


<b>FROM</b>	NAME & TITLE	David E. Scott, P.E., Director	<b>CITY of</b> <b>BALTIMORE</b> <b>MEMO</b>	
	AGENCY NAME & ADDRESS	Department of Public Works 600 Abel Wolman Municipal Building		
	SUBJECT	<b>CITY COUNCIL BILL 09-0124R</b>		

**TO**

DATE: May 14, 2009

The Honorable President and Members  
of the Baltimore City Council  
c/o Karen Randle  
Room 400 - City Hall

I am herein reporting on City Council Bill 09-0124R introduced by Council President Rawlings Blake and Council Members D'Adamo, Young, Clarke, Middleton, Reisinger, Welch, Henry, Cole, Branch, Kraft, Curran, Conaway, Holton, and Spector.

The purpose of the Resolution is to request the Commissioner of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), the Director of Construction and Demolition (DHCD), the Director of Public Works, the Chief of the Bureau of Water and Wastewater Utility Billing Division for Public Works, and the Senior Vice President, BGE Customer Relations and Account Services, to report to the City Council on the notification process for discontinuing utility services to properties that become vacant or are scheduled for demolition.

Article II § 45 of the Baltimore City Charter establishes the City's authority to operate, maintain, regulate and control a water supply system and establish charges for the consumption or use of the water. This section further notes the City's right to turn off and discontinue the supply of water to any person or property because of nonpayment of any fee or charge for furnishing the water. Article VII § 33 charges the Department of Public Works with the responsibility to have charge of the water supply system and "...exercise all the powers and perform all the duties connected with the operation thereof and the supplying of water to the City." Article 24 of the Revised Baltimore City Code § 2-3 provides that the owners of property are responsible for payment of water bills. Bills in arrears are considered sufficient reason to discontinue water service until all arrearages are paid. Resumption of water service requires the payment of a fee. Unauthorized use of water may result in a fine and water service termination. Rules and regulations established by the Director of Public Works (by authority of Article 24 § 1-1) implement the conditions for the turn-offs.

Section 115 of the International Building Code {Unsafe Structures} defines a vacant structure as an "...unoccupied structure that is unsafe or unfit for human habitation or other authorized use." According to statistics provided by DHCD, there are in excess of 12,000 abandoned properties in the City of Baltimore, many of which are held privately. Several thousand of these properties are owned by the Mayor and City Council and have been acquired through Project 5000. Recently enacted Ordinance 07-434 requires that whenever the Building Official determines a structure to be vacant, the Building Official must promptly notify the



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Director of Public Works of that determination (Section 115.4.6, International Building Code). Once the Department of Public Works receives this notification, two actions may be taken: if the structure has an accessible water meter, the water service is to be cut off; if the structure does not have an accessible water meter, water service may be cut off to the premises if damage to an adjacent property is imminent or if demolition of the property is planned [Article 24 § 2-3(2)].

Effective February 1, 2009, a new tracking system was implemented that notifies the Revenue Measurement and Billing Division (within the Bureau of Water and Wastewater) of acquisition and disposal of properties conducted by DHCD which will impact the water utility accounts. DHCD representatives create a service order that directs the Revenue Measurement and Billing Division to take certain actions with the water accounts for listed properties, from abandoning water service to maintaining the current water service status. Abandonment of water service requires closure at the angle valve, discontinuance of billing, and noting the account status as inactive. Reactivation of water service to the property may be requested by the property owner. If the account is to be kept active but the service needs to be turned off, the meter will be removed but the water connection maintained to the property, with the account charged a minimum fee for water service only. These same processes would be used with a request from a private property owner wishing to abandon or turn off water service. All fees and charges are set by the Board of Estimates (see Attachment).

The Department of Public Works will have appropriate representatives attend the scheduled hearing on this Resolution to report on the above notification process for discontinuing water service to vacant properties or properties scheduled for demolition, as requested by City Council Bill 09-0124R.



David E. Scott, P.E.  
Director

DES/MMC:pat

Attachment

Visit our Website @[www.baltimorecity.gov](http://www.baltimorecity.gov)



**Attachment**  
**City Council Bill 09-0124R**  
**Razed and Vacant Houses – Notice to Disconnect Utilities**

**Abandonment of Water Supply Service**

Size of Water Supply Service	Fee
3/4-inch water service	\$235
1-inch water service	\$235
1 ½-inch water service	\$400
2-inch water service	\$400

**Turn-off/Turn-on Charges**

Size of Meters	Fee
5/8-inch – 1-inch meters	\$65
1 ½-inch – and larger	\$90
Official Vacancy Fee	\$175

**Minimum Charges – Water Rates**

Size of Meters	Fee
5/8-inch meter	\$22.65
3/4-inch meter	\$40.77
1-inch meter, Townhouse	\$22.65
1-inch meter	\$90.60
1 ½-inch meter	\$141.11
2-inch meter, Townhouse	\$40.77
2-inch meter	\$266.48
3-inch meter	\$433.64
4-inch meter	\$874.08
6-inch meter	\$1,362.15
8-inch meter	\$1,984.20
10-inch meter	\$2,701.95
12-inch meter	\$4,615.95