

**City of Port Arthur, Texas
Water Utilities**

Policy on Privacy & Confidentiality

I. Objective

To establish fair information principals for the City of Port Arthur Water Utilities Division in carrying out its responsibility to respect the privacy and confidentiality of its customers.

II. Policy

A. How do we provide notice to our Customers?

The City of Port Arthur discloses to its customers its policies and practices for the collection, maintenance, use, and disclosure of identifiable information about its customers with each application for new water utility service accounts. These notices are also included with receipts to existing customers upon payment a the Water Utilities Department.

B. How personal information is collected?

When providing water utility services, the City of Port Arthur collects information directly from its customers. Information such as, name, address, telephone number, social security number, and driver's license number are retrieved from the initial application for new service.

C. How and when the personal information is used:

Personal information, which includes social security numbers, are maintained by the City of Port Arthur for purposes that are suitable for its operations and management. This information can be used for identification purposes, collection, credit checks, and as a reference connecting like accounts with outstanding balances.

D. How the personal information is protected:

The City of Port Arthur maintains water utility customer information on the AS400 in the "Customer Information System". Information from the application for water utility service is scanned into the computer system. Afterward, the paper applications are shredded and disposed of. Only key water utility personnel hav access to the computer system. The City of Port Arthur maintains customer information with a variety of technical, adminstrative, and physical safeguards to protect against loss, unauthorized access, destruction, misuse, modification, and improper disclosure. Any employee who fails to comply with the rules, may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination, and/or criminal prosecution.

E. Who has access to the personal information:

The City of Port Arthur does not share any personal information with the public. Moreover, only those City employees who have special authorization are allowed to have access to customer account information.

Records may be disclosed to governement regulators and other government agencies when authorized by law.

Records about a customer may be disclosed at the request or with the permission of the customer. Otherwise, request for personal information can be released if it is in compliance with the Texas Public Information Act. Requests for public information can only be excepted from disclosure if it specifically meets the requirements set forth under the Public Information Act. Users can obtain more information about the Texas Public Information Act at the Attorney General's website: <http://www.oag.state.tx.us>

F. How the personal information is disposed of:

It is maintained in the Water Utilities Department and in the Finance Department while the account is active. Once the account is closed, the information is maintained as long as is deemed useful and is then destroyed pursuant to the City of Port Arthur's Record Retention Policy.

