



**NEWS RELEASE**  
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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **SCV Water Board Approves Ordinance Establishing Penalties for Unauthorized Connections and Water Use from Fire Hydrants** *Revised Customer Service Policy Includes Enforceable Framework for Water Theft*

At its February 17, 2026, regular meeting, the SCV Water Board of Directors approved an ordinance establishing penalties relating to water theft from fire hydrants as well as corresponding revisions to its Customer Service Policy. Unauthorized connections and water use compromise the fairness and financial integrity of SCV Water's water system, cause revenue loss, damage facilities, and endanger public health and safety.

"Adoption of the ordinance aligns with SB 394, the new statutory authority on unauthorized hydrant connections, and strengthens local enforcement relating to water theft," said SCV Water Assistant General Manager of Finance and Administration Rochelle Patterson.

"The Policy changes clarify the definition of unauthorized use, identify unlawful acts, outline enforcement procedures specific to hydrant use, and establish billing and cost-recovery processes for unmetered or unauthorized consumption," Patterson added.

### **SB 394: Enhanced Penalties for Water Theft from Fire Hydrants**

In October 2025, Governor Gavin Newsom signed Senate Bill 394 (Allen, 2025-26) into law to address rising water theft statewide, especially unauthorized fire hydrant use during drought conditions and increased construction.

Unauthorized hydrant use and water theft during an emergency also impact first responders' abilities to fight fires. The law allows retail water agencies to ban unauthorized hydrant connections and strengthens penalties and civil remedies for water diversion, tampering, and related violations.

#### **Key Provisions of SB 394 include:**

- **Enhanced Penalties:** Fines up to \$2,500 for first-time violations and up to \$10,000 for repeat offenses, targeting commercial operators engaged in illegal hydrant use.
- **Civil Enforcement:** Empowers agencies like SCV Water to pursue civil damages against individuals or companies that tamper with or divert water from hydrants.
- **Public Safety Protection:** Helps maintain system pressure during emergencies and prevents contamination risks.
- **Ratepayer Protection:** Ensures financial responsibility for theft and damages rests on violators, not local communities.

"Together, these updates provide a clear, enforceable framework for identifying unauthorized water use, documenting violations, applying penalties, recovering costs for water loss and

facility damage, and coordinating with law enforcement when necessary,” said Patterson. “The revisions strengthen SCV Water’s ability to protect system assets, deter water theft, and ensure consistent and transparent enforcement practices.”

[Click this link to view SCV Water Ordinance No. 05 – Penalties Relating to Water Theft.](#)

[Click this link to view the revised Customer Service Policy \(February 2026\).](#)

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**About SCV Water:**

The Santa Clarita Valley Water Agency (SCV Water) is a full-service regional water agency located in the Santa Clarita Valley. SCV Water provides water service to more than 75,500 business and residential customers. It was formed on January 1, 2018, when local water suppliers combined into one integrated, regional water provider. More information can be found at [yourSCVwater.com](http://yourSCVwater.com).

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