



CITY OF MEADOW LAKE

POLICY

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| SECTION: | Fiscal Services | NUMBER: 400-17-001 | RESOLUTION: 087/17 |
| TITLE: | Utility Bill Collection | EFFECTIVE DATE: March 27, 2017 | |
| ORIGIN/AUTHORITY: | Council | REVISED: | |
| POLICY: | | PAGES: 2 | |

OBJECTIVE:

To provide clear and consistent guidelines to staff in the collection of utility bills, and to ensure that all account holders are treated in the same manner. The goal of this policy is to reduce the number of high uncollectable accounts, while also minimizing the number of actual service disconnections.

PROCEDURE:

1. All utility accounts are billed quarterly and have a clearly stated due date of 60 days from the date of issue. A penalty of 6% is applied to all overdue accounts.
2. Once the due date has passed, a reminder notice will be sent to the property owner on all overdue accounts. This notice will be sent by regular mail, even for those accounts billed through e-billing services. For accounts set up to be mailed to the tenant, the past due notice will be sent to both the tenant and the property owner. The reminder notice will clearly state that the water will be turned off if the account is not paid in full within 15 days from the date of issue.
3. Once the 15 days have expired, the Public Works department will leave a disconnection notice on the door of all properties that still have an outstanding balance over \$50.00 stating that the service will be disconnected if payment is not made by the end of the next business day. The disconnection notice shall state that Public Health may become involved if the matter cannot be resolved within 14 days.

4. If payment is not received, water services will be discontinued until the account is paid in full, including the \$50.00 disconnection fee to be added as per the Water & Sewer Bylaw.
5. During the period between the due date and the disconnection date, a payment plan may be established. Payments may be made in weekly, bi-weekly, monthly, or lump sum amounts. The goal will be to ensure the customer's account is current by the next billing due date, and so the payment plan should include the current arrears as well as the estimated next quarterly billing amount. If the payment plan is not adhered to, the City will discontinue water services without further notice.
6. When the outstanding amount is paid in full, the Public Works department will restore water services to the property. Following payment the City will aim to restore water services before the end of the next business day. Scheduling will be done during working hours and based on the availability of staff. (For example, if a payment is made end of day Friday, the City will aim to restore services no later than the end of day Monday. However, if an emergency situation such as a water main break arises, the work may be postponed until the City has a qualified staff member available to restore services.)
7. If, after two weeks, the account remains outstanding, the City has not been able to establish a payment plan with the owner, and water services are still disconnected, the City shall contact Public Health to notify them that the property is without water services and request their assistance. As per the direction of Public Health, the following information shall be provided:
 - Mailing address and name of the owner;
 - Mailing address and name the tenants if applicable;
 - The civic and legal property descriptions;
 - The date when the service was discontinued;
 - Any potential safety concerns related to visiting the property;
 - A summary of the action taken by the City to that point to resolve the issue; and
 - Any additional information relevant to the situation.
8. The City Manager is authorized to grant flexibility in the enforcement of this policy where, in his or her opinion, it is warranted by a specific situation.