

Town of Greenevers

Utility Billing and Collections Procedure Policy

The following utility billing and collections procedure policy is a general policy to be enforced for the collection of payment for utility services provided by the Town of Greenevers. This policy is to become effective as of the 1st day of July 2008. The following policy will be strictly enforced and will apply to any and all customers of utility services provided by the Town of Greenevers. Any question in regards to utility service, policy, or billing should be addressed to the Utilities Department at the Town Hall at (910) 289-3078.

Billing and Collections

- a. Utility bills for the previous billing cycle will be mailed to customers on the 25th day of each month. In the instance the 25th day of the month falls on a weekend day or holiday, utility bills will be mailed out on the previous workday.
- b. Utility bills for the previous billing cycle are **due on the 15th day of each month**. In the instance the 15th day of the month falls on a weekend day or holiday, utility customers will have the following Monday or business day to make payments without being charged a late payment fee.
- c. No partial payments will be accepted after the date utility bills are due which is the 15th day of each month.
- d. A **late fee of \$10.00** will be applied to any unpaid utility account **on the 16th day** of each month. This includes accounts where only a partial payment has been received throughout the month. In the instance the 16th day of the month falls on Saturday, Sunday, or a holiday, the \$10.00 late fee will be applied on Monday or the following business day.
- e. Utility payments must be either received in person or placed in the drop box (located on the side of Town Hall) on the morning of the 16th by 8:00 a.m. to avoid a late payment fee. The Town of Greenevers does not honor post marked mail for utility payment.
- f. As of July 1, 2008 any customer owing a past due amount for utility services shall pay a minimum of \$50.00 towards that balance in addition to their current monthly utility bill each month until the past due amount is paid in full. If a customer owing a past due balance fails to pay \$50.00 of that amount in addition to their current monthly utility bill, the account will be considered past due and subject to disconnection of service.
- g. Once a utility bill has been placed in the mail or dropped off at the Post Office, the Town is no longer responsible for that utility bill. Payment for that utility bill is due to the Town even if the customer does not receive it in the mail. All

customers who have utility services with the Town know regardless of receiving a bill or not that a payment is due for those services. Any question in regards to utility service or billing should be addressed to the Utilities Department at the Town Hall at (910) 289-3078.

Service Disconnection

- a. To any and all utility customers of the Town of Greenevers: if full payment of the current utility bill including any additional fees or minimum past due amount is not received at the Town Hall by the 24th day of each month, utility services will be disconnected at 9:00 a.m. on the morning of the 25th day of the month. In the instance the 25th day of the month falls on a Friday, weekend day, or holiday utility services will be disconnected the following business day. This applies to all utility customers regardless of their account history with the Town.
- b. Utility payments must be received in person or placed in the drop box by 8:00 a.m. on the morning of the 25th of each month before the cutoff list is given to our Water Department Personnel in order to avoid disconnection. The Town of Greenevers does not honor post marked mail for utility payment.
- c. If utility services are disconnected due to non-payment, the customer must pay a **reconnection fee of \$40.00** in addition to any amount owed for the previous billing cycle and any delinquent amount after the date of disconnection in order to have services reconnected. Service personnel may not accept payments from utility service customers.
- d. On cutoff day, the 25th day of each month, a customers' utility service is considered disconnected when the cutoff list is given to the Water Department Personnel. If a customer comes into Town Hall to make a payment after the list has been given to the Water Department Personnel, the customer will still be responsible for paying the reconnection fee whether services have been disconnected or not.
- e. Utility payments for reconnection must be received at Town Hall by 3:00 p.m. on any regular business day in order to have utility services reconnected on the same day. No reconnections will be made after 3:30 p.m. on any business day. Regular working hours are 8:00 am to 5:00 pm, Monday through Friday, excluding holidays.
- f. If water is disconnected from a service location that is a food provider, then the Town of Greenevers will contact the County's Health Department prior to reconnection.

Collection of Delinquent Accounts

- a. The Town of Greenevers will collect delinquent water and sewer debts through the following:
 - NC Local Government Setoff Debt Clearinghouse – This program allows municipalities the ability to attach to debtors NC refund check for any feasible fine or charge issued by the municipality.
 - Wage Garnishment – House Bill 469 allows Duplin County and the municipalities located within it, the ability to attach and garnish a debtor's paycheck for the balance that is due.
- b. In the event that a former delinquent utilities customer requests any future utility service(s) from the Town of Greenevers that individual will be required to pay in full the past due balance plus the required deposit(s) before service will be offered to the customer.

Meter Testing

- a. A Customer may request the Town to test the Customer's water meter. If the Customer's meter tests within the allowable limits as defined by the *American Water Works Association (AWWA)* and/or the manufacturer's specification, a charge to correspond with the meter size shall be placed on the Customer's account for the meter test.

If the Customer's meter tests outside the allowable limits as defined by the *American Water Works Association (AWWA)* and/or the manufacturer's specification, there shall be no charge for the meter test. The Customer's account shall then be credited based on the inaccuracy of the tested meter for the current billing period, if applicable. If a meter is determined to be out of calibration, it shall either be calibrated or replaced with a calibrated meter.

Meter Tampering

- a. If the Water Department Personnel determines that a meter has been tampered with, a \$250.00 tampering fee will be imposed on the account of the owner or resident of that property. This tampering fee must be paid prior to utility services being reconnected. Meter tampering includes the connecting and disconnecting of utility services at the Town's meter by the owner or resident of the property. Meter tampering by law is a Class I Misdemeanor offense.

Payment Extensions

- a. Each utility customer is allowed **one** extension per year in which the \$10.00 late payment fee will still apply. If a utility customer receives an extension of payment, the customer will be required to pay in full the amount of the current bill due for the month following the extension in addition to the previous month's payment in full or \$50.00 towards the past due balance.

- b. No extension will be given on cutoff day, the 25th day of each month, or thereafter for the previous billing cycle.
- c. If payment is not received for utility services and an extension has not been given yet throughout the year, we will consider the non-payment as an automatic yearly extension in order to avoid service disconnection.

Returned Check Policy

- a. If the Town receives a returned check for utility services the customer's utility service will be disconnected. In order to have utility services reconnected, the customer will be responsible for paying the Town Hall the face amount of the check in addition to a \$25.00 returned check fee and a \$40.00 reconnect fee.

Refunding and Applying of Deposits

- a. After notifying the Town of Greeneres of their impending move, a customer will be refunded the full deposit paid if the customer is in good standing. If a customer leaves owing a balance the deposit will be applied to the customer's account within 60 days. The portion of the deposit that remains will be refunded to the customer if the amount is over \$5.

Utility Service Connection

- a. All required deposits and connection fees must be paid in order to have utility services connected at any property. This applies to all property owners, residents, and businesses. Any balance owed for utility services must be paid in order to be connected. (This and other references to this rate are subject to Town Board approval.)
- b. Prior to utility services being connected, an application must be filled out at the Town Hall and the applicant must provide some form of picture ID. If the applicant is renting a residence or business, they must also provide either a renters agreement or lease agreement. Only the person whose name is on the agreement can have utility services connected in their name.
- c. If a customer is transferring continuous utility service from one street address to another, no additional connection fee will be required. All balances must be paid before utility service will be connected at the new address. If the final bill for the old address is not paid when due, utility services will be disconnected at the new residence until the Town receives payment for that bill. At that time a \$75.00 reconnect fee will also be due.¹

1. Continuous service is defined as maintaining utility service, receiving a utility bill, and making payment during each utility billing cycle.

- d. If a customer is transferring utility service from one address to another or reconnecting services to an existing address a connection fee of \$30.00 will be due prior to any services being connected if the customer has not maintained service with the Town for a period of 3 months. All balances owed to the Town for utility services must be paid in full prior to service connection.
- e. If the owner of a rental unit would like to have utility service transferred into his/her name and out of a tenants who still resides in the unit, all balances owed to the Town, by either the tenant or the owner, must be paid in full prior to the transfer.
- f. If the owner of a residence or business would like to have utility services transferred into someone else's name that will not be paying rent, he/she must provide a letter of authorization to the Town. No connection fee will be required. All balances owed to the Town by the owner or the applicant must be paid in full prior to service connection.
- g. Any utility service account must be opened under the name of a person, not a business, corporation, industry, etc...

Sewer Adjustments

- a. Adjustments for high sewer bills will only occur under the determination of a leak by Town of Greenevers service employees or a private plumbing company. No adjustment will be given until leaks are repaired and proof of repair is determined. Documented proof may consist of a plumber's bill, recent receipts for plumbing repair parts, or Town staff verification of leak. Adjustments will only be given on the sewer portion of any bill. If the customer can provide evidence that excessive water use or a leak did not enter the sewer system then the customer shall not be responsible for sewer charges above the customer's average monthly sewer consumption. Such average shall be determined by averaging the customers' monthly metered consumption for the six consecutive prior months.
- b. Only one adjustment to sewer is allowed per year per customer unless otherwise approved by the Town Administrator/Clerk.
- c. No adjustments will be given for watering livestock or yards, washing cars, gardening, etc...

Town's Right to Suspend Service

The Town reserves the right to suspend service, without notice, for the following:

- a. Prevention of fraud and abuse, i.e. meter tampering;
- b. Customer's willful disregard of the Town's rules and regulations;
- c. Emergency repairs;

- d. Insufficiency of supply due to circumstances beyond the Town's control;
- e. Legal procedures;
- f. Direction of authorized public authorities;
- g. Failure of the customer to permit town employees access to their water meter at all reasonable hours;
- h. Strike, riot, flood, accident, or any unavoidable cause(s).

Profane, Indecent, and Threatening Call

It is against North Carolina General Statute 14-196 to use "profane, indecent or threatening language to any persons over the telephone; annoying or harassing by repeated telephoning or making false statement(s) over the telephone."

If a call of this nature is received the following will occur:

1. At the first profane or indecent utterance, the caller will be asked to please refrain from that type of language. If the profane or indecent language continues, the caller will be politely informed that if that type of language does not cease then the call will be terminated.
2. Town personnel will document the occurrence including the caller's name, address and telephone number, if known. The incident will be reported to the supervisor. All incident-related documentation of calls of profane, indecent and threatening nature shall be placed in the Customer's file.
3. If the calls continue, Town personnel receiving these calls will contact the Annoyance Call Center and/or the Duplin County Sheriff Department, if either is deemed necessary.

This policy was approved by resolution by the Greenevers Board of Commissioners on the 29th day of May, 2008.

Jackial Swinson, Mayor

Attest:

Emma C. Brinson, Town Administrator/Clerk

(Seal)