
CITY OF AMITY

WATER/SEWER SERVICE BILLING POLICIES

Applications, Deposits and Restrictions:

Any person wishing to have water and/or sewer service provided by the City of Amity, Oregon must first open a water/sewer account for billing purposes. Service shall not be instated until this step is complete. A service application, provided by the City of Amity, shall be completed and returned with the required deposit as established by resolution. The application must be signed by the applicant and, if different, the property owner. Without authorization by the property owner, the city has the right to refuse service. When appropriate, city staff may require that proof of ownership be provided by the applicant. Only persons 18 years of age or older may hold an account in their name.

The required deposit shall be held on any and all active water accounts until a two-year satisfactory payment history is established or until an account is terminated. City Staff shall not allow for deferment of the deposit. Upon termination, deposits shall be applied to the final bill. Any outstanding balance will be billed to the provided forwarding address. Any portion of the deposit not applied to the final bill, shall be refunded by check and mailed to the forwarding address. The deposit may also be refunded upon request after a two-year satisfactory payment history has been established.

Any person desiring to have water and sewer services shall obtain an application from Amity City Hall, 109 Maddox Avenue, Amity, OR. The applicant shall provide: their full, legal name, date of birth, identification (driver's license, social security number, etc.), service address, type of service requested, proper mailing address, date to begin service, and property owner's name, mailing address, and authorizing signature. The authorizing signature must match the owner's information on file with the billing department. Property owners may transfer utility service to their name upon request and verification of current contact information. Transfers in this case may be made over the phone as long as a deposit is on file or is no longer required. In the case service has been disconnected due to non-payment, service may only be resumed by property owner once payment has been received or proof that the responsible party no longer resides at the service location. In such situations, uncollected debts shall be turned over to a collection agency and a lien may be placed on said property.

Water and sewer service applicants may be denied service if there is an outstanding balance owed from a previous water/sewer account. City staff shall have full authority to make determinations regarding routine denial of service.

Meter Reading Date:

Meters are read on or around the 20th of every month, depending on public works' projects. Public Works must have free and clear access to all water meters at all times. Access to the water meters must not be impeded in any manner, including but not limited to, obstruction by shrubbery, trees, fences, or by unleashed animals. If public works is unable to gain access to a water meter, a 24-hour notice shall be given to the property owner/occupant to have the problem corrected, or water service will be discontinued. The city retains the right to move any obstruction that restricts access to city meters.

Billing Date/Due Date:

Bills shall be mailed at the end of each month and due and payable on or before the 15th of the following month. If a bill is not received, a copy may be obtained by contacting Amity City Hall, however shall not negate the responsibility to pay the amount due by its due date. Should the 15th day fall on a weekend or a city holiday, the due date shall extend to the following business day. If payment is not received by the due date, there shall be an additional penalty applied to the account as established by resolution.

Termination Notices/Penalties:

An account that has a past due balance shall receive a termination notice, along with the regular monthly billing. Failure to pay any delinquent amount will result in a 48-hour reminder notice posted on the front door of the residence after the 10th of each month prior to disconnection. If a 48-hour notice is delivered, an additional fee shall be applied to the account in an amount established by resolution. If a customer receives a 48-hour notice and is a renter of said property, a notice shall be sent via regular mail to the property owner alerting them of the delinquent bill due.

Extensions/Penalties:

If a termination notice is received and the customer is unable to pay the past due amount before the scheduled shut off date, an extension may be requested. Customers shall be permitted to request an extension no more than two (2) times during a calendar year (January 1st- December 31st). No extensions shall be extended past the 25th day of the current month. Extensions **WILL NOT** be granted after the scheduled shut-off date and time. Payment arrangements must be made prior to the cut off date shown on the termination notice. If an extension is granted and the customer fails to remit payment by the extended due date and time, a 24-hour notice shall posted on the front door of the property and an additional \$10.00 fee shall be applied to the account. Payments shall then only be accepted in cash or money order for the past due balance. In addition, if a customer defaults on the extension agreement, the option will no longer be available to that customer in the future.

Disconnections:

Services shall be disconnected monthly if the past due amount is not paid or if arrangements have not been made prior to the disconnect date shown on the termination notice. Once disconnected for non-payment, a disconnection fee in the amount to be established by resolution shall be applied to the account and the customer shall be required to pay the entire balance due before water service will be restored. **ONLY** cash or money order payments will be accepted, and all payments must be made at City Hall. Public Works staff will not, under any circumstances, accept any payments from customers. Further, Public Works staff shall not postpone a shut-off that has been scheduled by the billing department.

Payments:

Payments may be paid by check, cash, or money order. The City of Amity does not accept credit/debit payments. City staff shall not, under any circumstances, accept post-dated checks.

Returned Check Penalties:

When a check is returned unpaid, a returned check fee in an amount to be established by resolution shall be applied to the account. If the city must notify the customer of such return check, an additional posting fee shall also be applied. The customer will have 24 hours to pay the check amount and the returned check fee. Failure to pay the full amount due by the date specified shall result in disconnection. To have services restored, the same process shall be followed as stated under Section "Disconnects." NO CHECKS WILL BE ACCEPTED to cover a check returned for insufficient unpaid. ONLY cash or money order payments will be accepted. Once a check is returned for non-payment for a second time in the history of the account, check payments will no longer be accepted as payment, regardless of who wrote the check. Requests to reinstate check payments may be submitted and reviewed at staff level.

Termination of Services:

When a customer wishes to terminate water and/or sewer services, the account holder must notify the billing department prior to the date termination is desired. If the customer fails to notify the city in writing of termination, any utility charges accruing are due from the account holder until notification is given to the city by the account holder or property owner/landlord. If a customer requests to have services terminated after 3:30 p.m. (Monday-Friday) or on weekends/holidays, services shall be made the following business day. If the customer specifically requests to have services terminated after hours or on weekends/holidays, the customer shall be subject to additional fees established by resolution. If a customer neglects to notify the city of service termination, the city shall hold the current account holder responsible for any amount owing.

Relocation:

When a customer is relocating from one service address to another within Amity's water/sewer system, the customer shall close the current account as usual and complete a new service application with submission of a new deposit. The customer may request to have their deposit transferred to the new account and city staff shall have full authority to make determinations regarding routine denial/approval of transfer based on customer's payment history. To be eligible, the customer may not have a past due balance on the account and the customer must agree to pay the final bill within 15 days of the bill date. Failure to pay the final bill in full by that time shall result in a 48-hour notice being posted on the front door of the new address and an additional posting fee shall be applied to the new account. Failure to pay the full amount due on the old account by the date specified will result in disconnection at the customer's new address. If service is disconnected, the customer shall be required to pay the entire balance due on the old account and the reconnection fee to have services restored. ONLY cash or money order payments will be accepted.

Change of Account Status:

Account holders are responsible for notifying the billing department of any changes in account status, such as name change, address change, termination, etc. Other arrangements, if any, are between the landlord/tenant or buyer/seller.

Landlord-Tenant Relationships:

At no time shall the utility office be used as an eviction tool for property owners. All regular policies and schedules regarding disconnection shall be followed at all times. If a landlord or property owner requests that water/sewer service be disconnected, and the utility service is provided in the property owner's name, the city shall honor this request on the day of choice given by the property owner. If a landlord or property owner requests that water/sewer service be disconnected, and the services are provided in a tenant's name, the request must be in writing and shall be honored under the assumption the landlord is abiding by landlord/tenant laws.

Finalizing Bills:

When a customer moves out of a residence, a work order shall be prepared and the city's public works department will retrieve a final meter read. A final bill shall then be created. If the deposit has not been previously refunded, it will be applied to the final bill with the due date being 15 days from the bill date. The city shall notify said customer of any unpaid remaining account balance via regular mail to last known address two times within the 60 days immediately following, before placement with a collection agency. Failure of the customer to receive such notification shall not negate the customer's responsibility to the charges due. If the account is sent to a collection agency, the city shall not accept any payments by the customer and all payments or arrangements to pay shall be made between the customer and collection agency.

Uncollectible Accounts:

The City of Amity is aggressive in using termination of service for current customers who fail to pay. Closed accounts are pursued for collection through in-house attempts followed by referral to a collection agency. The city shall further send a notice via regular mail to the customer's last known address informing them of action and potential fees. Should these attempts fail, a lien shall be placed on said property by the city recorder pursuant to ORS 91.255(3).

Billing Errors:

If a customer's bill is discovered to contain an error in calculation, billing amount or other error due to the city billing office's mistake or omission, the city shall make an adjustment to the customer's account or issue a refund, depending on the situation in question. Inability to access water meter does not constitute an error on the city's part.

If a customer's bill is discovered to contain an error or errors due to a customer's mistake, such as unreported meter damage, unreported plumbing leaks, etc., the city shall issue a corrected bill covering the unbilled amount and the amount due will be the sole responsibility of the customer and must be paid in conjunction with the city's billing process. In brief, the city does not penalize for its own errors, but does collect in instances where customer is in error.

Courtesy Leak Adjustments:

To view the city’s “Courtesy Leak Adjustment Policy”, please contact City Hall at 503-835-3711. A copy may be obtained from City Hall for a nominal fee.

Occurrences not ADDRESSED WITHIN:

This policy is written and adopted in attempt to guide staff through routine happenings. If an incident out of the ordinary occurs, city staff shall have full authority to make decisions that they feel shall be in the best interest of the city. In the event that the customer disagrees with staff decision, customer may appeal to city council.

City Employees/Councilors:

Employees and city councilors of the City are subject to the same provisions of this policy.

Rates for Water & Sewer Service:

To view the city’s “Water & Sewer Rate Schedule”, please contact Amity City Hall at 503-835-3711. A copy may be obtained from City Hall for a nominal fee.

Amity City Hall’s hours of operation are Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., excluding the following holidays: New Year’s Day; Martin Luther King Day; President’s Day; Memorial Day; Independence Day; Labor Day; Veteran’s Day; Thanksgiving Day and the Friday that follows; Christmas Day. In addition, City Hall shall close at Noon on Christmas Eve and on New Year’s Eve.