

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: Where do I find my water meter?

A: Water meters are generally located in the front yard of the residence and placed to be accessible, when necessary, by Utilities Division employees.

Q: What is the earliest my service can be started?

A: Normally service will be initiated between 1:00pm-7:00pm the next business day.

Q: How much will my deposit be?

A: All customers, excluding governmental units and industrial customers, may be subject to a security deposit of up to \$150. However, we can run a credit check to see if the fee can be waived or lowered.

Q: What is the service initiation fee?

A: (\$20) will be charged to all customers requesting water and wastewater service. At the option of the customer, the fee may be paid upon activating the service, or billed on the customer's first bill. This fee covers the costs associated with account setup, service activation in the field, and applies to all accounts that are activated on a yearly basis, such as irrigation meters.

Q: May I have an extension of my due date?

A: You may be eligible for a one-time extension for up to **7 days from the date the original due date**, if you are experiencing an isolated financial hardship.

Q: May I have a payment arrangement?

A: Customers must come to the office to sign an agreement. 50% of the balance must be paid to qualify for a payment arrangement on the remaining amount due.

Q: My service was terminated for non-payment, how much do I owe before service can be restored?

A: Customers disconnected for non-payment must pay their total billed amount plus late fees (10% and \$20) for the reconnect service order to be generated.

Q: What is the late deposit based on?

A: All deposits are equal to one and one-half times the average bi-monthly or monthly bill amount. For example, if your average bill is \$57.90, your deposit amount would be $\$57.90 \times 1.5 = \86.85 . All outstanding bills and required deposits must be paid before service is restored.

Q: My check was returned, can I make a pay arrangement?

A: Returned checks must be paid in full along with any returned check fees to restore water service. No extensions on returned checks.

Q: Can I just turn the water on myself?

A: Water can only be reinstated by authorized representatives. The city may pull the meter when service has been reinstated by an unauthorized person, additional charges

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

can be applied to the account and the person responsible could be subject to civil or criminal penalties.

Q: What is feasibility?

A: Feasibility is an extension plan available to customers outside of the municipal limits of the City of Winston-Salem, Village of Clemmons, Town of Rural Hall, or Town of Kernersville. In an effort to collect capital charges for the extension of a main under this plan, anyone with a service connection from the main must maintain at least a minimum bill for a period of 22 years whether the water service is used or not. This minimum bill must be kept by any and all homeowners during this period or risk having to pay new capital charges for service reinstatement.

Q: What is stormwater fee based on?

A: The amount of impervious surface area on a property i.e, structures, driveways, sidewalks etc.

Q: How are the stormwater fees charged?

A: Between 1 and 2000 sq ft then the fee will be \$51 annually or \$8.50 bi-monthly
Between 2001 and 4000 sq ft then the fee will be \$54 annually or \$9.00 bi-monthly
Between 4001 and 6000 sq ft then the fee will be \$81 annually or \$13.50 bi-monthly
More than 6000 sq ft then the fee will be \$108 annually or \$18.00 bi-monthly

Q: I reviewed three years of water bills and noticed that, strangely, my water bills in August every year are almost doubled. I do not use any more water in August than any other month. I suspect that something is not quite right with billing. Also I vacation at least one full week in August each year, so my water consumption should be a quarter lower than all other months. I may end up going back to the well and dropping the county's water. Who do I contact about this?

A: "The bill that goes out in August is most likely for July and August, the hottest two months of the year," said David Saunders, the City/County Utilities Director. "Almost all of our accounts have some seasonal increases in consumption during these two months. Most customers don't remember that the bill could include consumption from the previous month. There is often more outside use during that time, such as watering gardens or lawns, or washing cars, than in other months. But if you're not doing any of those things, there's no reason your water bill should be higher. The water meters function like a car odometer. It can only register consumption when water goes through the meter to drive the internal components, and it has a mechanical counter such that the readings are cumulative in nature. The customer's consumption is derived by subtracting the previous reading from the current reading.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

If any one reading is incorrect, that is accounted for when the next reading is entered into the system. In addition, if a reading falls outside of the anticipated range, it is automatically re-verified by a manual process.

A customer who questions the accuracy of a bill can call 727-8000 and request an investigation at no charge. The utilities department also offers a meter-testing service, if the customer suspects the meter is not accurately measuring their consumption. There is a fee of \$65 for this service, but that fee would be refunded if the meter were found to be faulty. Anecdotally, we have never known a residential meter to read too high; instead, they generally "fail in the customers' favor as they wear out."