

Porter Public Works Authority  
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### **Town of Porter Oklahoma Utility Billing Procedure**

#### **Utility Billing Policies and Procedures**

The following policies and procedures shall govern the provision of municipal utilities of the Porter Public Works Authority. PPWA bills are for three (3) services: water, sewer, trash.

#### **Fees and Charges**

All utility charges shall be calculated in accordance with the fee resolution, as approved by the Porter City Council.

#### **Municipal Utility Service Application**

- A. In order to establish a new account with the Town of Porter, the customer will need to present, in person, a United States photo ID, deposit in the form of cash, check or money order and will need to complete the service application. The residential customer is required to provide proof of residency (i.e.; lease agreement from the landlord) or proof of ownership, (proof could be the paperwork received at closing). In addition to the deposit, outstanding balances from all previous accounts of every occupant of the new account address must be paid. Due to increasing identity theft, the account holder's identity will be verified before any changes to an account will be made.
- B. For commercial customers, there may be additional permits or licenses applicable before service can be established. In addition to completing the application, providing the proper ID photo and deposit, the commercial customer will be required to provide a copy of their Sales Tax Permit.
- C. Application forms are available at City Hall, Monday through Friday, from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. When an application has been processed between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 12:00 p.m., utility service can be established the same day between 1:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m. or can be scheduled for a later date. Customers arriving after 12:00 p.m. to establish service can expect service on the following business day.
- D. All the time water service is turned on, the customer or responsible party must be inside the premises. Once the water service is turned on, the responsible party should verify that the service is working. This party should also confirm that there are no problems with the service such as leaks or sewer issues that would require service to be turned off.
- E. Realtors, banks, and mortgage companies wishing to have water service for inspections, closing, etc. must pay outstanding balances and have an established account. The balance of any account assigned to a property in foreclosure will be included in the special assessment letter requested by the closing company when sale of property is pending. All outstanding balances on foreclosed properties must be paid to new utility service being established.

#### **Deposits:**

- A. Each address will be an individual account and will have a renter's deposit or an owner's deposit. Realtors will be charged the same as an owner's deposit.
- B. Landlord's will be deposit free for up to a two week period for cleaning and / or remodel purpose. The cost for water usage will be billed to them. If utilities are to be left on after that period a current owner's deposit will be billed to the landlord. It is the responsibility of the landlord to call PPWA and request the water to be turned off.
- C. For joint accounts, when one occupant is moving, the deposit shall be associated with the residence. This means when an account holder moves, the deposit will stay with the occupant remaining in the residence.

### Transfers:

- A. Upon completion of a deposit transfer form, a deposit may be transferred to another individual who is taking ownership of said account. The original account holder will complete the deposit transfer form and have their signature notarized. The new account holder must complete the entire application process, as well as, the remainder of the deposit transfer form.

### Monthly Utility Bill

PPWA department shall provide each municipal utility customer a combined monthly utility bill which shall include the charges incurred by the customer for regular monthly water, sewer and refuse services, or an combination thereof, plus any fees, penalties or previous balances. Bills for municipal utility services provided shall be rendered and paid monthly.

### Meter Reading Dates:

- A. PPWA will work diligently to have all meters read between the 15<sup>th</sup> and the 20<sup>th</sup> of each month.
- B. In the event of inclement weather, entire route readings maybe estimated. This would happen if snow or ice prevents a meter reader from accessing the meters in that particular route. In this case, the billing clerk will estimate the readings by adding the last (3) three months usage dividing it by three (3) providing a estimate for the current month. Every effort will be made to correct any inaccurate reading as soon as meters are accessible.

### Delinquent Date:

- A. If a bill is not paid by the close of business day on the due date, a 10% late charge will be applied to the bill. When the due date is on a Saturday, Sunday or Holiday, the bill can be paid on the next business day before late fees are applied. Every effort will be made to post all payments received in the mail or night drop box prior to assessing penalties.

### Disconnect Notification Date:

- A. If a bill is not paid by the close of business on the due date, a disconnect notice will be mailed out to the customer. This will be the only notice the customer will receive. The disconnect notice will be mailed on the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month. If the 15<sup>th</sup> falls on a Saturday, Sunday or Holiday the notice will be mailed on the next business day.
- B. Any bill that remains unpaid by 5 p.m. on the 24<sup>th</sup> of the month will be charged a disconnect fee and utility services will be disconnected on the 25<sup>th</sup>. Every effort will be made to post any payments received prior to disconnection services and exclude those customers from the generated cut-off list.
- C. As a courtesy to utility customers, regular monthly utility disconnects will not be done on Fridays or the business day before a holiday. This is to allow customers an opportunity to have services restored in a timely manner.
- D. In the event meters in a particular route are inaccessible due to weather on a disconnect date, disconnect will occur as soon as weather permits.

### Reconnection of Service:

Services that have been disconnected shall not be restored or reinstated until payment of all charges and fees necessary to bring the account to a current status.

- A. For water services that have been disconnected, we will make every effort to restore service the same day when full payment has been paid by 1 p.m. For any payment received after 1:00 p.m. reconnections will take place on the following business day. As with any water service connection, a responsible party must be present inside the premises when the meter is turned on.
- B. Trash refuse containers will be picked up on Friday after cutoff date if utility bill has been disconnected for non-payment. Refuse container will be returned when full payment is made.

#### Billing Errors:

All efforts will be taken to avoid billing errors, however when these errors occur they will be corrected in a timely manner.

- A. Customers are responsible for all services that are used at their service location. When an under billing has occurred for a period of time, payment arrangements will be accepted to allow the arrears to be paid out over time.
- B. In the event that a customer has been over-billed, the customer will receive a credit on the monthly utility bill. No refunds will be given until the account has been terminated with a credit on the final utility bill.

#### Payment of Utility Service:

The Town of Porter accepts several forms of payment. Payments are accepted in person at the city hall office in the form of cash, personal check, money order or cashier's check. A drop box is offered for payments made by personal check, money order or cashier's check. Cash payments in drop box are not advised. Enroll in an Auto Bank Draft from your choice of bank, where payment will be taken from your checking account and sent to PPWA for payment. PPWA offers automatic withdrawals for customers who bank with First Bank Porter. (Automatic Withdrawal Form must be filled out at city hall before services can be provided at First Bank Porter).

- A. Public Works meter readers shall not take utility payments from customers at any time.
- B. When a customer receives monetary help from an agency on their utility bill, we will require documentation from that help agency stating the amount they will pay.

#### Obstructed Meters:

Water meters are located in the utility easement on a property. Utility easements are strips of land used by utility companies to construct and maintain overhead electric, telephone, and cable television lines. It is the responsibility of the property owner to maintain utility easements; however, utility companies have the right to access utility easements. Therefore it is unlawful for a water meter or sewer main to be obstructed by fences, parked vehicles, brush, landscaping, or by any other means that prevents access by the meter readers or utility workers.

- A. The Town of Porter utility billing department will make every effort to work with customers whose water meter is behind a locked fence.
- B. Customers whose meter is obstructed by any means will be notified and given twenty-four (24) hours to remove the obstruction. Customers are subject to be billed a cost for removal of debris that is located on the water meters preventing PPWA to have access to the meters.
- C. If utility billing department is unable to obtain actual meter reading at the billing period time, an estimated bill will be calculated.