

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

**To: News Editors**

**From: Kgamanyane Maphologela**  
**Director: Communications & Stakeholder Management**

**Date: 8 October 2015**

### **Introduction of regionalization and regret for sending incorrect pre-termination notices**

The City of Johannesburg regrets causing any inconvenience to its customers who received incorrect pre-termination notices as a result of change in their due dates for payment of services during the past two months.

This was due to the implementation of the new credit control policy amended recently. The City realizes that this change should have been communicated better beforehand and regret for any inconvenience experienced by customers.

Furthermore, the City wishes to advise that all charges relating to the issuing of the abovementioned pre-termination notices will be reversed.

From now onwards customers are encouraged to pay their municipal bills as per their normal due dates. Also note that customer due dates will be restored to their normal due dates, and our team has arranged to work around the clock to ensure that this happens as soon as possible.

However, the City takes this opportunity to announce that it will be launching the regionalization of its billing. This means that customers will be billed on their municipal statement per region as from the 1<sup>st</sup> of December 2015. The impact of this exercise to customers is expected to only be noticed in January 2016 statements.

#### **The impact of this change on customer are as follows:**

- Current customer's billing date, meter reading and due dates will change.
- Customer's won't be able to change their meter reading or billing dates as it is set per region and cannot be changed.
- Some customers might receive two bills during the first month of implementation, but this will not cause a negative financial overcharge on the account as the first bill will be for a shorter period and a smaller amount. The second bill will be for a full calendar month. Affected customers will be advised through sms'es and personalised letters beforehand - and this will be a once off occurrence.
- Customers who currently have debit orders signed must please remember to amend their debit order dates with their financial institution (bank) to reflect the new correct deduction date. All this information will be communicated before the launch of billing regionalisation.

#### **The benefits of this change to customers are as follows:**

- The biggest benefit is that they will be able to choose their own due date between the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month until the last day of the month.
- Customers will know the dates we issue bills and read their meters - both water and electricity upfront.
- There will be a dedicated meter readers per region.

In our effort to support our customer centric approach, the billing regionalization initiative will empower the City to understand its customers better. This will lead to improved efficiency and economics of scale - meaning that meter readers will find it easier to read meters per region allocated to them rather than operating in a scattered way all over the City's seven regions.

A list of suburbs per region will be made available on the City's website ([www.joburg.org.za](http://www.joburg.org.za)) as from the 1<sup>st</sup> of November 2015 for ease of reference should customers not know which region they reside in. Furthermore, a list of meter reading dates per region will be placed on the website ([www.joburg.org.za](http://www.joburg.org.za)) as well as printed onto customer's statements.

Customers can either phone the Call Centre on 0860 562874 (Joburg) or email it to [duedates@joburg.org.za](mailto:duedates@joburg.org.za) or visit their nearest Customer Service Center. Kindly note that should you wish to use the email facility, you should include your account number and the preferred due date as well as any of your personal information that you need to update on the email.

Kgamanyane Maphologela, Director of Customer Communications says the City is currently streamlining its billing operations to respond to customers' needs, and this will in turn result in improved billing accuracy, giving customers the ability to choose their own due dates for payment of services, and provide a more predictable common date for billing and meter reading. This effort will improve billing accuracy, reduce a number of estimated bills, and create a platform for shorter turnaround times on query resolutions.

This will also assist the City to profile customer queries per region, gather more accurate customer intelligence on every region, and result in informed reporting per region to afford improvements in our operations and problem solving.

"We want to work faster and efficiently by improving customers' experience. The current billing schedule is open all working days of the month, consisting of 21 portions. Each portion caters for each regional township in the City, which strains the physical meter reading that impact on billing accuracy. Now we want to reduce the number of these many portions and rather focus on each region and improve the quality of meter reading and query resolution," says Maphologela. The current City billing is on 21 portions which will now be reduced to 8 regional billing portions.

For more information, please visit any of our nearest **Customer Service Centre** or speak to us by calling the **City's Call Centre** on **0860 562 874**.

Lastly, customers must remember that should they pay at any 3<sup>rd</sup> party on the due date, it will only reflect on our systems 3 days later, therefore credit control will kick in.

**Issued by:**

**Kgamanyane Maphologela, Director: Communications & Stakeholder Management,  
Group Finance**

8 October 2015

## **FREQUENT ASKED QUESTIONS BILLING REGIONALISATION PROJECT**

### ***What is Billing Regionalisation?***

It is the billing of customers per the region of their residing areas.

### ***When will it be launched?***

The City will be launching the regionalization of its billing as from the 1st of December 2015. The impact to customers will only be noticed in January 2016 statements.

### ***How will it affect me?***

The billing date, meter reading and due dates will change. The impact of this change on customer is as follows:

- Current customer's billing date, meter reading and due dates will change.
- Customer's won't be able to change their meter reading or billing dates as it is set per region and cannot be changed.
- Some customers might receive two bills during the first month of implementation, but this will not cause a negative financial overcharge on the account as the first bill will be for a shorter period and a small amount. The second bill will be for a full calendar month. Affected customers will be advised through smses and personalised letter beforehand of this once off occurrence.
- Customers who have debit orders signed must please remember to amend their debit orders with the financial institution (bank) that they use in order to reflect the correct deduction date. All this information will be communicated before the launch of billing regionalisation.

### ***How will I know my new meter reading dates?***

A meter reading schedule will be inserted into statements and will be available on the City's website, [www.joburg.org.za](http://www.joburg.org.za) or at any Customer Service Centre across the City as from the 1<sup>st</sup> of November 2015. Furthermore, each customer will receive a personalised letter advising of the above mentioned. There will be advertisements in the newspapers as well. The meter reading schedule will be circulated closer to the time.

### ***How will I know my new billing date?***

The billing date per region will be circulated with the meter reading schedule and will be available on the City's website, [www.joburg.org.za](http://www.joburg.org.za) or at any Customer Service Centre across the City as from the 1<sup>st</sup> of November 2015. Furthermore, each customer will receive a personalised letter advising of the above mentioned. There will be advertisements in the newspapers as well.

### ***How does it affect my due date?***

The due date will change due to new reading schedule. The customer will be afforded an opportunity to choose their own due date between the 15<sup>th</sup> and the last day of the month.

### ***Can I change my due date?***

Yes, the customer can request that a due date which has been systematically generated be changed. This request can be made at any of our Customer Service Centres or through the Call Centre or via email at [duedates@joburg.org.za](mailto:duedates@joburg.org.za).

***Can I change my meter reading date?***

No, the reading date is set as per region & suburb and cannot change.

***Can I change my billing date?***

No, the date is set as per region and cannot change.

***Why have the City decided on this project and what are the benefits to me as the customer?***

The City of Johannesburg is trying to become more customer centric and the billing regionalisation is an initiative that will empower the City to:

- The biggest benefit is that they will be able to choose their own due date between the 15th of the month until the last day of the month.
- Customers will know the dates we issue bills and read their meters - both water and electricity upfront.
- Dedicated meter readers per region.
- Understand our customers better.
- Meter readers to visit each region only once.
- Economies of scale, meter readers will find it easier per region.
- Create a platform to have good intelligence of our customers per regions.
- Business efficiency.

***Is there anything that I should be changing as a result of this project, ie. Debit orders?***

Yes, you will have to amend your debit order with the financial institution (bank) that you've signed it with in order to reflect the correct deduction day.

***With activation of the system, will there be any negative impact on me?***

No, except that some customers might receive two bills during the first month of implementation, being December 2015, but this will not cause a negative financial overcharge on the account as the first bill will be for a shorter period and small amount and the second bill will be for a full calendar month.

***Will I be financially impacted by the implementation of this project?***

No, the impact is more technical of nature and was initiated in order for the City to become more customer focused and profile our customers per region instead of per portion.

***Do I need to visit the Customer Service Centres to update my details?***

Yes, you may visit any Customer Service Centre across the City to update your details.

***How do I know in which region I fall?***

List of suburbs per region will be made available on the website as from the 1<sup>st</sup> of December 2015. Each customer's region will be printed onto customers' statements. Furthermore, a list of meter reading dates per region will be placed on the website ([www.joburg.org.za](http://www.joburg.org.za)) as well as printed onto customers' statements as from the 1<sup>st</sup> of December 2015..

***Will I receive two bills for the first month?***

Only a few customers will receive two bills in December 2015, the implementation month. These customers will be advised beforehand of this once off occurrence.

The second bill will be for a full calendar month. Affected customers will be advised through smses and personalised letter beforehand of this once off occurrence.

Customers who have debit orders signed must please remember to amend their debit orders with the financial institution (bank) that they use in order to reflect the correct deduction date. All this information will be communicated before the launch of billing regionalisation.

***Can I change my due date more than once?***

Yes, should it be necessary. This functionality is to allow customers to align the due date with their pay days or any day that is convenient to the customer.

***Where can I provide my preferred due date:***

Customers can either phone the Call Centre on 0860 562874 (Joburg) or email it to [duedates@joburg.org.za](mailto:duedates@joburg.org.za) or visit their nearest Customer Service Center. Kindly note that should you wish to use the email facility, you should include your account number and the preferred due date as well as any of your personal information that you need to update on the email.

***My payment methods:***

Customers must remember that should they pay at any 3<sup>rd</sup> party on the due date, it will only reflect on our systems 3 days later, therefore credit control will kick in.

You can also pay via EFT which will show immediately on our records or at any Customer Service Centre.

Ends