

TOWN OF WASHINGTON UTILITY POLICY

SECTION 1. PURPOSE

The Town of Washington is providing the following utility policy to ensure compliance with all federal regulations, state regulations, parish regulations, municipal ordinances and additional policies for the utility system consisting of water, sewer, and gas services.

SECTION 2. ESTABLISHMENT OF WATER, GAS, SEWER SERVICES/NEW CUSTOMER ACCOUNTS

- a) To establish new service, the Town requires a completed utility application, valid photo ID, valid SSN or EIN, signed lease agreement if applicable and required deposits. The applicant must also provide any additional information requested for the purpose of establishing services. Individuals applying for services must also be 18 years of age unless legally emancipated.
- b) Service will not be granted to an account holder until ALL past due amounts with the Town are paid in full.
- c) Service will not be granted to an applicant if any red flags detecting potential fraud per the Town's Identity Theft Prevention Program.
- d) The new customer account is to be created/set-up in the utility system software and must show the utility deposit amounts received from the customer.
- e) Utility deposits shall be held by the Town until the account is paid in full and closed. If a service is disconnected on an account while other services are still active the entire deposit will be held until the account is closed. The Town shall not owe any interest to account holders on the Deposit. The Town shall apply the account holder's available Deposit towards all services on the account at time of closure. If the Deposit is sufficient to pay the account in full, the Town shall return any remaining Deposit to the account holder.
- f) Utility deposit monies must be deposited into a separate bank account from the operating account. Utility deposit monies are to be recorded as an increase in restricted cash and as an increase in the customer utility deposit liability in the general ledger/accounting system. Management is strictly prohibited from spending the utility deposit monies.
- g) A pressure test shall be performed by a certified plumber on all customer lines at the time the natural gas is turned on when applicable according to the Town's Operation and Maintenance Manual.
- h) If a gas service line has any disruption of flow for 6 months or greater due to a valve turned off a pressure test shall be performed on all customer lines.
- i) The cost of the certified plumber to perform the pressure test is the responsibility of the customer.
- j) A Certified Operator must be present with the certified plumber to verify the results of the pressure test.

SECTION 3. CUSTOMER BILLING

- a) Customers are required to maintain current contact information including mailing address.
- b) Customers are required to obtain a 911 address from St. Landry Parish 911 office.
- c) Customers are responsible for the installation, maintenance and integrity of the customer side of the service lines.
- d) Any employee of the town is responsible to provide any relevant information for customer accounts to the Utility Clerk to be recorded for accurate billing.
- e) The Utility Clerk is responsible for updating the account information immediately in the utility software.
- f) Meter readings are taken on or about the first or second week of the month.
- g) Utility bills are generated and mailed on or about the last business day of the month.
- h) The total amount billed each month for each type of service is to be recorded in the accounting system as an increase in customer receivables and as an increase in revenues of the municipality (e.g., water, sewer, gas, etc.)
- i) Water, sewer, and gas consumption is the account holder's responsibility. The account shall be billed based upon all water and gas having been measured via the meter(s). The sewer shall be billed based on the water consumption measured via the water meter. The customer is responsible for payment for all services measured by the meter(s). The account holder is responsible for monitoring the usage and the security of the portion of the system that is located on the serviced property.
- j) Per Section 14 (A) of the Louisiana Constitution the Town of Washington is prohibited from providing any services or materials without charge.
- k) All billing adjustments must be clearly documented on a Customer Billing Adjustment Request Form with written documentation of approval by the Town Clerk and acknowledgment by the mayor.
- l) Accounts that have remained in DELINQUENT status as of thirty (30) days past the Due Date shall be closed and a final bill generated with a new due date.

SECTION 4. COLLECTION OF PAYMENTS AND OUTSTANDING DEBT

- a) All employees who collect monies or have access must be adequately bonded for insurance purposes.
- b) The Town will NOT accept cash payments for utility services and deposits.
- c) Customer payments are to be accepted by designated utility clerk employee(s) only at town hall and during regular business hours.
- d) In addition, payments can be made by credit card via the phone or online as well as placed in the drop box provided in front of town hall.
- e) The employee who is responsible for entering data into the billing system should not collect payments.

- f) Each employee who collects payments is to be assigned their own user profile in the billing software. Employees who are assigned a user profile shall ensure that their computer remains locked while not in use and shall not permit anyone else to work out of their user profile.
- g) All collections should be entered immediately and reflect on the customer account in the utility billing software. A physical or digital receipt must be provided upon request.
- h) At the end of the day, a report reflecting payments received must be printed and submitted to an appropriate designated person to prepare the deposit. Any shortages or overages noted must be investigated and resolved immediately.
- i) Collections are to be deposited daily.
- j) The total amount collected/deposited each day for each type of service is to be recorded in the accounting system (general ledger) as an increase to cash and as a decrease in customer receivables.
- k) A penalty fee will be added to the original amount owed the day after the due date if an account is not paid in full by the due date.
- l) If a customer owes an amount in excess of the amount of their utility deposits after closure and final billing, the municipality must attempt to collect the excess amount. If attempts to collect payment are unsuccessful, management is to send to the collection agency chosen at 60 days past due from the last bill's due date.
- m) Customer account balances that are written-off as uncollectible must be submitted to and approved in writing by the council.
- n) Each month, the customer receivable balance reflected in the general ledger is to be reconciled/agreed to the total of customer balances recorded in the utility billing system (subsidiary ledger). Any differences must be investigated and resolved immediately.
- o) Each month, the customer utility deposit liability balance reflected in the general ledger is to be reconciled/agreed to the total of utility deposits recorded in the utility billing system (subsidiary ledger). Any differences must be investigated and resolved immediately.

SECTION 5. TERMINATION OF SERVICES AND/OR ACCOUNTS

- a) Customers who violate the municipality's utility service agreement, ordinances, or any federal/ state law regulating utilities shall be subject to the penalties provided in the municipality's utility service agreement and/or ordinances.
- b) Services are to be terminated on all customers who do not pay their bills in full by the payment due date in accordance with the municipality's ordinance.
- c) The municipality is to refund the utility deposit monies paid by the customer less any outstanding amounts owed by the customer. Refunds are to be paid by check from the municipality's utility deposit bank account. In addition, appropriate entries to recognize these refund transactions are to be recorded in both the accounting system and the utility billing system.
- d) Services cannot be resumed for a delinquent customer until all outstanding amounts owed are paid, including any outstanding fees.

- e) Services can be discontinued if a customer fails to comply with any policies, federal regulations, state regulations, parish regulations, and municipal ordinances pertaining to utility services as well as building code permits and regulations enforced by the Town or Parish.

SECTION 6. MISCELLANEOUS

- a.) Any employee of the town is responsible to provide any relevant information for customer accounts and operations of the infrastructure to the appropriate department(s)' supervisor.
- b.) All new installations of water, sewer, and gas services are limited to an area within 10 feet of the property line closest to the main line that will be used for connection.
- c.) Each employee using the utility software is to be assigned their own user profile in the utility software. Employees who are assigned a user profile shall ensure that their computer remains locked while not in use and shall not permit anyone else to work out of their user profile.
- d.) Utility accounts cannot be held open under deceased customers. The Utility Clerk will follow the Deceased Customer Policy.
- e.) Utility Laborers must wear safety gear identifying them as the Town's employees when their uniforms are not easily identifiable in the field. (ex. cold weather, rain, low-visibility situations)
- f.) On call Utility Department Laborers of the town will complete appropriate documentation to report any work for customers done outside of business hours.
- g.) Utility Laborers contacted directly by customers during business hours will advise customers to contact the Utility Clerk to initiate work orders for work to be completed.
- h.) Multi-residential user customers will be billed as a multi-residential user until both residential structures are established on their own individual meters.

*If for any reason policy is deviated from, the employee must have written approval.

The following policy has been approved by Mayor William Dwight Landreneau to comply with the Town Utility Ordinances on 2/27/25.



William Dwight Landreneau