

**UTILITY SERVICE OFFICE POLICIES
UTILITY OFFICE
CITY OF DOVER, OHIO**

1. Applications, Deposits, Restrictions

Any person wishing to have electric service provided by the City of Dover, Ohio, to be put in their own name, when that service will serve a dwelling not owned by the applicant, the applicant must post a deposit as follows:

For an apartment or home heated with a gas-fueled furnace - \$50.00.

For an apartment or home heated by an electrically powered furnace or heating system - \$100.00

For a mobile home heated with a gas-fueled furnace or heating system - \$75.00.

For a mobile home heated with by an electrically powered furnace or heating system - \$150.00.

Commercial account applicants will be charged a deposit of \$100.00 unless the business owns the property.

Only persons 18 years old or older may have Utility Service provided by the City in their name.

Applicants who are unable to pay the deposit may make arrangements with a public service agency to pay the deposit on their behalf.

Applicants may avoid paying the deposit if they are able to supply a letter of good credit standing from a utility company from which they have previously received service for the past 12 months or if the applicant has had good credit with the City for the past 12 months.

The applicants deposit shall be held in a City of Dover account designated for this purpose only, and shall be applied to the account in full and without interest, 12 full billings from the date of utility connection, if all bills have been paid in full within thirty days (30 days) of the billing date during the preceding year.

If all invoices are not paid by the due date for the first year (12 billings) of service after the beginning of service, the deposit will be held until the account is closed, at which point the deposit will be applied to the final billing(s).

2. Any person wishing to have any of the above utility services for any dwelling shall make application in person at the City Utility Office, Municipal Office Annex, 122 East Third Street, Dover, Ohio 44622.

3. Utility service applicants may be denied utility service in their name if:

There is any outstanding balance owed from a previous utility account in the applicant's name, or spouse's/roommate's name.

The applicant is unable to pay, or make arrangements to pay, the required deposit, or supply a letter of good credit standing from a utility company with whom they have maintained good credit for the past 12 months.

The Utility Office Clerks and staff members shall have full authority to make determinations regarding routine denial of service for the above reasons.

Landlord-Tenant Relationships

In keeping with Ohio statutes, it is the position of the City of Dover Utility Office that the Utility Office may not be used as an eviction tool for property owners to remove unwanted tenants. All regular policies regarding shut-off for nonpayment or other reason will be followed at all times. If a landlord or property owner requests that utility service be disconnected, and the utility service is provided in the property owner's name, the tenant will be notified of the landlord's request and given a reasonable amount of time to request service in their own name, and meet all the above requirements for the same, to avoid shut-off.

Medical Need

Account holders (or family members in the same household), may give notice to the Utility Office in writing if there is a medical need requiring electricity to be maintained in all events. All efforts to respect a medical need will be made, and said notice will be provided to the Electric Field Division. In the event of an emergency such as a power outage, all effort to restore service to such residences will be made as quickly as possible.

An account, which service has been designated for termination due to nonpayment, and in which a genuine, life-threatening, medical need for electricity (such as an electrically-powered breathing assistance device) exists for a person living at the applicable address (and service is not in the landlord's name), may provide a signed physician's notice of said need to avoid disconnection. The physician's notice will then avert disconnection for 30 days, however at that time; the water for said address will be disconnected and the account (electric, water, sewer, and trash) must be paid in full for service to be restored. There will only be one doctor's note accepted for medical needs once every six (6) months. It is strongly advised that such notices be provided prior to disconnection for nonpayment. However, a physician's notice of medical need provided after disconnection will restore electric service for a period of 30 days after the reconnection fee is paid.

Delinquent Final Bills:

Any utility bill generated by the City of Dover when a customer moves out of a residence (final bill) and not paid within 60 days, shall be placed with a collection agency for action at the discretion of the Utility Office Manager. The customer will be given at least two written notices of payment due during those sixty days before placement with a collection agency. If the customer has a current account held with the city of Dover the delinquent final bill will be transferred to that current account if payment has not been received after the two written notices have gone out.

Ownership of Property Transfers to Realtor or Financial Institution (repossession)

If ownership or stewardship of a property with an unpaid utility account transfers to either a realty company (temporary) or to a financial institution (as in the case of property repossession), said utilities will not be commenced in the name of a final purchaser of the property until all amounts owed for City utilities are paid in full. If utility service (electric or water) has been terminated for nonpayment and remains off, utility service will be restored to allow for preparation and sale of the property at the request of the realtor or financial institution. Such resumption of service requires an agreement by the realtor or financial institution that all utility amounts owed must be paid at the time of property transfer in order for service to commence or continue in the name of the final purchaser of the property.

All Utilities-Change of Account Status

Account holders are responsible for notifying the Utility Office of any change in account status. The account holder must notify us when moving in or out, or when property changes ownership. In the last instance, either the seller can request service be removed from their name, at which time a date of termination is set, wherein the buyer is required to fill out an application for services, or the buyer of the property can do this prior to the seller requesting service be removed from their name. If the Utility Office is not notified of changes, any utility invoices presented after the date of change (move in or out or sale of property) are due from the account holder. Other arrangements, if any, are between the landlord/tenant or seller/buyer. Please note, unless the property is changing hands of ownership and not just tenant, the water will remain in the property owners name.

Electric Service Between Tenants

When a tenant moves out of a property and the Utility Office is notified, the electric service is automatically transferred in to the property owner's name, and the bills will be mailed directly to the property owner. The property owner can contact the Utility Office at any time to inquire as to whether or not a new tenant has signed up to have services transferred in to their name, however, it is the sole responsibility of the property owner to make sure the tenant has done such. The Utility Office will not be involved in any disputes over amounts owed or dates tenants moved in and out.

Providing Water & Sewer Service:

In keeping with Dover Codified Ordinance 925.011 ("Billings, Payments, & Penalties: All charges for water consumed from the Municipal Waterworks System shall be billed to the property owner monthly and shall be payable monthly."), The City will maintain all water and/or sewer accounts in the name of the property owner. Landlords wishing to have water and/or sewer bills mailed to tenants must notify the Utility Office of this request. The Utility office will in such cases honor this request by mailing the monthly water and/or sewer bill to the tenant's address "in care of occupant." Property owners

and tenants are solely responsible for record keeping in such cases. The utility office will not become involved in disputes over amounts owed.

No final bills will be issued for water and/or sewer bills in the case of rental units unless there is a change of ownership, in which case the account will be transferred to the new property owner and a final bill up to the date of real estate closing will be issued to the previous owner.

It should be noted that this policy is designed to eliminate the practice of requiring the property owners to pay multiple minimum billings during the course of a month in which more than one tenant may occupy a property.

Writing Off Uncollectible Accounts:

The Utility Office 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. Some accounts, regardless of attempts to collect, will remain unpaid.

In December of each year, the Utility Office, in conjunction with the Auditor's office, determines via billing system reports which accounts can be considered uncollectible. The selection is based on age of the accounts, along with any known unusual circumstances that might make a particular account uncollectible (for example, extended imprisonment of the account holder). Accounts marked for write-off are at least two years old. Once the selection process is complete, the Utility Office uses the billing system to designate such accounts as "written off", though payment can still be accepted on any account so designated for an indefinite period of time. Accounts thus written off are no longer included in standard reports of uncollected closed accounts or in any accounts receivable amount for the City Utilities.

In addition, accounts for which the account holder has been granted protection from collection efforts by the courts (bankruptcy), are written off throughout the year as required by law.

Accounts held by City-Owned entities or properties are written off in total yearly.

No policy exists for the sale of uncollectible accounts to third parties.

Letters of Credit

After a customer of the City Utilities closes an account, they may request a letter of good credit with which they may prove good credit to any subsequent utility. This letter will be provided if the customer's account has never been terminated (shut off) for nonpayment, and the customer has remained completely current in their account for twelve consecutive months prior to the close of the account. All final bills must also be paid in full prior to issuing a letter of credit.

Returned Check Charge

The City of Dover Utility Office charges a fee of \$35.00 for processing checks refused for insufficient funds, closed/frozen accounts, or stop payments. The City also may terminate service to any account on which a check is returned for insufficient funds. If three (3) checks have been returned for any reason during a twelve (12) month period for the same person/account, checks will no longer be accepted in our office, and said customer may only make payment by cash, credit, debit, or money order.

If a check was written to avoid disconnection or for an arrangement made on a disconnect notice and the check is returned for any reason, electric service will be terminated immediately, without notification. Once service is terminated, you will be required to pay the bill in full, plus a \$35.00 insufficient fund fee, plus the reconnect fee in cash, credit, debit, or money order.

Employees of the City of Dover

Recognizing that employees of the City are subject to the same occasional financial constraints as all other customers, employee's utility accounts will fall under all provisions of this policy, with this additional safeguard:

If a utility account held in the name of an employee becomes overdue to the point of receiving a termination-of-service notice, both the City Auditor and the Mayor shall receive a copy of the notice. If arrangements for payment are made with the utility office, both the Auditor and Mayor shall receive a copy of the arrangements. When the account is paid in full, the Auditor and Mayor shall receive a copy of the paid invoice.

Seasonal Disconnections/Reconnections

The reconnection charge for restoring water/sewer service to a property which has been turned off at the owner's request is \$50.00.

Billing Errors and Corrections

If a customer's bill is discovered to contain an error in calculation, billing amount, or other error due to the City Utility Billing Office's inadvertent mistake or omission, the policy of the Utility Office is as follows:

If the error is in the customer's favor (they owe the City money as a result of the City's error), it is the policy of the City Utility Billing Office not to seek to penalize the affected customer by billing for previously unbilled amounts, unless it is due to an under read meter reading, and not for a stopped meter.

If the error is in the City's favor (we have over-billed as a result of the City's error), the City will issue a refund or credit, depending on the amount in question. If a credit to the account is given, the credit must be usable within six (6) months. Otherwise, a check for the over-billed amount will be provided to the customer.

If a customer's bill is discovered to contain an error or errors due to a customer's mistake (unreported meter damage, unreported plumbing leaks, etc.), the City Utility Office will issue a corrected bill covering the unbilled amount. If the error is in the Customer's favor, no refund or credit will be issued.

In brief, the City does not penalize for its own errors, but does collect if/when a customer is in error.

Water Bill Arrangements

Arrangements can only be made by the property owner regarding water bills owed. A date and monetary amount of what will be paid needs to be said at time arrangement is made.

If water service is disconnected at a property a reconnection fee must be paid along with the total amount due on the account in cash, credit, debit, or money order, before service will be restored, regardless if payment is made by the tenant or the landlord.

It is the sole responsibility of property owners and tenants to keep record of the amounts due. The City Utility Office will not become involved in disputes over amounts owed.

PAP

If a customer is signed up with our office for direct payment, the funds will be withdrawn from their checking account on their bills due date. If for any reason the payment is returned to us for non sufficient funds, closed account, froze account, or stop payment you must pay the amount of the returned check in full plus a \$35.00 returned check fee, by cash, debit, credit, or money order.

If payment is not received, services may be disconnected and then payment must be received in full, plus a \$35.00 returned check fee, and the reconnection fee.

If the customer signed up for direct payment has NSF twice (2) in a six month period or three (3) in a twelve month period, they will be removed from direct payment.

They may sign up again for direct payment, however if there are any issues with the account again, they will be removed from direct payment and will not be permitted to go back on PAP.

Also if the customer continually requests to be removed from direct payment and then put back on direct payment, month after month, it is to the discretion of the Utility Office Manager as to whether or not they will continue to be allowed to be on direct payment.

It will then be their sole responsibility to make sure they make payment to our office by the due date of their bill.

Check Processing

It is the policy of our office that we do not accept post-dated checks. Check payments will be processed daily on the date they are received by our office.

If payment is made using a post-dated check and it is returned to our office for nonsufficient funds, you will be responsible for paying the amount of the check along with a \$35.00 returned check fee to our office, by cash, debit, credit, or money order.

Budget

Customers, who have resided at the same address for at least twelve (12) billings, may request to be placed on a budget. However, if it is a rental property, only the electric account in the tenant's name can be placed on the budget.

Budget year runs from August to June, with the month of July being a makeup month (meaning any monies owed at the time of the July bill must be paid to a zero (0) balance before going back on the budget). The account must be at a zero balance at the time budget starts (unless there was an overage paid the prior budget year).

Pay amount is the same each month and must be paid by the bill due date. If payment is missed one month, customer will be removed from the budget and will not be able to get back on the budget until the next budget year.

Payment Arrangements

Tenant's and owner's may make arrangements in person, in office regarding their utility bill (as long as it is in their name) to make payment at a later date, and at the time said arrangement is made, they are informed their service can be terminated without warning if they do not follow through with the arrangement made. Said arrangement is documented in the text screen on said account, also a copy of said arrangement will be given to the customer at time arrangement is made. If arrangement is not followed through with, the service may be terminated the following business day or on the following scheduled disconnect day. Once said service is terminated the bill must be paid in full along with any reconnection fees in order to have service restored. If for any reason the customer is not able to follow through with the arrangement and we are informed of such prior to disconnect, we may extend the arrangement on a one time basis within reason and at the discretion of the Utility Billing Office.

Phone Information

To receive any account information over the phone, you must provide your account number. This is for privacy protection.

Drive Through

The drive through is available (6-7-21) for quick payment transactions only. Please provide the payment stub to keep traffic flowing. All other business transactions must be completed inside the office.

Bankruptcy

Once a customer files bankruptcy with our office, and proper notification (filing) from the courts have been received. A reading is done on the meters and the account is finalized out, and a new account is started. Once said proceedings has taken place, it is the policy of this office that any utility account held with the City of Dover must be kept current (bill has to be paid in full by the due date each month) or services will be terminated. Once service has been terminated a reconnection fee plus the bill in full has to be collected in cash, debit, credit, or money order, for service to be restored.

If a customer who has filed bankruptcy signs up to have new service in their name, or is listed on the application, and it is a rental property, the deposit required will be two (2) times the average bill and they must keep the bill current (paid in full by the due date each month) or services will be terminated. Once service has been terminated a reconnection fee plus the total amount of the bill has to be collected in cash, debit, credit, or money order, for service to be restored.

Web Payments

As a courtesy to our customers, payments may be made by visiting www.doverohio.com. Also, no information is stored when using a credit card, so if you choose to make payment online, you will be required to supply all information every time.

Agency Assistance

If a disconnection notice is received and you have an appointment scheduled with a public service agency, your disconnect date may be postponed when we are informed of the appointment date and time. Our office must be contacted on the date of the appointment by the agency with the amount pledged at that time. If they are not pledging the full balance, you are responsible to have the remaining account balance by the close of business the following business day.

The City of Dover Codified Ordinances also outlines other procedures for matters not covered in this policy statement. The Utility Office reserves the right to modify, change, or add to this policy statement as the need arises.