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## Public Service Announcement

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**Date:** February 19, 2014

**RE:** Water Shutoffs Scheduled in Allentown!

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After operating the Allentown water and sewer systems for six months, Lehigh County Authority (LCA) wants city customers to be aware that overdue water accounts are now subject to service termination.

Every customer in LCA's Allentown Division has now received at least one full quarterly water and sewer bill, in addition to the initial prorated bills that were issued last summer and fall. That means every customer has had at least two water bills from LCA in order to get used to the Authority's new bill format and customer service protocols.

In addition to the regular water bill LCA issued to each customer, additional notices were issued on yellow paper and bright green paper to notify customers of their past-due balances and the schedule for water service termination if the bill is not paid.

The first round of warning notices were issued earlier this month, with a water shutoff date later in February. The actual date of the water shutoff is dependent on the LCA staff's ability to get to each neighborhood where shutoffs are scheduled, including navigating around massive snow accumulations. Service terminations will continue into March if needed.

### **Am I going to be shut off?**

Not every customer is up for a water shutoff this month. Only those customers who received a warning notice on bright green paper at the beginning of February are subject to shutoff this month. Next month, a different batch of customers will receive notices. The rotating notices are based on billing schedules, so customers will soon begin to notice the quarterly routine of LCA's notification procedures.

Still not sure? You can call LCA at 610-437-7515 to inquire, or email [cityservice@lehighcountyauthority.org](mailto:cityservice@lehighcountyauthority.org). Better yet, if you have an outstanding water bill due to LCA, pay it online at [www.lehighcountyauthority.org](http://www.lehighcountyauthority.org) and you will be sure to remain in service!

### **LCA's Approach to Bill Collections**

LCA recognizes many customers were confused by the billing transition from the City of Allentown to LCA. That's why the Authority included a 6-month transition period in the billing cycles, so all customers would have a chance to see a new bill from LCA and ask questions, and try out the payment options that are available.

Making more payment options available is one way LCA hopes to help customers stay on top of their water bill. Customers can pay any of the following ways:

- By credit card online at [www.lehighcountyauthority.org](http://www.lehighcountyauthority.org) – LCA offers this option for free, with no additional service charges for paying by credit card
- By mail to LCA using the return envelope provided
- By automatic deduction each quarter from a checking or savings account (LCA's AutoPay program)
- By using your own online banking to send payment electronically
- By cash, credit card, check or money order at either LCA location:
  - 1300 Martin Luther King Jr. Dr. in Allentown
  - 1053 Spruce Street in Wescosville
- Pay after-hours at either location using a drive-through drop-box located there

Nonpaying customers will receive notification from LCA about their past-due balances, including two mailed notices (in addition to the regular bill) and one automated phone call prior to service termination. However, the phone call can only be issued if LCA has a phone number on file. To date, about 80 percent of the Allentown customers have a phone number on file due to LCA's extra efforts to reach out to customers to request phone numbers and correct data errors. Customers can submit up to two phone numbers to list on their water account by filling out a form on the website at [www.lehighcountyauthority.org](http://www.lehighcountyauthority.org).

The phone numbers will also be useful for LCA to contact customers in the event of an emergency or during a prolonged water system outage due to a water main break.

After mailing all notices and phone calling each customer, LCA will initiate service termination if an account remains unpaid.

### **LCA in Partnership with Customers**

Moving forward, considering the high cost of the lease of the water and sewer systems from the City of Allentown, it will be important for LCA and its customers to work together to control costs whenever possible. To maintain the lowest cost possible, all customers will be required pay their fair share, and pay in a timely manner. In return, customers will receive high-quality, reliable utility services from a professionally managed local, nonprofit organization.

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