



# Pioneer Irrigation District

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[www.pioneerirrigation.com](http://www.pioneerirrigation.com)

August 24, 2015

**Subject: Private Irrigation Facilities**

To Whom It May Concern:

We receive many complaints each year about water boxes and delivery ditches overflowing, flooding, leaking or perhaps not having water at all. For the purposes of this letter, we'll refer to all of these as "facilities." If the facility is one Pioneer is responsible for, we will readily take care of the problem. However, there are many of what we call "private facilities" within District boundaries. This letter is intended to provide more information on just what a private facility is, why they exist and who is responsible for them.

Private facilities are called this because they are beyond the District's main distribution system; and are not facilities that Pioneer owns, maintains or is responsible for. Please understand that Pioneer's purpose and job is to bring water from the Boise River (near Eagle Island), through our canal system to a delivery point. This delivery point may not be right at your property, but might be up the street or around the corner. Our control and ownership of the delivery system ends at that delivery point. Any ditches, pipes, boxes or other distribution methods beyond that delivery point were installed by private property owners or subdivision developers and are technically private property that is out of Pioneer's jurisdiction. This is where the cooperative nature of the system comes into play. Pioneer brings the water in to a delivery point and the property owners must take it from there.

When the District was originally formed, better than 100 years ago, most of the land was farmland and was not broken up by streets, businesses and neighborhoods. As development has taken place, farmland has been split up for streets, houses, etc. This made it more difficult to control the water once it left the original delivery points. Because Pioneer's jurisdiction ends at the delivery point, private citizens and developers have installed things like boxes, ditches, pipes, etc., to help them better control their water. These systems are all owned by the people using them.

The maintenance and monitoring of private facilities should be done by the group of water users using the facility. Most of the private facilities are VERY old. Here's where the problem comes in..... in many cases, the people who had them installed are no longer around, and the information about maintenance and monitoring has not been

passed on to subsequent property owners. That results in a situation where people may not know they are supposed to be taking care of a private facility. When things like floods and leaks happen, people call Pioneer to report the issue, and they are told things like, "It is a private facility. We can turn the water off at the delivery point for 24-48 hours for repairs, but repairs are up to the users because Pioneer doesn't have jurisdiction over it." While frustrating to the caller, those private facilities are private property and Pioneer would be trespassing if we did anything to them.

So what do you do if you are on or near one of these private facilities? Try to educate your neighbors. Because these facilities are private, Pioneer does not have records of who is served by each private facility, but we do have records of who is served by each of our delivery points. We can provide you with a list to help you determine who might be on your private facility. Talk to the users of the facility and explain to them that it is private and up to the users to maintain. You are welcome to copy and distribute this letter. Perhaps, like a homeowner's association, you may consider setting up a fund that everyone using the facility contributes to so there are funds available when maintenance needs to be done. Pioneer can provide Idaho Code sections on exactly how to go about doing that. It would also be a good idea to get together and assign someone as the "watermaster", whose job it is to monitor the facility.

These private facilities were set up as neighborhood control systems and require the entire group using it to participate in its management. That means neighbors need to be talking to each other.

Please feel free to call Pioneer if you have questions, as we may be able to help you with things like determining if a facility is private or Pioneer's. Please understand that private facilities are out of Pioneer's jurisdiction and we have no control over or liability for them.

If you have additional questions, please call us at 459-3617.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Amber Jaquier". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

Amber Jaquier  
Secretary/Treasurer