



# *City of Hempstead*

1125 Austin Street • Hempstead, Texas 77445 • Tel: 979-826-2486 • Fax: 979-826-6703

## *Utility Department Policies and Procedures*

*Revised 05/06/2019*

### **UTILITY PAYMENTS**

1. Utility bills are mailed on the last working day of each month.
2. You have from the 1<sup>st</sup> through the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month to pay without a penalty.
3. From the 11<sup>th</sup> through the 20<sup>th</sup> of the month to pay with a 10% penalty.
4. On the 21<sup>st</sup> the utilities are disconnected for non-payment.
5. If you do not receive your bill by at least the 3<sup>rd</sup> day of the month, it is your responsibility to come by or call this office, (979) 826-2486, and we will be able to tell you the amount of your bill. However, the reason you are not receiving your bill could be an incorrect address. You are responsible for notifying us of mailing address changes.

### **DEPOSITS**

1. Residential deposits are \$350.00 (three hundred and fifty dollars), **cash only**.
2. Commercial deposits are \$500.00 (five hundred dollars) or 2 ½ (two and one-half) times the amount of the estimated bill, **cash only**. A letter of credit from a bank may be accepted in lieu of a utility deposit when the deposit required is over \$1000.00 (one thousand dollars).
3. **No** checks are accepted for residential or commercial deposits, **cash only**.
4. **No partial payment** is accepted for deposit, and **no one guarantee** another person's deposit.

5. A deposit is issued in **only one name**. Application must be made in person and applicant must be 18 years of age or older. **Identification will be required to show proof of age.**
6. Deposits are transferable from one address to another. Name change from one person to another, both parties must be present. Duplicate receipts are not issued.

Deposit receipts should be kept in a safe place to be presented at the time of disconnect for final bill or homeowner refund\*.

NOTE: See Refunding Homeowner Deposit (Ord. 94-105)

## **CHECKS**

1. Two party checks are not accepted for payment of utility bills.
2. Checks are presented for payment **only one time.**
3. We do not accept checks for landfill use.
4. Insufficient check fee is \$30.00 (thirty dollars).
5. Checks are **not** accepted for **final bill.**

## **CREDIT CARDS**

1. **VISA AND MASTER CARDS ONLY.**
2. Payment has to be paid in full.
3. There will be a 5% fee charged to you from Card Company.

## **CONNECTS AND DISCONNECTS**

1. Connects and disconnects will only be performed between the hours of 8:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday during office hours.  
**Customer must come to City Hall in person to request connect and/or disconnect.**
2. Connects for water and gas on manufactured homes will only be made when manufactured home is tied/anchored down.
3. If transferring from one location to another within our service area, any current bill must be **paid in full** before new connection will be made.
4. The City will not turn on a water or gas meter unless someone is at home.
5. Any building you are requesting utilities that has been disconnected for 6 (six) months must be inspected by the building inspector before any utilities are connected.

## **DISCONNECT FOR NON-PAYMENT**

1. All utility bills are to be paid in full by 5:00 p.m. on the 20<sup>th</sup> of the month. If the 20<sup>th</sup> is on the weekend, an additional day will be given. Utilities will be disconnected for accounts **not paid in full by the 21<sup>st</sup>** of the month.
2. Due to unavoidable circumstances a 5 (five) day extension may be obtained by the 20<sup>th</sup> of each month, by signing a written request for an extension if the bill is not over \$350.00 (three hundred and fifty dollars). **NO MORE THAN ONE EXTENTION WILL BE GIVEN.** Special situations will be handled on a per case basis.
3. All utility payments are to be made in the office. Servicemen are not allowed to accept utility payments.
4. Once the disconnect (cut off) list has left the utility office the customer is considered disconnected for non-payment. The account must be paid in full and a reconnection fee of \$15.00 (fifteen dollars) per service must be paid before services are reconnected. **Checks are not an acceptable form of payment** for an account that has been turned off for non-payment. **Once the disconnect (cut off) list is generated the reconnect fees will be applied to the account.**
5. The City will not turn on a water or gas meter unless someone is at home.

## **FINAL BILLS**

1. The only person who can authorize a disconnect is the customer who has the account in **their name**. It is best not to take disconnects in advance because sometimes they can be forgotten. It is the responsibility of the customer to make sure the utilities have been disconnected as requested.
2. For deposit refunds, we must have the green deposit receipt endorsed by the customer or an affidavit signed by the customer. Identification will be required unless we know the customer. Refund checks are issued only in the utility customer's name.
3. Friday morning is the **only** day that final bills are processed. In order to receive a refund on Friday, a customer must disconnect by 4:30 p.m. Thursday. Disconnects requested after 4:30 p.m. Thursday will be processed Friday of the following week.
4. Final bill and/or refund check may be picked up after 1:00 p.m. on Friday.
5. Current mailing address is required if customer wants his/her final bill and/or refund check mailed.

## **REFUNDING HOMEOWNER DEPOSIT**

Upon written request, **a homeowner** may receive a refund of his/her utility deposit if **all** of the following apply:

1. Lived in his/her house at least 1 (one) year.
2. Has sufficient evidence that there is no mortgage against the house.
3. Customer has always **paid his/her utility bill by the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month.**

## **TAP FEES, LINE EXTENSIONS AND METER ENLARGEMENTS**

### **WATER TAP FEES**

Residential ¾" tap	\$600.00 (six hundred dollars)
Commercial and larger residential taps	Actual cost of labor and materials

### **GAS TAP FEES**

Residential J" tap	\$600.00 (six hundred dollars)
Commercial and larger residential taps	Actual cost of labor and materials

### **SEWER SERVICE CONNECTION CHARGES**

1. Sewer service connection charges or sewer tap lines made by the City of Hempstead, Texas crew and running from and off of the city main sewage line to any property line owned by private individuals or entity, shall be made by the City of Hempstead, Texas or its authorized agent thereof.
2. The cost of such sewer line tap from the city main line to the property line shall be actual cost of labor and material per linear foot as measured by the City of Hempstead, Texas or its authorized agent, or \$300.00 (three hundred dollars), whichever sum is greater, as determined by distance of sewer line tap and connection as needed for any given job site.

### **LINE EXTENSION**

Line extensions for water, natural gas, sanitary sewer, and electricity will be paid for by the customer.

### **METER ENLARGEMENTS**

Customer pays the difference.

## **CUSTOMER-OWNED SERVICE LINES**

The City of Hempstead is required by the Railroad Commission of Texas to notify our natural gas customers of Rule 192.16.

The City of Hempstead notification rule does require notification that:

1. The City does not maintain customers buried piping.
2. Buried piping is subject to potential hazards of corrosion, leakage and pipe should be:
  - a. Periodically inspected for leaks;
  - b. Periodically inspected for corrosion;
  - c. Repaired when unsafe condition exists.
3. When excavating near buried piping, piping should be located and excavation done by hand.
4. The City can assist in locating natural gas service lines when possible. Plumber and maintenance contractor can assist in inspecting and repairing the customers buried piping.
5. To report a gas leak or any gas emergency, please call (979) 826-2486.

## **GAS CONNECTS**

Routine gas connects consist of a 15 (fifteen) minute dial test and inspection of the house. All appliances will have to have a shutoff valve, vent and be in good working condition.

The inspector will determine if gas can be turned on. If anything is wrong, the inspector will explain what corrections need to be done. The house will also have to pass a 15 (fifteen) minute dial test before gas can be left on.

You must be home for us to do this. We do not make connects after 4:30 p.m.