONTHLY?**

**A:** Yes, you can make periodic installments on your utility account throughout the year. The frequency of the payments is up to you.

To have the amount automatically come out of your bank account you must set up the payment online through your financial institution. The SCRD does not have the ability to set up pre-authorized payments for you. You will need to add the Sunshine Coast Regional District as a payee and include your 6 digit account number.

**Q: WHAT IS THE PAYEE NAME FOR THE SCRD ON MY ONLINE BANKING?**

**A:** If you cannot find the payee based on the list below please contact your financial institution directly for assistance. Alternatively, you can search “Sunshine Coast” and search through the results to find us.

<b>FINANCIAL INSTITUTE</b>	<b>PAYEE NAME</b>
Bank of Montreal	Sunshine Coast Regional District - Utilities
CIBC	Sunshine Coast R.D. Utilities
RBC Royal Bank	Sunshine Coast Regional District
Scotiabank (Bank of Nova Scotia)	Sunshine Coast (RD) Utilities
TD Canada Trust	Sunshine Coast Regional District Utilities
Sunshine Coast Credit Union	Sunshine Coast Regional Dist - Utilities
HSBC	Sunshine Coast Regional District - Utilities
Vancity	Sunshine Coast Reg Distr Utl
Most Credit Unions	Sunshine Coast Regional District - Utilities

**Q: WHAT HAPPENS IF I CANNOT PAY MY UTILITY BILL ON TIME?**

**A:** Balances that remain unpaid by 4:30 pm on the due date are subject to a 2% penalty.

Subsequent penalties will be applied to the account for each month that it remains outstanding (applied on the close of business on the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month).

Balances that remain outstanding as of December 31<sup>st</sup> are deemed to be taxes in arrears and will be transferred to your property tax account per Section 399.2(b) of the *Local Government Act*. Once this happens, the outstanding amount is no longer payable to the SCRD, payment must be made to your property tax account.

**Q: WHAT IS THE SCRD’S PROCESS FOR NOTIFYING PROPERTY OWNERS THAT THEY HAVE AN OUTSTANDING UTILITY AMOUNT?**

**A:** If a utility account remains unpaid as of the close of business on June 15<sup>th</sup> a reminder notice will be generated and sent to the owner in late June. If the balance continues to be unpaid by mid-September a second, final reminder will be issued. If the balance remains unpaid as of December 31<sup>st</sup> it is transferred to property taxes where the Surveyor issues a notice.

A summary of the SCRD’s current collections policy is as follows:

<b>1 Day After Due Date</b>	Any outstanding Current Charge incurs a 2% penalty
<b>30 Days After Due Date</b>	Any outstanding Current Charge incurs an additional 2% penalty
<b>Greater than 30 Days After Due Date</b>	If the account continues to remain unpaid on the 16 <sup>th</sup> of the following month, an additional 2% will be applied to the account for each month that it remains outstanding, until paid in full.
<b>Year End (December 31)</b>	Balances that remain unpaid as of December 31 of the current year will be transferred to property taxes as per <i>Local Government Act</i> Section 399.2 (b).

**Q: WHY HAS THIS UTILITY ARREARS AMOUNT BEEN ADDED TO MY PROPERTY TAXES?**

**A:** Utility amounts unpaid as of December 31<sup>st</sup> are transferred to the respective property tax account for collection. Notice of this transfer is issued by the Surveyor or Municipality (in the case of District of Sechelt properties) shortly after the process has been processed (typically in February).

**Q: WHY AM I RECEIVING THIS BILL WHEN THERE IS A WATER CHARGE ON MY PROPERTY TAXES?**

**A:** There are two separate water charges, one in the form of a user fee, and the second showing up on the property tax notice (parcel tax / land charge).

As a Regional District we are not able to include user fees on property taxes.

The user fee (utility bill) is intended to cover operating costs associated with delivering water to your property while the parcel tax (land charge on property tax notice) is to offset the maintenance of the water lines and capital projects. The parcel tax is levied to all properties that have access to the service regardless of use.

**Q: WHAT IS A USER RATE?**

**A:** User rates are charged against properties that are connected to the SCRD water system or wastewater facility. The SCRD also provides curbside garbage collection services to residential properties within the service area.

The user rate is set to offset the operating costs associated with providing the service.

User rates apply to each separate residential unit. That means a home with a suite is considered two residential units. A property with more than one dwelling on the land, regardless of whether or not it is in use, will also be billed for each unit.

**Q: IS IT CUSTOMARY FOR THE TENANT OR THE OWNER TO RECEIVE THE UTILITY BILL?**

**A:** The registered owner is always responsible for the charges therefore the SCRD only invoices the registered owner.

However, if the registered owner has contracted out a property management firm we will make the exception if we receive notice in writing.

If there are more than one registered owners only one will receive the invoice. Our system defaults to the first person listed on the Land Title. If there is a specific co-owner who should receive the invoice please inform us at [infrastructure@scrd.ca](mailto:infrastructure@scrd.ca) or 604-885-6806.

**Q: MY HOUSE IS VACANT, WHY DO I HAVE TO PAY A UTILITY FEE IF I AM NOT USING THE SERVICE?**

**A:** Although water meters were installed at most properties on the Sunshine Coast, the water service charge is still a flat rate amount, not based on usage. Under this current structure, the service charge is levied against the property regardless of whether or not the building is vacant for part of the year.

If you will be away for an extended period of time (more than a year) and the dwelling will not be used during that period we can turn the water off which would result in inactivation of the water charge (there is a \$50 fee for turning the water off). Unfortunately, garbage is a mandatory service, regardless of use, so the charge will remain.

**Q: DOES THE SCRD ISSUE PROPERTY TAX NOTICES?**

**A:** The SCRD does not issue property taxes and therefore does not collect property tax payments. Please refer to your Property Tax Notice for instructions on where and how the payment should be made. In general, if your folio number begins with:

- **746** – Payments should be made to the Surveyor of Taxes via Service BC. There is an office located in Sechelt at #102 – 5710 Teredo St. Phone No: 604-885-5187. If you are outside of Sechelt please call 1-800-663-7867 to get the nearest Service BC location.

*Please note, some online banking systems may list this payee as “Province of BC – Rural Property Tax”.*

- **570** – Payments should be made to the District of Sechelt, located at 5797 Cowrie St. Phone No: 604-885-1986.
- **524** – Payments should be made to the Town of Gibsons, located at 474 South Fletcher Rd. Phone No. 604-886-2274.