

MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC UTILITIES

BILLING & CUSTOMER SERVICE POLICIES

1. DEFINITIONS

- 1.1. Application Fee:** A charge to cover the costs incurred by the Department for processing the service application, verifying form of property ownership, entering account information into billing software and meter reading software, travel to and from the service location to install/unlock/read the meter, inspect the customer's service facilities for proper cut-off and pressure reducing valves, ensure no cross connections exist, travel to and from the service location to turn-off/lock/read the meter upon account termination, and final billing. Fee charged as established in the Montgomery County Fee Schedule, adopted by the Montgomery County Board of County Commissioners. (This fee is only charged if customer wants to re-open an account after being closed for over 90 days.)
- 1.2. Bill Handling Fee:** A monthly fee to cover the cost incurred by the Department associated with delivering paper bills, including, but not limited to materials, printing, and postage. Fee charged as established in the Montgomery County Fee Schedule, adopted by the Montgomery County Board of County Commissioners.
- 1.3. Capacity:** The Department's finite ability to intake and treat raw water to produce, purvey, store and deliver a safe and dependable supply of potable water to its customers. Also the finite ability to collect, and treat wastewater. The Departments capacity is the whole of the systems' physical infrastructure including the network of water supply lines, wastewater collection lines, pump stations, storage tanks, treatment facilities and other appurtenances. By connecting to the Department water and/or sewer system, an applicant is purchasing (or reserving) a portion of this capacity. By disconnecting, either voluntarily or by default, an account holder is relinquishing their rights to this capacity
- 1.4. Capacity Development Fee:** A one-time connection charge to recover the cost incurred by the Department for developing additional system capacity associated with infrastructure upgrades or expansion required for a specific development project. Capacity Development Fees are applicable, but not limited to major subdivisions, commercial development, or existing developed parcels requesting water and/or sewer service(s). Payment of the Capacity Development Fee shall be established in an Agreement between the Department and the Developer.
- 1.5. Capacity Use Fee:** A one-time connection charge to recover cost of maintaining current system capacity. Capacity Use Fees are assessed to new account applicants desiring service at locations not having an active account within the ninety (90) days. This fee shall be paid at the time of application.
- 1.6. Common Connection Fee:** A monthly fee for a service addresses temporarily containing more than one residential housing unit being served from a single connection. Fee is charged as established in the Montgomery County Fee Schedule, adopted by the Montgomery County Board of County Commissioners. *[Practice exists and is referred to as "Trailer Charge"]*

- 1.7. **Connection Charge:** Charges associated with connecting new accounts to the utility system(s). Examples include the tap fees, capacity use fees, and capacity development fees.
- 1.8. **Delinquent Account:** Accounts whose past due charges remain unpaid thirty (30) days after the original due date.
- 1.9. **Delinquency Fee:** a fee to recover the cost incurred by the department for identifying, tracking, and processing work orders for delinquent accounts. Fee charged as established in the Montgomery County Fee Schedule, adopted by the Montgomery County Board of County Commissioners.
- 1.10. **Department:** Montgomery County Public Utilities.
- 1.11. **Late Fee:** An administrative fee to recover the cost incurred by the department for identifying and tracking an account whose current charges remain unpaid after the due date. Fee charged as established in the Montgomery County Fee Schedule, adopted by the Montgomery County Board of County Commissioners.
- 1.12. **New Account:**
- 1.13. **Tap Fee:** A one-time charge to recover a portion of the cost incurred by the Department of connecting a customer or parcel to the nearest water or sewer line (i.e. taping saddle, service lateral pipe, meter setter, water meter, meter box, and installation labor). This fee includes the initial Capacity Use Fee described below. Once tap is installed customer has 60 days to install their water lines with no monthly bill. After 60 days whether lines are in or not monthly billing will start with a minimum bill being sent to customers.
- 1.14. **Terminated Account:**

2. BILLING & CUSTOMER SERVICE DIVISION INFORMATION

- 2.1. **Office Location:** The Billing & Customer Service office is located in the lower level of the Montgomery County Central Permitting building at 444 N. Main St. in Troy, NC 27371. The entrance is located at the rear of the building where parking is also available.
- 2.2. **Hours of Operation:** 8am to 5pm, Monday through Friday.
Normal State of North Carolina Holidays observed
- 2.3. **Contact Information:** *Phone No.:* 910.572.1221
Fax No.: 910.572.1223
Email Address: mcpcu@montgomerycountync.com
Website:
www.montgomerycountync.com/departments/public-utilities/customer-service
- 2.4. **Service Interruptions:** Customers who experience problems or emergency situations during normal office hours should contact the Billing & Customer Service Division office. After hours emergencies may be reported by calling the Montgomery County Water Treatment Plant at 910.439.6197. Examples include if you have no water service, low water pressure, discolored water, water flowing in the street, sewer odor, or you hear an alarm at a water or sanitary sewer pump station.

3. ACCOUNT MAINTENANCE

- 3.1. Applying For Service:** Every person or entity wishing to establish utility service with the Department shall execute the appropriate "Utility Service Application" form provided by the Department. The form shall be completed by an individual or individuals of legal age and having a form of ownership or tenancy of the property where service and capacity reserve is desired. Applications may be submitted in person or electronically. The application fee and any applicable connections fees must be submitted before service will be made available to the applicant. A "Utility Service Application" for the owner/landlord of a rental property must be on file with the Department before services will be made available to tenants. Only one application fee will be charged to landlords with multiple rental properties. However, connections fees for each parcel or service location apply.
- 3.2. Application Fee Reduction:** A reduction in the application fee is available if customers choose to have their payment automatically drafted from their bank accounts. Customers may fill out a "Utility Bill Draft Authorization" Form provided by the Department. Reduction amount as established in the Montgomery County Fee Schedule, adopted by the Montgomery County Board of County Commissioners.
- 3.3. Connection Fee Financing:** Tap fees and capacity use fee) shall either be paid at the time of application for new utility service, or be financed by the Department with sixty (60) equal monthly payments. The monthly payment amount shall be calculated dividing the Tap Fee (at the time of application for service) by sixty and rounding the quotient up to the nearest dollar. Financed tap fee payments will be billed along with regular monthly service billings until debt is satisfied. Debt may be paid in full at any time without penalty. Fully or partially paid Tap Fees are considered conveyed with the property. If application for service is made by new owner(s), only the unpaid portion of the Tap Fee will be applied to the new account. The term and payment amount will continue until the unpaid portion is satisfied. Fee charged as established in the Montgomery County Fee Schedule, adopted by the Montgomery County Board of County Commissioners
- 3.4. Deposits:** The Department does not require deposits to open accounts, but all prior accounts in Customer's name must be current with no outstanding balances.
- 3.5. Suspending Service:** Customers may request that the Department temporarily lock their meter if the service location will not need service during the specified time. As a courtesy to our customers, the Department will lock and unlock a meter once per calendar year at the request of the account holder to protect a vacated property from water leaks or theft. Request may be submitted by contacting the Department by phone or email or in our Billing and Customer Service Office. During suspension, billing shall continue as normal. A customer can request a 90 day suspension of service with no bill but if the department is not notified to turn water back on at the end of the 90 days a \$400.00 fee (\$150.00 Application Fee and \$250.00 Meter Installation) will be charged.
- 3.6. Transferring Service:** Customers may transfer their service to a new location within ninety (90) days of service termination at no charge by completing a "Service Transfer Request" form provided by the Department or by contacting the Billing & Customer Service Division. All accounts must be current with no outstanding balances.

- 3.7. Terminating Service:** Customers may terminate service by notifying the Department at least two (2) business days before the desired date of termination. The Department will read and lock the meter on the requested date and a final bill will be issued upon the next billing cycle. Customers who vacate their service address without notifying the department are responsible for all charges until such notice is given. An account with no activity for 90 days utility service may, without notice be suspended by MCPU.
- 3.8. Rental Property:** The Department requires an Owner/Landlord account to be associated with any parcel or service location where an application for service is made by a tenant. Tenants transferring or terminating services will cause the owner/landlord account associated with the parcel or service location to be activated. The owner / landlord shall be responsible for all monthly charges after the date of tenant transfer or termination. Likewise, once a tenant application is received by the department and services started, the owner / landlord account shall become inactive and is no longer responsible for monthly charges. Should a tenant allow their account to default for ninety (90) days, the Owner/Landlord account will be activated to prevent forfeiture of the parcel's / location's reserved capacity.

4. BILLING & PAYMENTS

- 4.1. Bill Delivery Options:** Customers will automatically receive paper bills delivered to the billing address on record with the Department. Customers may choose to receive electronic billing by providing an email address to the Billing & Customer Service Division.
- 4.2. Application of Partial Payments:** In the event payment is made in an amount less than the total due on a bill, any such amount shall be allocated to outstanding charges in the following order: 1) Tap fee finance payment; 2) Past due water usage; 3) Past due sewer usage; 4) Current water usage; 5) Current sewer usage; 6) Fees.
- 4.3. Bill Frequency:** The Department will bill its customers monthly. The Department will make reasonable and deliberate efforts to read each meter beginning on the 6th of each month, but does not guarantee an exact billing cycle. The Department shall cause bills to be processed and delivered by the 1st of every month.
- 4.4. Minimum Bill:** Customers will receive a minimum bill each month with an active account. The minimum bill is established to cover the cost of maintaining infrastructure and the capacity to treat and deliver the first gallon to your service location. The minimum bill amount is charged as established in the Montgomery County Fee Schedule, adopted by the Montgomery County Board of County Commissioners annually.
- 4.5. Due Date:** The due date for Payment of current accounts is by the 15th of every month.
- 4.6. Payment Options**
- 4.6.1. Automatic:** Draft-Free for all customers. Forms available at www.montgomerycountync.com/mcpu under Documents, or in our office. Drafts are processed on the 10th of each month and payments are transferred from customer accounts on the 15th of each month.
- 4.6.2. On-Line:** Free for all customers. Link available at www.montgomerycountync.com. Customers will need their account number and PIN (available on bills) to process transactions. Please allow 24 hours for processing payments (i.e. payments made on-line will not be posted in the Department's account until the next business day).

4.6.3. **Phone:** Free for all customers our new Pay By Phone: 1-866-328-2937 must have your account number and pin available. Please allow for 24 hours for processing.

4.6.4. **By Mail:** PO BOX 425, Troy, NC 27371 (Fees set by usps)

4.6.5. **In Person:** 444 N. Main Street, Troy, NC 27371 (Dropbox located outside office for after hours and weekend payments).

4.7. Late Fee: Late Fee is applied to each account that current charges are not paid by the 18th of each month. Fees are applied on the 19th of each month at 8:00 a.m.

4.8. Delinquency Fee: Delinquency Fee is applied to each account that previous months payment has not been made when current payment becomes due. This fee is applied at 8:00 a.m. on the 16th of each month and is \$75.00. An account with no activity for 90 days utility service may, without notice be suspended by MCPU.

4.9. NSF Fee: A fee of \$25.00 will be applied to an account each time payment is returned for non-sufficient funds for payments made by check, credit cards, ACH or other online payments. Notification will be made by telephone or sent to customer via USPS with amount returned and amount owed.

4.10. Bill Handling Fee:

4.11. Fire Suppression Availability Fee: Account for dedicated fire suppression charged \$150.00 per year.

4.12. Common Connection Fee: Grandfathered accounts containing more than one residential housing unit are charged an additional \$3.00 per month.

5. ACCOUNT HOLDER RESPONSIBILITIES

5.1. Cross Connections: No cross-connections with other water sources (i.e. wells or storage tanks are permitted. Other water sources must be physically disconnected (valves are not approved as the only means of separation).

5.2. Shut-Off Valve: It is required that all customers have a shut off valve located in a separate box on their side of the water meter box.

5.3. Pressure Reducing Valve: It is required that all customers have a Pressure Reducing Valve (PRV) in a separate box on their side of the meter.

5.4. Access: See 5.6

Tampering: G.S. 14-151.1 makes it unlawful for any unauthorized person to alter, tamper with, or bypass a meter that has been installed for the purpose of measuring the use of water or to knowingly use water passing through a tampered meter supplied by the utility provider for the purpose of measuring and registering the amount of water consumed. The statute also prohibits any unauthorized person from reconnecting water connections or otherwise turning back on water service when it has been lawfully disconnected or turned off by the provider of the utility service. If an individual is found in a civil action to have violated any provision of G.S. 14-151.1 he or she is liable to the water supplier in triple the amount of losses and damages, up to a maximum of \$500.

5.5. Right of Entry: Authorized agents of Montgomery County shall have access at all reasonable hours to the premises of the customer for the purpose of installing or removing County property, inspecting piping, reading or testing meters, or for any purpose in connection with the County's service and facilities.