

PUBLIC INFORMATION

METER TAMPERING/THEFT OF SERVICE

CUTTING LOCKS

Stealing water from a water system is a criminal offense in Texas (class A misdemeanor). See Texas Penal Code Section 28.03(b)(3)(B). Class A misdemeanors are punishable by a fine not to exceed \$4,000, confinement in jail for a term not to exceed one year, or both fine and confinement. See Texas Penal Code 12.21

The State of Texas has a law that makes tampering with meters or District equipment illegal and establishes penalties for violations. Penalties are prescribed for the following acts:

- Interfering with the meter seal. The lock/locking device, curb stop or valves, meter setter, meter box, meter vault, or bypassing a water meter.
- Knowingly consuming any water which has not been correctly registered on the meter because of tampering.
- Reconnecting water service that has been disconnected or shut-off by the Water District for nonpayment or other reasons.
- Knowing consuming any water which has been unlawfully reconnected.

Anyone found guilty of these illegal acts may be subject to a tampering fine. Proof that a meter, pipe, valves, or other attachment has been tampered with or reconnected is presumptive evidence that the customer or user has caused the tampering or reconnecting. It is not necessary to catch a person in the act of tampering or reconnecting.