

Inverness Water System *AutoPay* Electronic Payments Authorization

Name _____
Service address OR Water System account number _____
Phone _____ Name of your bank _____
Name on bank account _____

- I wish to have payments for my Inverness P.U.D. Water System bills withdrawn automatically from my bank account. I am enclosing a voided check for the account to be used.**
- Please also sign me up for Paperless Billing.**

My email address is: _____

Authorization Agreement for IPUD's *AutoPay* Automatic Cash Transfer

I hereby authorize the financial institution I have named on this application to charge the account I have specified for payment on my Inverness P.U.D. Water System bimonthly invoice. I agree that each such charge to my account shall be the same as if I had signed a check to pay my bill. I have the right to stop *AutoPay* payment of a charge by notifying Inverness Public Utility District at least seven (7) business days before the due date of the bill. I may elect to discontinue my enrollment in this *AutoPay* plan at any time.

Signature _____ Date _____

Return this signed form (with a voided check) to:

Inverness P.U.D. Water System, PO Box 469, Inverness, CA 94937-0469

Why Writing Checks to Pay Bills is a REALLY BAD IDEA...

Every time you pay a bill by writing a personal check, you reveal to every person who handles that check...

- ✗ your bank account number
- ✗ where you bank
- ✗ a copyable image of your checks
- ✗ the current range in your check numbering series
- ✗ a sample of your handwriting, and
- ✗ a specimen of your signature!

And then you trust all that information to always make its way reliably through the mail (!!).

Use of a secure, electronic method of paying bills bypasses error-prone human handling of your checks, as well as significantly reducing your exposure to mail theft, fraud, and even identity theft.

With our *AutoPay* automatic payment program, you authorize us to prepare for you a one-time *virtual check* in the amount of each water bill. On the payment due date, as indicated on your water bill, the amount you owe is paid electronically from your bank account using the same ACH interbanking system that transfers funds when the bank processes a paper check that you have written.

The majority of our customers have already made the switch to an electronic format to pay their Inverness water bill. And, not a single one of those payments has been lost or mishandled.

An added benefit is that our cost to handle each payment is reduced from dollars to pennies. Experts tell us a utility's cost to process each check is around \$6 (although we calculate our cost at closer to \$4, but that is still much too high a figure). Our water system is characterized principally by fixed operating costs, so we have limited possibilities for cutting expenses. Payments processing is one area where there is a significant opportunity to realize savings. This is a way to help us keep our rates from increasing. *Economies like this have kept our water rates unchanged since 2009!* **We urge you to sign up today for our *AutoPay* electronic payment program.**

➤ You can also reduce your ecological footprint by opting to receive your water bills by email.

Check out the details on the other side of this sheet, then complete the form above and return it to us with a voided check from your bank account. We'll take care of the rest.

For questions, please call us at (415) 669-1414

Please see other side for details of *AutoPay*

Here's how *AutoPay* works...

- You will receive your water bill as usual in the mail (or by email if you also sign up for Paperless Billing). Your Inverness water bill arrives around the end of each even-numbered month.
- The bill will tell you how much water you used, how much you owe, and the date on which your bank account will be charged for your payment – typically, 21 days from the statement date.
- On the payment due date, your bank will use the Automated Clearing House (ACH) system to automatically transfer the amount of your bill from your account to the IPUD's bank account at Bank of America – just as if we had deposited a check that you had written.
- That's all there is to it! Once you sign up for *AutoPay*, all you have to do is jot down each payment in your check register. We'll let the banking system take care of the rest without any further effort on your part. You won't ever have to worry about forgetting to make a payment.

Q and A

❏ *Can I cancel participation in the **AutoPay** program?*

Of course. You can opt out at any time just by notifying us (to stop an already scheduled payment, you must notify us at least 7 business days before the scheduled payment date).

❏ *Can I cancel an individual payment?*

Yes. Just let us know at least 7 business days before the scheduled payment date.

❏ *Is the email bill the same as a mailed paper bill?*

Yes. An emailed bill looks just like the paper bill and provides all the same information.

❏ *If I sign up for Paperless Billing, can I go back to receiving my bills by mail?*

Yes, just give us a call and ask to cancel Paperless Billing.

❏ *Can I receive an email bill as well as a hardcopy bill in the mail?*

Unfortunately, the system we use isn't set up to provide both. You must use either regular mailed bills or emailed bills. And, we can accommodate only one email address per customer account.

❏ *Is **AutoPay** safe?*

A check you write and an *AutoPay* payment both use the same ACH system to transfer funds between your bank and ours. The difference is that an *AutoPay* transfer is entirely electronic, without the physical exposure and error-prone human handling of a paper check. We believe *AutoPay* is significantly *more secure* than writing a check.

❏ *What happens if the payment date rolls around and I don't have sufficient funds in my bank account to cover the amount of my water bill?*

It's exactly the same as when a written check is returned for Nonsufficient Funds. No payment will be credited to your Water System account and we will notify you of the situation (you will also be subject to our normal returned check charge of \$25.00).

❏ *Can I pay my bills with a credit or debit card?*

Frankly, we are resisting offering this service, because it would have to be provided by a third-party vendor who would tack onto each payment a substantial "convenience" fee that you, our customer, would have to pay (in addition to the full amount of your water bill).

To participate in *AutoPay* ...

Simply complete the *electronic payments* authorization on the other side of this sheet and return it to us with a voided check from your checking account. Also indicate if you want to receive your water bills the eco-friendly way by email instead of as a paper bill in the mail.