

CITY of PIEDMONT UTILITIES

Standard Service Policy

06/20/2017

Purpose

This policy has been developed to provide a method for the City of Piedmont utilities to respond to our utility customers in a fair and consistent manner and to establish terms, conditions, rates and charges associated with the rendering of municipal utility services.

General Policies

All utility meters are property of the City of Piedmont. It is the responsibility of all customers to provide safe and adequate access to the utility meters for our utility personnel. It is the responsibility of the city utility workers to turn on and off all city utilities.

A. Section 1: Applicants

Application shall be made for any utility service requested on such form as approved by City Council. Once the application is received by the Utility Office, each will be reviewed and applicant will be notified within 4 business hours of approval status and requirements. Applicants must be 18 years of age and provide valid photo identification at the time of application. Service will be declined to an applicant who is indebted to the city or any utility company for utility service at a former location. Service will be denied where such indebtedness was incurred by a member of the applicants or applicants household, either under the name of applicant or another name when the application was made. Utility service will be considered after all indebtedness is paid in full.

Applications for service at rental properties must be accompanied by an affidavit of the property owner stating the responsible party or a copy of the rental agreement contract. The property owner must be in good standing with utility accounts in order for utilities to be turned on at the rental property. In order to secure prompt payment of accounts and charges for services and facilities provided, and as a condition precedent to the rendering of such services, each customer shall pay an advance service deposit based on a third party risk evaluation using a credit screen. If a customer chooses not to have a credit screen, deposits will be determined to be High Risk.

LOW RISK (SCORE > 621) SERVICE DEPOSITS FOR PROPERTIES WITH EXISTING UTILITIES ON PROPERTY

WATER	\$75.00
GAS	\$100.00
ELECTRIC	\$100.00
SEWER	\$25.00

HIGH RISK (SCORE < 620) SERVICE DEPOSITS FOR PROPERTIES WITH EXISTING UTILITIES ON PROPERTY

WATER	\$150.00
GAS	\$250.00
ELECTRIC	\$350.00
SEWER	\$50.00

Such advanced service deposits may be increased or decreased from time to time at the discretion of the Mayor, and utility superintendents. The service deposits for commercial and industrial customers shall be an estimated two (2) month's bill as estimated by the utility superintendents and may be secured by an approved surety bond or letter of good credit in lieu of a cash advance deposit or cash deposits (CD) in the name of the utility and property owner.

Inspection: When utility service is existing, approval must be permitted to the utility department by the City of Piedmont's building inspector or his authorized representative before a service connection may be made or reinstated to any business, home, manufactured home, apartment, or any structure. If at this time the inspector finds it necessary for upgrades to utility service components, the involved parties will be notified in writing on what utility needs must be met to bring into current local and state codes.

B. Section 2: Water, Gas, and Sewer New Service Taps

When service is requested at a new location or where service(s) have not existed previously, for Residential, Commercial or Industrial service, the appropriate tapping fee(s) or aid to construction costs must be paid prior to service connection. If any tap or service requires a city street to be cut, there will be an additional \$300.00 charge. If any tap or service requires a state highway to be cut or a directional bore there will be an additional \$350.00 charge. A customer for any directional bore, will be charged ten dollars (\$10.00) per foot in addition to any and all other charges. When state highway has to be cut, allow 4-6 weeks for state highway department (ALDOT) to issue the work permit. Tapping fees and aid to construction cost are as follows:

WATER TAP FEES

Standard ¾"	\$600.00
1"	\$1000.00
2"	\$1500.00

*Customer is to pay full cost for service line over 35 feet.

Customer must install cutoff valve outside utility meter box on the customer side before utility will unlock water meter. Water meters will be placed at or near property line, customer will own from meter valve to property.

SEWER TAP FEES

Standard 4" tap - ¾" meter	\$500.00
Standard 4" tap - 1" meter	\$600.00
6" tap - ¾ "-1"meter	\$750.00
6" tap -2" meter	\$1000.00

Utility sewer will stop at property line and clean out must be installed at property line.

GAS TAP FEES

Standard	\$300.00
High pressure	\$750.00
High pressure-long	\$1000.00

*Any service over 150 feet will be charged \$1.50 per foot.

\$100.00 will be waived from tap fee for any one of these water heater, primary heat, or range.

\$150.00 will be waived from tap fee for primary heat, and water heater.

ELECTRIC SERVICE FEES

SEE LINE EXTENSION POLICY #100 & #102

C. Section 3: Access to Utility Meters

A meter shall be installed for each connection and shall be read each month by a duly authorized agent of the city, who shall have access to the premises of each customer for such purpose at all times as well as for the purpose of removing or repairing any equipment owned by the city located on the premises. Each customer accepting service from the city shall, by acceptance of such service(s) agree and consent to such access for repair, maintenance and removal. Utility identified employees shall have access to customers' premises at all reasonable times for the purpose of reading meters, testing, repairing, removing or exchanging any and all equipment belonging to the city utility.

D. Section 4: Rates, Billing, and Payment

1. The City of Piedmont Utilities does not guarantee uninterrupted service of utilities, nor will it be held liable for conditions that occur beyond the control of the City of Piedmont Utilities. These can be but not limited to, the stoppage of the flow of water, sewer, gas and/or electrical voltage fluctuations, and outages, continuity of service or voltage ranges. Customers with three phase service are responsible for protecting their equipment from possible single phasing. To request an account to be closed and service disconnected, customers must notify Piedmont Utilities in person. A final reading will be taken and the meter locked. Once the account has been closed, the security deposit will be applied to any remaining balance on the account.
2. Rates shall be determined to be residential, commercial, industrial, or church by the utility superintendents. These rates and their structures can be obtained in the utility office located at 128 South Center Avenue. Piedmont, AL 36272.
3. If any customer has the capability of reaching a 50 kilo-watts Demand, a meter shall be installed to measure the demand per month. When the meter is installed and if a customer reaches the 50 kilo-watts or higher of demanded power six months out of a twelve month period, this customer shall then be considered and billed as a demand customer. The customer shall remain as a demand customer for the period of twelve months or until last 50 kilo-watts measured reading of the billing system

4. Churches: The billing capacity or demand for churches will be fifty percent (50%) of the capacity indicated by the demand meter for the current month. The word CHURCHES is intended to mean the premises, where operated in good faith for religious worship purposes and where electric service supplied such premises is utilized exclusively in connection with such religious worship purposes. This provision does not apply where any part of the premises is used for business or other nonreligious purpose and not used for religious purposes on a regular basis. Church operated schools, hospitals, camps, orphanages, book stores or similar services shall not qualify for this provision.
5. Bills for services shall be provided on the basis of the meter reading on the day of the month selected therefore. The rates for service are net and the current monthly bill is **DUE UPON RECEIPT AND BECOMES DELINQUENT AFTER THE FIFTEENTH (15th) DAY OF THE MONTH AND IS SUBJECT TO PENALTIES AND POSSIBLE TERMINATION.** If the fifteenth (15th) day falls on a Saturday, Sunday or city utility recognized holiday, then the delinquent date shall be extended to the city's next business day. **DISCONNECTS WILL BE DONE ON THE TWENTY-FIFTH (25TH) DAY OF EACH MONTH FOR ALL DELINQUENT ACCOUNTS.** If the twenty-fifth (25th) day falls on a Saturday, Sunday or city utility recognized holiday, then the disconnect date shall be extended to the city's next business day. For initial and final billing, a service period of ten (10) days or more shall constitute a full billing period with no proration of any applicable rate. For initial and final billing less than ten (10) days the recorded consumption will be added to that of the next or previous billing respectively. **Failure to receive a bill does not relieve the customer's responsibility of paying the bill when due. Customers will receive a bill approximately the first day of each month and if the customer fails to receive a bill within two (2) days of that date the customer should notify the utility office to obtain a copy of the bill.**
6. If full payment is not received by the city utility office on or before the delinquent date shown on bill, a late penalty will be added to the customer's account. The late penalty shall be ten percent (10%) of the amount of the billing or five dollars (\$5.00) whichever is greater. If full payment is not received by the delinquent date, utility service may be terminated without notice. Additional reinstatement charges are added to the customer's delinquent account in accordance with the attached schedule of fees and charges (SFC). All reinstatement charges and the delinquent amount and late penalties must be paid prior to service being restored. In order to guarantee same day reconnection of service, payment must be made by 12:00 P.M noon. After business hour's reinstatement of service will be done only in case of an emergency for example: a doctor certified medical need. The city utility reserves the right to increase the advance service fee requirement for any customer whose service has been discontinued due to non-payment on more than one occasion. The additional advance service fee, if required, must be paid before service will be restored to such customer. Advance service fee increases may only be authorized by the Mayor or the utilities superintendents. Additionally, the Mayor or utilities superintendents are authorized to extend the cut-off date where customers have made advance arrangements to clear any delinquent accounts by an approved date. Any bill that becomes delinquent is subject to termination without any further notice, and customer's billing is the notice. Bills being paid on the day of cut offs shall be in the form of cash, money order, or credit card only. The City reserves the right to use a licensed collection agency at its discretion for the collections of past due accounts.

7. Personal checks will normally be accepted for payment of bills. If the check is not honored at the bank for any reason, services will be disconnected and the customer must redeem the check in cash or credit and pay a thirty dollar (\$30.00) collection fee and disconnect fees. The city reserves the right to refuse payment by personal check for any customer whose check has been returned in a twelve month period. The City reserves the right to pursue collection of bad check payments and fees through a licensed collection agency or prosecution of criminal charges as it deems necessary.
8. When using the night depository for payment of monthly utility bills, payment may be made by cash or check; however, either the entire bill or the payment "STUB" must accompany the payment in a sealed envelope. The use of the night depository for utility payments is entirely at the sole risk and responsibility of the customer.
9. Should an account holder become deceased, the Utilities Office will notify the address, in writing, stating persons occupying property must contact the office within 30 days to have account name changed. Once that 30 days has lapsed, the office will then place a notice on the door of the residence stating the account must be changed within two weeks or utilities will be disconnected.
10. All members of the household must be clear of any and all past due debt to the City of Piedmont Utilities office. Options for repayment will be made at the discretion of the utilities superintendents based on account history, etc. If it is determined that a debtor has not made arrangements to repay the utility debt in a reasonable amount of time, the entire debt amount will be transferred to the account and payment must be made in full to avoid disconnection.
11. **POSTPONING TERMINATION DUE TO SPECIAL CONDITIONS** - The City will temporarily-for a period of 15 days-postpone termination of residential service for nonpayment of a delinquent bill where the City has received written verification of the need for life support equipment in the Customer's household from the Customer's physician as provided in this section. The term "life support equipment" as used in this section shall mean any medical device that is electrically operated on a twenty-four (24) hour a day continuous basis to avoid the loss of life. In order to obtain this verification from the physician, the City may require the Customer to execute a certified statement about the life support equipment. Upon receiving the Customer's executed certified statement, the City may request the Customer's licensed physician to verify the need for the life support equipment. After receipt of the physician's written verification, the City will place the Customer's household on life support status. The City will maintain a list of all households placed on life support status. The Customer shall notify the City of any change in life support status. The City may periodically confirm the life support status of any household by requiring the Customer to execute an updated certified statement and requesting the Customer's licensed physician to verify the continuing need for the life support equipment. The City shall have no obligation to place any household on life support status if the Customer fails to execute the certified statement or the City never receives a licensed physician's written verification of the need for life support equipment.

E. Section 6: Seasonal Utility Services

There will be a reconnection fee of thirty-five (\$35.00) dollars when a customer has any utility service discontinued for seasonal purposes for example: Gas service disconnected in non-heating months and

continues into the fall or winter months, and electric service to pumps during drought periods or disconnected in wet periods at the same address.

F. Section 7: Water Leak Adjustments

Excessive bills for water consumption due to leaks beyond the customers control may or may not be adjusted based on account history at the discretion of the Mayor and Utility superintendent. As a standard, a once per lifetime adjustment will be granted.

SCHEDULE OF FEES AND CHARGES

1. Disconnect for non-payment

Any account that has been disconnected for non-payment will be charged an additional \$50.00 deposit. This deposit will be added to the accounts original deposit.

Electric	\$40.00 if cut off at meter \$100.00 if cut at pole
Water	\$30.00
Gas	\$40.00
Water and Gas	\$50.00

We understand that occasionally customers may not realize they are on the disconnect list until we arrive at the property. At the discretion of the utility employee, we may choose to leave the utility on if the customer either immediately comes in to the office to pay or calls to pay the bill while we are onsite. At that time, the customer must also pay a \$15 service fee in lieu of the disconnect fee.

No after hour reinstatement except that explained in the Trouble Call Fees section below.

**In the event any utility service is disconnected due to hazardous conditions by no fault and beyond the control of the customer, reconnect charges shall not apply.

2. Temporary Service

Electric	\$30.00 per 30 days (150 kWh)
Water	\$30.00 per 30 days (2000 gal)
Gas	\$30.00 per 30 days (1000 CF)

*note no temporary shall be in use longer than 90 days except at utility superintendent discretion.

**note any usage above listed amount will be charged at current rate, billed to the customer, and due upon receipt in accordance with the Standard Service Policy.

3. Broken Lock or Tampering with Service

Electric	\$100.00
Water	\$100.00
Gas	\$100.00

Damage done to any cut-off \$250.00

The tampering or theft will be investigated and additional fees may apply.

Theft of services by any means will result in criminal prosecution.

4. Transfer of Service

In order to transfer any service, any and all current amounts due must be paid with the following transfer fees:

Electric	\$15.00
Water	\$15.00
Gas	\$15.00

5. Meter Re-Read and Test Fee

If meters test within +/- 3% the following charges shall apply:

Re-read Per meter	\$25.00
Test- Electric residential	\$35.00 + shipping
Electric Commercial	\$50.00 + shipping
Gas	\$50.00 + shipping
Water	\$50.00 + shipping

6. Trouble Call Fees

Gas trouble calls – There is no trouble call fee for suspected Gas leaks. Since natural gas has no scent, a strong odorant that smells like rotten eggs is added to help customers detect possible leaks. If you smell natural gas:

- Remove any cigarettes or other smoking materials from the area and then extinguish them.
- Do not use any matches, lighters or other open flames, do not turn on or off any light switches, electric appliances, flashlights, doorbells or even garage door openers, as they could create a spark.
- Do not use telephones (cellular included) on the premises where leak is suspected. Phones can create a spark.
- Evacuate everyone from the building immediately and then call Piedmont Utilities from a safe location at **256-447-3560; 256-447-6656; or Piedmont Police Department at 911 or 256-447-9091** to let us know where you are.
- Do not re-enter the building until utility department has declared it to be safe.
- For your safety, we promptly investigate suspected natural gas leaks as a free service 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Electric Trouble calls – If there is a problem with the electricity at your location, please be sure to check all electrical breakers or fuses at service entrance. If the electric utility personal is called out and the problem is with utility power, there will be no charge. If the electric utility is called out and the problem is found to be behind customer metering point, then there could be an additional service fee-minimum of \$50.00-added to customers next billing cycle. If problem is with the utility, please call during business hours at 256-447-3560 or after hours at 256-447-6656

Water Trouble calls- If there is a problem with water service at your location or to report a water leak, call (256)447-3560 or after-hours (256)447-6656. If the problem is past the meter no work shall be done on or to private property. The city shall maintain water service lines from the meter to the main line. If multiple calls are made with crews responding and at no fault of the City services, fees may be applied to customers next billing cycle. If problem is found on City's line, then no charges shall be applied.

Sewer Trouble calls- The City utilities are responsible for maintaining the **main** sewer lines located in the right-of-way, and public utility easements. Property owners are responsible for maintaining service lines which extend from the City main to the residence or business. Policy defines the service line as beginning at residence and ending past the tie-end at main. If there is a blockage or off-set in line on the City right-of-way, it still is the responsibility of the plumber to unblock the line. There is no such thing as a City side on a service line. The City will be responsible for excavating and repairing the sewer line that falls in the public right-of-way, or easement. This **does not** change the fact that the service line is still owned by the resident. Before the City will excavate and repair defects found in right-of-way, the resident **must provide** video evidence of service line as provided by your plumber that shows the problem. After the evidence is reviewed and does show a problem the city will schedule for repairs at no cost to resident. Residents also need to have a property line cleanout installed by a plumber prior to contacting City about blockages for access of their service line. If problem is with the utility, please call during business hours 256-447-3560 after hours 256-447-6656.