



FAQ: Multifamily Apartment Building Disconnection

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DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA WATER AND SEWER AUTHORITY | 1385 CANAL STREET, SE | WASHINGTON, DC 20003

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ): Pending Multifamily Apt Building Disconnection

1. Can the water be disconnected if I pay my rent?

Yes. Water and Sewer charges are payable without regard to the lease agreement. If your utility charges are included in the lease agreement, DC Water has not received the payment from the owner.

2. Can I get account balance information on the account?

Yes, provided the owner of the property has authorized DC Water to include you as a party to receive the information. DC Water is unable to provide the account information to you without the owner's permission or other suitable arrangements. You may want to contact the owner to have you included as third party to receive the bills.

3. What if I am unable to get in contact with the owner?

If the owner is unable or unwilling to provide access to the account, individuals contacting DC Water for information about the disconnection notice and water service account will be directed to the Office of the People's Counsel (OPC): Phone (202) 727-3071 or Email Info@OPC-DC.gov. Tenants may also contact Legal Aid DC: Phone (202) 628-1161; Office of the Tenant Advocate: Phone (202) 719-6560; DC Office of the Attorney General (OAG): Phone (202) 442-9828. These agencies can assist with resolving landlord/tenant issues, forming a tenant association, providing customer advocacy, rendering legal advice, and helping get access to account information to assume responsibility for the account charges.

4. Can we (tenants) set up a payment plan without the owner?

To make changes or receive account information, the tenants must collectively establish a tenant association and designate an authorized representative to request in writing to assume responsibility for the water service account. This does not mean that the representative or tenant association is liable for the charges. Again, DC Water holds the owner responsible for payment of the charges associated with the water service account.

5. What if there's no tenant association?

Without a tenant association and designated representative, tenants cannot assume responsibility for the water service account.

6. Can we (tenants) pay DC Water directly without an association?

Yes. Payment can be made directly to DC Water; however, you will need the account information to pay online or by phone. If paying by mail (check or money order) without the account information, please indicate the service address and any other information that will assist DC Water with locating the correct account, in the Memo section.

7. What if all the tenants don't agree to pay?

Payment is required to prevent service disconnection and is not contingent upon a collective tenant agreement.

8. Can we (tenants) ask the Courts for help?

Tenants may petition DC Superior Court to establish a receivership for the property. For assistance with the filing, contact Legal Aid DC: Phone (202) 628-1161 or DC Office of the Attorney General (OAG): Phone (202) 442-9828..

9. What happens if a receivership is established?

See DC Code 34-2304 for more information. Tenants may petition DC Superior Court for the appointment of a receiver. Tenants should contact Legal Aid DC: Phone (202) 628-1161 or DC Office of the Attorney General (OAG): Phone (202) 442-9828.

10. How can I get water for my unit in my name?

To establish an individual water service account, each unit must be individually metered at the owner's expense and risk; and all tenants must agree in writing to establish an individual water service account.

11. How much will I be charged for water and other fees with an account?

Charges for water service consist of fixed fees and usage charges – determined by how much water is used within the unit. Fixed fees include the Water System Replacement Fee (WSRF), Metering Fee, and Clean Rivers Impervious Area Charge (CRIAC). Visit our website at <https://www.dewater.com/approved-fy-2025-and-fy-2026-rates> for approved rates.

12. What if all tenants don't agree to get service for their unit/name?

All tenants must collectively agree in writing. Without a collective agreement, service cannot be established for any tenant.

13. Does a lien affect property in my apartment?

No. A lien applies to real property and building structure not your personal property in your apartment.

14. What happens to my lease if the property is sold at tax sale?

Your tenancy typically remains in place but you should consult a landlord tenant attorney to be sure.

15. What type of assistance is available for tenants?

DC Water does not offer assistance programs for multifamily accounts; however, individual accounts are eligible to apply for our Customer Assistance Programs and payment assistance through Greater Washington Urban League.

16. How do we (tenants) request to assume responsibility for water and sewer service charges?

The request must be submitted in writing by email to Credit.Collection@dcwater.com or by mail to:

DC Water

Attention: Customer Care - Credit & Collection

1385 Canal St SE 3RD Fl

Washington, DC 20003

17. What documentation is required to assume responsibility for water and sewer service charges?

Documentation must demonstrate that the regulatory requirements of DC Municipal Regulation §430.2 or 403.3 have been met.

18. Who can we (tenants) contact for more information?

Account information is not available to unauthorized parties to the account; however, tenants can call the DC Office of the Attorney (OAG), OAG Mediation Hotline at 202.442.9828 for help. OAG Mediation works to help tenants resolve disputes with landlords, including utility bill disputes. Other resources may include Office of the People's Counsel (OPC): Phone (202) 727-3071, Office of the Tenant Advocate (OTA) – Phone: (202) 719-6560, and DC Legal Aid – 202-628-1161 or fill an online intake at <https://intake.legalaiddc.org/>.

19. Where can I find more information on the District of Columbia Municipal Regulations (DCMR)?

DC Water's full Municipal Regulations are available at:

<https://www.dcregs.dc.gov/Common/DCMR/AgencyChapterList.aspx?AgencyID=131>

20. Can I deduct water payments from my rent?

See DC Code § 34-2303 to determine if you may deduct water payments from your rent.

21. How does the GM determine if assuming responsibility is practicable?

The General Manager takes into consideration whether:

- A request has been received from the tenants or their authorized agents within 14 days of the disconnection notice, to request to assume prospective financial responsibility for the water service account.
- Necessary information has been received to confirm that each unit on the premises can be individually metered.
- Necessary information has been received to confirm whether an existing tenant group or association meets regulatory requirements.
- Some other information pertaining to the premises has been received to impact a finding of practicability.