

POLICY IV. B BILLING AND COLLECTIONS POLICY

A. NEW ACCOUNTS

1. **NEW CUSTOMERS:** Shall request service by written/online fillable application for utility service, shall provide a copy of the warranty deed or lease/rental agreement, photo identification and pay required fees and deposits as identified in the Fee Resolution as adopted by the Bonners Ferry City Council and listed in Appendix A.
 - a. If the customer has a prior account with the City that has been closed or retired but has a balance owing or a balance in collections, the customer shall pay all past-due balances before a new account may be opened.
2. **NEW SERVICES:** If a service connection does not exist, the customer ~~must~~ shall request a facilities extension, pay pre-service application fee, and pay amounts as defined in the City's Facility Extension policy IV.C.

B. SECURITY DEPOSITS

1. **REQUIREMENTS:** Required for all new residential electrical accounts unless a letter of credit is provided or the customer enrolls in auto-pay. Required for all new commercial and industrial accounts unless the customer enrolls in auto-pay. The deposit will be collected at the time of application. If payment arrangement is needed on the deposit, a minimum of fifty percent of the deposit amount will be collected at the time of application and the remaining amount by the due date of the first billing cycle on the account. Payment of deposit will take priority and the remaining amount will be applied to utility service balance.
2. **AMOUNT:** See Fee Resolution as adopted by the Bonners Ferry City Council and listed in Appendix A.
3. **LETTER OF CREDIT:** The security deposit will be waived on residential accounts if the customer has the previous 12 months consistent full, on-time payment history with the City or an email received from the previous electric utility company, on the company's letterhead documenting the previous 12 months of consistent full, on-time payment history. This letter must show historic payment obligations for a like sized account.
4. **DEPOSIT REFUNDS:** The City will credit the deposit to the customer's account after 12 months of full, on-time payments at the customer's request or when the account is closed.
5. **INTEREST:** Will not be paid on security deposits.
6. **BANKRUPTCY:** If a customer has previously declared bankruptcy while a utility customer of the City of Bonners Ferry, the security deposit required shall double. Additionally, the deposit shall not be refunded to the account until there has been 24 months of full, on-time full payments or when the account is closed.

C. BILLING POLICY

1. **RATES:** Billing rates are as adopted by the Bonners Ferry City Council.
2. If an error is found in billing or a mechanical meter malfunction is found, the billing will be corrected retroactively for up to a three-year period.

POLICY IV. B BILLING AND COLLECTIONS POLICY

D. PAYMENTS

1. **DUE DATE:** Payments shall be due the 30th of each month, with the exception of February, in which payments shall be due the last day of February.
2. **AUTO PAY:** To enroll in auto-pay the customer must complete the form available at City Hall. Auto-pay may only be withdrawn from a checking or savings account. After two consecutive months of auto-pay returned due to NSF, the auto-pay will be stopped and the customer will be required to pay the security deposit and the amount due. If a customer has been removed from auto-pay, they will not be able to re-enroll in auto-pay until they have had twelve consecutive months of full, on-time payments.
3. **PAYMENT METHODS:** Payments can be made with cash, check or credit cards. Credit card payments can be made through the automated phone system or the online portal.

E. BILLING PROCESS

1. Bill mailed and due 14 days later
2. On the 15th day a Payment Reminder Letter is mailed if there is a past due (30 day) balance over \$20.00 letting the customer know it shall be paid within five days or an arrangement for payment is made.
3. A City of Bonners Ferry Payment Arrangement form must be filled out for the arrangements to be accepted. Payment arrangements will only be made to bring past due balances current. Current amounts due will remain due on the regular billing cycle, (example bill date April 15, due date April 30). Customers must pay a minimum of 25% of the past due amount prior to the payment arrangement being accepted. The remaining balance of the past due amount will be due within 30 days. A new payment arrangement will not be allowed if the previous payment arrangement was not paid. Each account is limited to 2 payment arrangements per year.
4. Door hanger is then generated if the balance is not paid or a payment arrangement has not been accepted. A door hanger fee will be charged.
5. A customer can delay termination of service for an additional thirty (30) days from scheduled disconnect date by obtaining a certificate from a doctor or public health official stating that a medical emergency would exist or a medical condition would be aggravated if the service is turned off. Payment arrangements must be made before the thirty-day window expires. The certificate must be signed by the person diagnosing the medical condition and must name the person affected.

F. CONNECT AND DISCONNECT POLICY

1. **CHARGES:** Connect and disconnect charges will be made for all connects and disconnects at the rates shown in Appendix A.
2. **IMMEDIATE DISCONNECT REASONS:** The City may immediately and without notice disconnect services for the following reasons:
 - a. Broken payment arrangement.
 - b. Diversion or unauthorized use of City utility services.

POLICY IV. B BILLING AND COLLECTIONS POLICY

- c. Discovery of a condition determined by the City to be hazardous.
- d. Violation of and/or noncompliance with any applicable Federal, State or other local laws, regulations and codes.
- e. Discovery of meter tampering.
- f. Other appropriate circumstances.

3. DELINQUENT ACCOUNTS AND DISCONNECT:

- a. A “Door Hanger Charge” will be required each time City personnel are required to make a visit to the premises on a delinquent account. The customer will be charged as identified in the Fee Resolution as adopted by the Bonners Ferry City Council and listed in Appendix A.
- b. Delinquent accounts shall be disconnected after the disconnect notice unless payment arrangements have been accepted by the City.
- c. Account holder shall have the right to a hearing before the Utility Grievance Board in order to show cause why the service should not be disconnected. Account holder shall be responsible for scheduling and participating in the hearing prior to the scheduled date of disconnect. The Utility Grievance Board shall be composed of one staff member from the Utility Billing Department (typically the billing supervisor) and a staff member from City Administration (typically the City Administrator).
- d. Accounts shall not be reconnected until the connect charges, disconnect charges, account balance and any required deposits have been paid in full.

4. RECONNECT REQUIREMENTS: After a service has been disconnected by customer request or for non-payment, the City shall require the service to be brought up to current State and National Code requirements and City standards before reconnection. Accounts shall not be reconnected until the connect charges, disconnect charges, full account balance and any required deposits have been paid in full.

5. DISCONNECT FOR MAINTENANCE: By request of the customer and when it is convenient for the City; the City will provide routine off-on service to its customers during normal working hours at no cost to the customer. If such service becomes excessive, generally more than two hours of labor per year or outside of normal working hours, the City may charge for such service. The charge will be the actual labor cost expended for such service. If a service needs to be updated, the update will be required prior to the service being re-energized. The update is the owner’s expense.

G. CLOSED ACCOUNTS

1. CUSTOMER REQUESTED CLOSURE:

- a. Customer must complete a request to discontinue utility services form. The account will remain in the customer’s name until the City has received the completed form.
- b. The customer receives a closing bill that is due on the due date. The customer continues to receive a statement until account is paid in full or turned over to a collection agency.

POLICY IV. B BILLING AND COLLECTIONS POLICY

2. INACTIVITY CLOSURE:

- a. When an account has been disconnected and inactive for thirty (30) days, account will be closed and any past due balance sent to collections.
- b. Reconnection of an account closed due to inactivity will require a new application and payment of all associated fees and deposits.
- c. When an account is closed, due to inactivity meters may be removed.

H. COLLECTION POLICY FOR CLOSED ACCOUNTS

1. PROCESS:

- a. Closing bill mailed ~~on~~ in the regular billing cycle
- b. Final collection notice mailed 30 days after final bill is due, before sending to the ~~credit bureau~~ collection agency

I. RETIRED SERVICE

1. A service may be retired by written request of the property owner. When a service is retired, meters will be removed.
2. Request for service at a location from which a service has been retired shall be required to install a new service per the Extension Policy 4C.

J. NON-SUFFICIENT FUND (NSF) POLICY

1. When the City receives an NSF for auto-pay or a check the payment is cancelled from accounts receivable and the customer is charged a NSF fee. The City Clerk will advise the Police Department of NSF checks when appropriate.
2. NOTIFICATION: The Clerk will send a door hanger to inform them of the NSF.

K. LANDLORD/RENTAL DWELLING POLICY

1. TRANSFER OF SERVICE: Upon a tenant vacating a property the utility accounts shall revert back to the landlord's name or property manager. The landlord/property manager may contact the City at any time to request the status of the tenant's account.
2. TENANT'S LIABILITY: If the service is placed in the landlord's name and the tenant has outstanding utility bills, the tenant will be subject to the collection process.

L. METER READING

1. Meters are read monthly or when a final read is necessary.

M. ESTIMATED BILLING

1. When the City is unable to gain reasonable access to a meter or when the meter fails, the City will estimate the reading for a billing period based on the historical usage of that service.

POLICY IV. B
BILLING AND COLLECTIONS POLICY

N. WATER LEAKS

1. When a major water leak is discovered on the customer's lines the City will provide bill relief under the following conditions.
 - a. Only for the billing cycle in which the leak is detected.
 - b. The leak must be external to any structures.
 - c. Not greater than ½ of the amount in excess of the normal water usage, as estimated by the City
 - d. The consumer must notify City Hall within thirty days of the billing date.
 - e. The consumer must provide a detailed explanation, in writing, of the conditions.
 - f. If the leak is caused by customer negligence, the City will not absorb any of the loss.

**POLICY IV. B
BILLING AND COLLECTIONS POLICY**

Appendix A

Always review adopted fee resolution.

Schedule of Security Deposits, Connect Charges, and Disconnect Charges

A. ELECTRIC

1. Security Deposit Rates:

Residential \$200.00

Commercial/Industrial

Existing Service Two-month average of previous customer, \$200 minimum.

New Service Two-month average estimated by City, \$200 minimum.

2. Connect and Disconnect Rates

Door hanger charge \$25.00

Connect and Disconnect

During Working Hours \$30.00

Outside of Working Hours \$90.00

3. Transformers and Transformer Capacity Credit (late comers' agreement)

a. All new transformers shall be billed to the first customer as the full costs of materials.

b. If there is a capacity available on an existing transformer, then a proportionate share of the original cost of electric transformer shall be billed to subsequent customers. Staff shall then credit the first customer's account with the additional capacity charges.

B. GARBAGE

1. Security Deposit Rates:

None.

2. Connect and Disconnect Rates

None.

C. WATER

1. Security Deposit Rates:

None.

2. Connect and Disconnect Rates

Connect and Disconnect

During Working Hours \$30.00

Outside Working Hours \$90.00

D. SEWER

1. Security Deposit Rates:

None.

2. Connect and Disconnect Rates

None.