

CITY OF MONROE CITY UTILITY COLLECTION POLICY

Words appearing in *italics* are defined in the Definitions section of this policy.

New Applicants

New applicants are required to complete the *utility service application*. A picture I.D. or social security card must be presented so that a copy may be made and attached to the application. The *service initiation fee* must be paid as well as all outstanding utility bills in the applicant's and co-applicant's names.

New Co-Applicants

New co-applicants will be given credit for having utility service at the specified location if they:

- Are listed on the *new applicant's* application for utility service
- Have provided a picture I.D. or social security card so that it can be attached to the application
- Have signed the application

They will also be responsible for payment of the utility bill in the event of default by the applicant.

Transfers

Applicants who currently have utilities in their name, may have utilities read into their name at another location. They will not need to make a new application, but may have to pay additional deposits depending on the deposits required for the location at which they are requesting service. They will have to pay the service initiation fee. There is no limit on the number of locations in which an applicant may have utilities in their name if none of their locations are delinquent, including residential and commercial accounts. There is a limit of two locations in which an applicant may have utilities in their name if their utility bill is delinquent, one of which may be commercial. Exceptions may be made by the Director of Administration to address extenuating circumstances.

Meter Deposits

Residential:

Electric	\$100.00
Gas	\$100.00
Water	<u>\$100.00</u>
Total	\$300.00

Electric Heat \$200.00

Commercial: Other than restaurants and motels: Same as residential

Restaurants and motels: Minimum amount equal to the residential utility deposits. The City reserves the right to require an amount equal to the sum of the two previous highest utility bills, during a 12-month period at the location in which business was conducted on a regular basis.

Meter deposits will be held for a maximum period of two years. They will be refunded after one year if the customer has not been assessed a penalty more than one time during this period. They will be refunded after two years regardless of their penalty status.

Meter deposits are required for all new customers except:

- *New applicant who has a third party co-signer.* Once the third party co-signer signs the utility application for the new applicant, they are responsible for payment of the new applicant's utility bill in the event of non-payment. If the third party co-signer does not pay the new applicant's delinquent bill by the due date set by the City, the utilities at the co-signer's location are subject to shut-off. The co-signer is responsible for the payment of the utility bill for the entire time that the new applicant has utilities in their name up to a maximum of two years. If the new applicant provides satisfactory credit references or makes the required cash meter deposits after their account is established, the third party co-signer will be removed from their application. Their name will then be removed as the third party co-signer for the new applicant. These meter deposits made by the third party co-signer will be held until such time
 - That the new applicant has resided at the location for 12 consecutive months with no more than one penalty being assessed during this period at which time the meter deposits will be refunded to the third party co-signer.
 - That the new applicant has resided at the location for 24 consecutive months regardless of their penalty status at which time the meter deposits will be refunded to the third party co-signer.
- New applicant provides satisfactory credit reference from their prior utility provider(s) from which they have had utility service in their name for 12 continuous months during the past 24 months. The customer must complete the *utility service reference request* for each provider stating the provider's name, fax number and the location in which the customer had utility service. If the customer's prior utility supplier(s) will complete, sign and return the City's utility reference request, documenting that the new applicant was their customer for 12 continuous months during the past 24 months and was not assessed a penalty more than once, the cash meter deposit requirement will be waived. This utility service reference request must be submitted to the City and approved prior to utility service being put into the new applicant's name. If it is necessary that utilities be put in applicant's name prior to credit approval being obtained, the applicant must make the required meter deposits. If the credit check comes back good, the meter deposits will be refunded within 30 days.

Meter Reading

All meters are read from approximately the 23rd through the 25th of each month. This will change due to weekends, holidays and availability of meter reading personnel.

Billing

Utility bills are generated and mailed to customers on the last business day of the month. They are delivered to the customers on the first business day of the following month.

Payment

Utility bills are due and payable on or before the *due date*.

Penalty Assessment

All accounts, which have not been paid on or before the *due* date, shall be subject to *penalty*.

Termination of Service

Customers who have not paid their bill in full by the *due date* are subject to termination of service and a friendly reminder being posted on their door. If the delinquent customer cannot pay their bill in full they may obtain a *promise to pay* extension. If the delinquent customer cannot pay their bill in full after their *promise to pay* extension expires, they may request a *payment plan*. Delinquent customers who do not honor their *promise to pay* extensions for their *payment plans* are subject to termination.

Reinstatement of Service

When service is terminated for non-payment, the restoration amount must be paid prior to the service being reinstated. After the required payment is received, service will be restored at the *restoration date and time*. Exceptions may be made by the City Clerk to address extenuating circumstances.

Director of Administration

Termination of Service:

Under normal circumstances, no extensions of credit will be honored after the utility service is cut-off. However the Director of Administration is authorized to deviate from this policy if the circumstances of a particular situation warrant it, for a period of not more than seven (7) days. During this time, the Director of Administration can have utility service reinstated and offer additional payment arrangements. The Director of Administration will advise the *City Clerk* of any deviation and the actions to be taken in said particular situation. In the absence of the Director of Administration, the Mayor shall have this authority. This authority is limited to one incident per year per customer.

Meter Deposits

All customers are required to make meter deposits. However, the Director of Administration is authorized to waive this requirement for commercial customers who have either incorporated or formed a limited liability corporation and who have more than three owners.

Assistance from Outside Agencies

The City shall accept written, faxed, or oral verification from NECAC, Family Services or any other agency pledging funds for a delinquent customer's utility bills. Upon such verification, the amount pledged shall be posted immediately to the customer's account. Verifications must include name of agency, contact person, and specific information about who they are assisting and to what dollar amount.

Exceptions

Special Medical Needs:

Utility customers with special medical needs must register with City Hall. Registration must include a letter from their doctor describing their medical situation. The policy for these customers shall be the same as any other utility customer with the exception that the *City Clerk* will make personal contact with this customer after the normal *utility cut-off date and time*. The customer will be personally informed of the City's intention to cut-off their utility service. The customer will be given the names and other

information of organizations that may provide assistance to them for paying their utility bills such as NECAC, Ministerial Alliance etc. These customers will then be given an additional seven calendar days to arrange a payment plan. After seven (7) days, if the utility customer has not entered into a payment plan, the utility service will be cut-off.

Estates

City Clerk shall determine the contact person of the estate of the deceased to request the name, address, and telephone number of the person responsible for paying the deceased's utility bills. If no reply is received by a reasonable amount of time, the City Clerk is authorized to cut-off utility service. Where the only asset in an estate is real property that is serviced by City utilities, the City Clerk may defer payment until the property is sold, but not for more than six months. Upon granting the deferral, the City Clerk shall file with the County Recorder's Office of the County wherein the property is located, a notice that the City claims a lien on the property for unpaid utilities.

Cold Weather

Electric and gas services shall not be disconnected for non-payment if the temperature is forecast to drop below 33 degrees in Monroe City as published by the National Weather Service on the Internet on the scheduled termination date.

Hot Weather

Electric service shall not be disconnected for non-payment if the temperature is forecast to be above 95 degrees or the heat index above 105 as published by the National Weather Service on the Internet on the scheduled termination date.

Final Billing

Customers having utilities taken out of their name shall be final billed at the end of the month along with the regular billing. Customers no longer having utility service, and have not been here long enough to have their meter deposits refunded, will have their meter deposits applied to their final bill; unless prior arrangements have been made to hold the deposits. If the deposits are greater than their final bill, the balance will be refunded. If the deposits are less than the final bill, the customer will be expected to pay the difference.

Collection Agency

All final billed accounts that have not been paid within 90 days are referred to the City's collection agency. Final billed accounts for which no forwarding address has been given, may be referred to the City's collection sooner.

Write-Offs

All final billed accounts that have been referred to a collection agency and have been deemed uncollectible by that agency shall be written off as uncollectible. The City will still pursue collection of these accounts.

Budget Payment Plan

Customers who have lived continuously at the same location for 12 months may elect to participate in the Budget Payment Plan. The current utility rates are applied to the customer's utility consumption for one full year. A percent contingency may be added. The total estimated cost plus the contingency is divided by 12 in order to obtain the budget payment amount. The customer will pay this amount every month unless notified by the City that it has changed. The City reviews the customer's utility bill budget plan in March to determine where the customer stands. The customer is advised of this review via letter.

In October, the City refigures the budget payment for each customer. This information is sent to each customer. If City Hall is not contacted by the customer of any concerns or the new budget amount, the new amount will go into effect with the October 31st billing. If the customer has concerns with the new amount, they need to contact City Hall as soon as possible. Budget customers can make extra payments to their utility bill accounts at any time. Budget customers who are unable to pay their budget amount on or before the 25th of the month or first City business day following the 24th may be removed from the budget payment plan at the discretion of the City Clerk and/or Director of Administration.

Customers with Multiple Locations

If utility service is to be terminated at any of their locations due to non-payment, utility service will be terminated at all of their locations. Corporations, Limited Liability Companies and Partnerships shall be deemed the same as the individuals owning same for purposes of this section. Exceptions may be made by the City Clerk to address extenuating circumstances.

Other Items

Locations that are in the landlord's name that have been shut off for non-payment will not have utility service restored until those utilities have been paid in full.

Utilities will only be sent to the mailing address for the person who is on the bills. No More in care ofs.

The City does not accept two party checks including payroll checks. Checks presented to pay a utility bill must be made payable to the City of Monroe City and not have any designation for any other purpose.

Billing Payment Summary

- 1st of Month – utility bills are delivered to customers
- 25th of the month – full amount of bill is due or a payment of Promise to Pay of \$10.00 to extend the 2nd Friday of the following month.
- Payment plans can be set up. They must be requested by the utility customers and adhered to. Subject to termination of utility service with notice if plans is not followed.

DEFINITIONS

City Clerk: Person in charge of collecting delinquent utility accounts. The City Clerk has the authority to cut-off utilities for non-payment and to establish payment plans.

Current Utility Customer in Good Standing: Individual who currently has utility service with the City of Monroe City for at least the past 12 consecutive months and who has not been delinquent more than once during the past 12 months.

Due Date: The 25th of the month or the next City business day following the 24th of the month.

Friendly Reminders:

After penalties have been assessed to delinquent customer's accounts, a friendly reminder notice will then be generated and affixed on the door of the delinquent customers. These reminders will advise the customer of the amount that they need to pay and also the date and time by which payment must be received by City Hall in order to avoid termination of service.

Meter Deposits: Amount submitted with application for utility service, which is used to insure payment of final bill for utility customer.

New Applicants: Customers who request utility service who currently do not have utility service at other locations in Monroe City.

New Co-Applicants: Spouses or other adults who reside at the same location as the applicant.

Notice of Pending Utility Cut-off: Informs delinquent customer that utility service will be cut-off on the utility cut-off date and time unless they pay their delinquent bill in full or make satisfactory arrangements prior to the utility cut-off deadline.

Notice of Termination of Service: Informs delinquent customer that utility service has been terminated at their location and the total amount, including the restoration fee that must be paid before service will be restored.

Penalties: 5% of the current period's delinquent amount on service. There is no penalty assessed to prior periods' delinquent balances.

Promise to Pay: Request by a utility customer, who is unable to pay their delinquent utility bill in period 1 by the utility cut-off date & time scenario 1, to be given until the second Friday of the following month to pay their delinquent utility bill.

Promise to Pay Fee: \$10.00 per location.

Restoration Amount: Delinquent balance or delinquent payment plan payment amount plus the restoration fee.

Restoration Date and Time: No later than 3:30 P.M. on the current City business day that the utility service was disconnected. After 3:30 P.M., next day service only at regular work order service times. No after- hours restoration.

Restoration Fee: \$20.00 inside the City limits and \$40.00 outside the City limits. This amount is assessed when the Utility Cut-Off Notice is given to the utility division for execution and must be paid even if the customer pays their delinquent bill prior to termination of service.

Service Initiation Fee: \$20.00 inside the City limits and \$40.00 outside the City limits. This fee is to be paid by those requesting utility service in their name prior to a work order being issued. This fee will be waived for all landlords if any or all of the utilities are read out of a tenant's name and directly into the landlord's name. If any or all of the utilities have been shut-off, the landlord must pay this fee.

Third Party Co-Signer: Current utility customer in good standing who agrees to guarantee payment of utility bill for a new applicant. They are limited to two locations.

Utility Cut-Off Date & Time: The next City business day following the utility cut-off deadline at 3:00 P.M.

Utility Service Application: Form to be completed by applicant and co-applicant for the purpose of obtaining utility service in their name(s).

Utility Service Reference Request: Form to be completed by the NEW APPLICANT which can be faxed by the City to their prior service providers in order to obtain their payment history for the purpose of determining if cash meter deposits will need to be made.

Work Order: Form used to request action by the City regarding utilities at a particular location. This includes, but is not limited to turn-on, turn-offs, read-ins and read-outs. Work orders are only processed at 2:00 P.M. when City Hall is open.