

Eastsound Water Users Association

Summary of Policies and Procedures

Address:	PO Box 115, 286 Enchanted Forest Rd. Eastsound, WA 98245
Eastsound Water Business Phone:	(360) 376-2127
Eastsound Water Emergency Pager:	(425) 388-2500
EWUA website:	www.eastsoundwater.org

1- Introduction

This brochure is an introduction to the Eastsound Water Users' Association and a summary of its Policies and Procedures. More specific details of these Policies and Procedures are documented in the Bylaws and Operating Policies, available in the Association office and at www.eastsoundwater.org. Nothing in this Brochure is meant to supersede or conflict with the latest approved edition of the Association's Bylaws and Operating Policies. If any conflicts occur, the procedures specified in the Bylaws and Operating Policies apply.

For questions or additional information, please call the Association Office (360) 376-2127.

2 - Association History

The Eastsound Water Users Association (EWUA) is a private, not-for-profit, incorporated organization established by island residents in 1955 to develop and operate the Eastsound water system. It presently consists of over one thousand member water users in the extended Eastsound region, and as such is one of the largest private water associations in the state. In San Juan County, only the town of Friday Harbor operates a larger water system. EWUA is led by a member-elected Board of Directors and operated by a General Manager and certified operators. Board meetings are held at least once per month, and are open to members. A General Membership meeting is held once per year.

3 - Where Our Water Comes From

The EWUA water system is a combination of a variety of water sources, over 40 miles of distribution lines, and nearly a dozen storage tanks. About half the system's water supply is withdrawn from a dozen wells drilled throughout our service area, all located in the "Eastsound Aquifer". The other half of EWUA's water supply is from Purdue Lake, a manmade reservoir on Buck Mountain, incorporating a comprehensive modern treatment plant and various storage facilities. The Eastsound system is designated as a Class A system by the State Department of Health (DOH) and operates under

strict guidelines to insure delivery of a supply dependable in both quantity and quality.

In both 2005 and 2007 EWUA won awards for the best tasting water in Washington from Evergreen Rural Water Association.

4 - Membership Availability

EWUA operates under strict Department of Health guidelines, and by State and County regulation cannot contract to serve more members than its water sources and physical facilities can reliably and safely provide. In the past, demand for water service has occasionally outstripped the development of dependable new water supplies. Currently EWUA has sufficient capacity to provide for the current growth being experienced in our service area. Developing additional sources to expand capacity is a primary priority and key component of EWUA's water system planning efforts.

To support EWUA's efforts to develop the water system capacity needed to provide for the future of the Eastsound region, the State Dept of Health and San Juan County have designated EWUA as the community's preferred water purveyor. Future development is directed to seek their water service from EWUA. The development of new water systems or new private wells in EWUA's service area will not be permitted unless EWUA cannot provide "timely and reasonable service". For details on this policy contact either EWUA or the San Juan County Dept. of Health.

5 - Becoming an EWUA Member

Membership can be obtained in either of two ways. If a prospective member were interested in developing a new piece of property within the EWUA region, they would apply for a new Membership. If they are purchasing a property that already has an existing Membership attached to it, they can gain Membership by transfer. Transfer of a Membership is not automatic, however, and must be applied for, as described below.

New Membership Application

New Membership packets are available in the EWUA Office, and staff can answer questions related to form completion. Requests for memberships are processed on a first come first serve basis and are brought to the EWUA Board of Directors for approval at the monthly meetings.

Membership Service Classes

Typically, Memberships are of either **non-residential** use or **residential** use. Water use is described in terms of Equivalent Residential Use, (ERU). An ERU represents the typical daily use of a single-family household – an average of household use throughout the water system. Those living in apartments typically use less water. Commercial users generally use more, and have a wider range of consumption as the nature of the establishments change. Eastsound Water Staff will discuss the nature of the Membership sought and provide a hydraulic evaluation to confirm connection requirements.

Membership Costs

Membership costs can be divided into three categories: Membership Fee, Connection Cost, and Monthly (or Quarterly) Service Costs.

Membership Fee represents the basic cost of buying into the water system and is a function of the projected cost of developing new system capacity. The concept is “growth should pay for growth”. The membership fee is due at the time membership is granted.

Connection Cost represents the cost of connecting water service from the water main to the member’s meter, and is due at the time of water hook-up. In addition to the Connection Cost due EWUA, the applicant will be responsible for hiring an approved contractor for trenching. The cost of developing service from the member’s meter to the point of use is an additional member responsibility.

Service Cost is the billing fee generated from monthly or quarterly meter readings, or in the case of inactive Memberships, the share of cost for maintaining the system.

Estimates of fees in each category can be obtained from the EWUA office.

Membership By Transfer

Purchasers of property with existing EWUA Memberships will need to complete and file an Application Form, pay a transfer fee and

new easement documentation to gain Membership status in their name. Purchasers signing an Application Form should be aware that they are agreeing to all terms and conditions of membership, and should carefully study the Association Bylaws and other Member information available to them at the EWUA Office.

Property purchasers are encouraged to carefully verify the nature and status of the “Membership” that is claimed to be associated with the property. Consider the following questions:

- Is the claimed Membership associated with the correct property Tax Parcel Number?
- Have all Membership costs and fees been paid?
- Is the Membership in good standing or are payments in arrears?
- If undeveloped property, is there a water main in the appropriate location from which connection can be made, or will the purchaser be responsible for main extension and other connection costs?

6 - Membership Transfer to New Parcel

In certain situations the owner of a property with an existing EWUA Membership may wish to transfer that Membership to another property. The member seeking the transfer must own both the originating property and the receiving property. Since Memberships are limited, the EWUA Board makes every attempt to discourage Membership purchase with the expectation of later transfer to another tax parcel. The Board considers such transfers on a case-by-case basis, and a maximum of only one transfer per five-year period is permitted. The “Transfer”, if approved, will result in the cancellation of the original membership and the development of a new membership account. There is a transfer fee for this transaction. EWUA Staff will be required to perform the necessary hydraulic study, as with any new Membership application.

7 - Sale of Membership

EWUA Memberships are not commodities that can be sold. Undeveloped Memberships can be returned to EWUA, which will refund up to ninety percent of the current

Membership value, less any applicable fees or unpaid billings. The “buyback” of Memberships is at the discretion of the EWUA Board.

8 - New Construction

In addition to securing a Membership the owner of property being developed will be responsible for hiring a contractor to locate the water line, provide a trench for the meter provided by EWUA, and make final hook-up from the meter to the construction site.

Locating your Water Line

EWUA will provide assistance in locating existing water mains that would serve the construction site. The locations of relatively new water mains are generally well documented and can usually be located with little trouble by EWUA Staff and the Developer’s contractor. However, Developers are warned that many older lines have been installed with little documentation and in “unspecified” easements. EWUA staff will provide any information they can to assist the Developer and Contractor in main location, however, EWUA cannot take responsibility for location of such lines. The lines must be located by the Developer to facilitate later hook-up and to insure that no structure is built on an easement containing a main. Construction in a water main easement could result in the Developer being required to remove the structure or pay for an expensive rerouting of the water main.

Utilization of Quality Plumbing Components

Experience has shown that certain types of water pipes are more susceptible than others to cracks or leaks in service. The cost of purchasing high-quality piping and other components is generally only a small portion of the total installation cost, and may prevent costly and destructive water loss and water damage. Developers are urged to consult their contractor to insure that quality materials are installed in accordance with EWUA’s Design and Construction Standards.

9 - Protecting Your Water Supply

To insure a safe and available water supply, all EWUA Members are asked to work together to use the limited supply wisely and prevent contamination. Conservation is the watchword for all users, particularly during

summer months when demands for water triple, while rainfall is almost non-existent. Selection of plantings that minimize water use is important, up to 40% of summer demand is for outdoor irrigation. Installation of pressure reducers, low-flow toilets, showerheads, and water fixtures will do much to reduce water bills and preserve the limited water resource.

In addition to conservation, protecting the quality of the water is essential. Users should be careful not to create any plumbing situations where a Cross-Connection through an unapproved sprinkler valve or a carelessly placed watering hose could allow water to be siphoned back into the domestic distribution system, bringing with it contamination that could cause illness to the user or others in the distribution system. Consult with your EWUA Staff if you have any questions about Cross-Connection problems. Prospective members of the Association are required to complete a Cross Connection survey prior completing their membership transaction. State law requires cross connection protection for a variety of businesses and water uses including medical facilities, farms, irrigation systems and even hot tubs. For more on “cross connection” visit the newsletters posted at www.eastsoundwater.org.

10 - Guest Houses & Unapproved *Water Connections*

Memberships are granted for a specific and limited purpose; an individual dwelling unit, a commercial establishment, an apartment building, or other designated usage. Any changes in usage may require changes in the ERU designation of the Membership. Increased water use, for supply to a Guest House (defined by EWUA as a second habitable space with any form of cooking facilities) or other water-using activity must be approved in advance by EWUA. If an unauthorized connection to a Guest House or other activity has been made in the past and now is discovered by EWUA, charges can be levied to account for past water use and the Member can be required to purchase additional ERU capacity. If a property owner suspects a past illegal connection, they should immediately consult with EWUA Staff to clarify the nature of their Membership and prevent termination of service.

The Board recognizes that some unauthorized connections have developed over the years due to misunderstandings or by previous owners, and the board will work with Members to clarify such issues in a reasonable and fair manner.

11 - Catastrophic Leaks

On occasion a suddenly broken water line or defective plumbing fixture will cause the catastrophic loss of large amounts of water – usually while the property owner is on vacation or otherwise absent. EWUA billing is based on water usage as registered by flow through the member’s water meter, and can be shockingly large when such a catastrophic leak occurs. Members experiencing this type of leak should consult with their plumber or contractor to obtain immediate repair, and also quickly notify EWUA Staff to help insure that the same event does not repeat. Members are encouraged to document and photograph their system failure and professional repair efforts, and keep copies of all related paperwork and invoicing.

If a leak causes a property owner to make substantial major revision to their service line or plumbing as approved by EWUA Staff, they may apply to the Board for reduction in billing for the lost water under the Association’s Catastrophic Leak policy.

EWUA encourages members to learn where their water meter is located and how to read it. Checking the meter status between EWUA meter readings can reduce the potential for extreme water bills. EWUA will be happy to assist in teaching members this simple but important skill. Members should develop the habit of shutting off their water supply during extended absences. For a small fee EWUA staff can shut service off at your meter, and return it to service prior to your return. In addition, EWUA Staff or the Member’s plumber may be helpful in making other suggestions to minimize the chance of catastrophic leaks.

12 - Failure to Pay Assessments

Failure to pay monthly water billing or other assessments in a timely manner will initiate a procedure of formal notification by certified letter to the last known address of the Member. If assessments are not cleared up as specified in the

notification procedure, EWUA Staff will shut off the member’s water supply at the meter. The water supply will not be reinstated until all delinquent charges have been cleared.

It is recognized that Members may have unusual financial problems from time to time, and the EWUA Board and Staff will attempt to work with them to develop a payment plan suitable for the situation at hand. However the Member is responsible for making the necessary contacts with EWUA to appropriately resolve the situation.

13 - Termination of Membership

Failure to pay billing assessments in a timely manner and/or failure to remain in contact with EWUA can result in termination of Membership – a final step in the “notification procedure” cited above. Termination of Membership does not eliminate the past-due assessments, which are still the obligation of the former Member. Eighty percent of the original purchase price of a terminated Membership will be refunded to the owner, less any outstanding fees and past due billings. Membership termination can have severe financial consequences to the property involved, vastly reducing its market value and preventing its occupancy. Any Member with problems that might lead to loss of Membership should consult with EWUA Staff to discuss options available to prevent Membership termination.

14 - Other EWUA Services

For members sensitive to the chlorine residual required in EWUA’s distribution system free filtered water is available during business hours outside the EWUA office at 286 Enchanted Forest Rd. Members supply their own sanitary containers.

EWUA is part of the national “call before you dig” network. For your protection, you are required by law to call for utility locates before doing any digging. Mark your planned digging area and call “811” a couple of days before your project and utility companies will come to your property and mark the utility locations for you.