



## RESOLUTION No. 132

### ACCESS AND LANDSCAPE TRIM POLICY FOR WATER METERS, WATER EQUIPMENT AND FIRE HYDRANTS AMENDMENT JUNE 21, 2022

(Supersedes Water Meter & Fire Hydrant Access and Landscape Trim Regulations of July 20, 2020)

#### I. BACKGROUND - GENERAL

*Reference: WAC 480-110-305 Access to Premises*

*“Authorized personnel of a water company have the right to enter a Customer’s property during reasonable hours to perform meter reading, maintenance, testing, installation or removal of the district’s property. Customers may ask to see the identification of the water district personnel before allowing entry to the Customer’s property.”*

To facilitate the reading, maintenance and repair of meters and to ensure firefighter access to fire hydrants in order to best serve our Customers, the SunLand Water District (SWD) instituted Landscape Trim Regulations in 2014. These regulations were updated in 2019 and are further amended herein as District Policy. All requirements are based on SWD policies and standards as well as national, state, and local codes. Their application is necessary to ensure a safe working environment for SWD employees and Clallam County Fire Department personnel as well as to provide safe, reliable, efficient, and low-cost utility services. The regulations ensure District capability to maintain accessibility to water meter locations, aiding in the ability to quickly locate meter boxes in case of leaks or emergency shutoff requests by Customers. The District shall have the right, through its agents or employees, to safely enter the property of the Customer at all times for the purpose of: reading, inspecting, repairing, or removing metering devices or other equipment.

#### II. ACCESS & LANDSCAPE TRIM POLICY -- WATER METERS/EQUIPMENT AND FIRE HYDRANTS

##### A. Water Meters and Water Equipment

1. All water meter installations must be pre-approved by the District.

2. At no time shall access to the District's water meters or equipment on the Customer's property be denied as a result of fences with locked gates, landscaping, trees, buildings, debris, aggressive or dangerous animals, or other obstructions. At no time shall any obstacle, debris, vehicle, RV, etc., be placed or parked on top of a water meter.
3. The Customer shall keep the area around all meters, and other District facilities on the Customer's property free of vegetation, health and safety hazards, debris, and obstructions, to ensure clear and safe access at all times. Meter boxes shall have two feet of clearance from all edges of the meter box, a two foot wide access from the street to the box and six-foot clearance overhead.
4. To maintain accessibility, it is the homeowner's responsibility to keep the meter box trimmed and to ensure the water sprinkler system, if present, is not set up in such a way as to prevent SWD personnel from accessing the water meter. At no time shall any obstruction, debris, vehicle, RV., etc., be placed or parked on top of a water meter.
5. The SWD suggests considering the mature size of plantings when choosing location.
6. What a meter should look like. Meter is visible and clear of debris.



7. What to avoid: Meter is obscured by grass or debris.



8. What to avoid: Meter is obstructed by a vehicle or heavy object.



9. Compliance to SunLand Water District (SWD) Policy:

- If trimming is needed to comply with District policy, the SWD will attempt to contact the homeowner, or their representative, in person. If the Customer is not home, the SWD will hang a “door hanger” notice at the home, requesting **the owner to respond to the District within 10 business days. A copy of the District Policy and the door hanger notification will also be mailed by first-class US Mail to the home or mailing address of the owner or, in the case of irrigated HOA greenspace areas and commercial sites, to the cognizant HOA officer or business entity.**
- Once the SWD has made contact with the Customer, or their representative, discussion can take place regarding what needs to be done to comply with the regulations and to decide if the property owner or the SWD will do the trimming.
- If there is no response, and the Customer, or representative, has not made contact within the time allotted, SWD personnel will carefully and thoroughly trim around the box according to SWD specifications.
- If the Customer notifies the SWD that they prefer to do the trimming, they will have 10 business days to accomplish the task. If not completed within the time allotted, the SWD will trim around the meter box to District specifications.
- If the SWD does the trimming, the task will be completed by the District within 10 business days and the Customer will be billed for time and materials.

#### 10. Inaccessible meters:

- The District will notify Customers who are in violation of access regulations and will be given ten (10) days to correct the situation. The Customer must permanently remove the safety hazard, debris or obstruction; trim or remove brush or other vegetation, or take other necessary action to comply with the District's access requirements.
- If the Customer requires a padlocked gate, they must allow the installation of a District padlock to ensure that both Customer and District representatives have access at all times to the Customer's property and District facilities.
- If a property is completely fenced and without a gate to provide access, the Customer must install a gate and, if padlocked, either allow the District to install a padlock, as noted above, or provide a key to allow District access.
- Customers must keep aggressive or dangerous animals 25 feet from District equipment and pathways or otherwise kennel, pen or secure the animals; thus allowing District representatives safe access at all times to District meters and facilities on the Customer's property.
- In the event that access to the meter poses a serious/immediate safety concern, and before correction has taken place, the meter reader will not attempt to read the meter and will estimate the read in accordance with the previous month's usage.

#### **B. Fire Hydrant Access and Landscape Trimming**

##### 1. Clearance Requirements

- Fire hydrants shall have three feet of clearance on all sides and a 180° view path up and down the street.
- To maintain accessibility, it is the cognizant property owner's responsibility to keep the area surrounding the fire hydrant trimmed. (The SWD suggests considering the mature size of plantings when choosing their location.)

2. Landscape Trimming:

- If landscape trimming is needed to comply with regulations, the District will attempt to contact the cognizant property owner(s), or their representative(s) in person. If not home, the SWD will hang a "door hanger" notice at the home(s) affected, requesting the responsible party to respond to the District within 10 business days. A copy of the District Policy and the door hanger notification will be mailed by first-class US Mail to the cognizant home(s) or mailing addresses. In the case of areas under the responsibility of a homeowner's association, a mailing will be sent to the cognizant HOA officer.
- Once the SWD has made contact with the parties affected, discussion can take place regarding what needs to be done to comply with the regulations and to decide if the property owner, or the SWD will do the trimming.
- If there is no response, and the responsible party, or parties, have not made contact within the time allotted, SWD personnel will carefully and thoroughly trim around the hydrant according to SWD specifications.
- If the SWD is notified that the parties concerned prefer to do the trimming, they will have 10 business days to accomplish the task. If not completed within the time allotted, the SWD will trim around the fire hydrant to District specifications.
- If the SWD does the trimming, the task will be completed by the District within 10 business days and the Customer will be billed for time and materials.
- If immediate access is required to an inaccessible site, and the owner cannot be contacted, the SWD will trim as necessary and the owner will be billed for time and materials.

3. Inaccessible Fire Hydrants

- In the event that access to the fire hydrant poses a serious/immediate safety concern, and before correction has taken place, action will be taken by the SWD as necessary.

**C. Consequences for Violations**

Failure to comply with the current District Policy, or to pay any fees, costs or charges incurred by the Customer in order to achieve compliance to this policy, will result in any or all of the following: (a) discontinuation of the Customer's services, (b) a deposit charged to their account until the requirements of the District have been met, (c) legal or other action as may be available to the District to collect those debts owed.

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**WHEREAS** the SunLand Water District wishes to establish a District Policy to ensure access to water meters, water equipment and fire hydrants for the service and safety of all Customers of the SunLand Water District,

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, the Sunland Board of Commissioners approves Resolution 132 Water Meter/Fire Hydrant Access and Landscape Trim Policy

Adopted this 21<sup>th</sup> day of June 2022

  
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Jim Larson, President

  
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Gary F. Fortmann, Secretary

  
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Al Frank, Commissioner