

# Walton County Board of Commission

## Walton County Water Department

2171 Highway 81 SW \*\* P.O. Box 880

Loganville, GA 30052

Phone: 770 466 4887 Fax: 770 466 6129

### Water Department Accounts Policies & Procedures

#### 1. Introduction

The Walton County Water Department (WCWD) is pleased to provide service to our customers. We believe that service is beneficial only if it is of the highest quality available at the lowest possible cost. We pledge to always make this our goal. All of the policies and procedures we develop are designed to be fair. We welcome any comments and concerns that you, as a customer, may have.

#### 2. Application for Service and Deposits

To establish an account with the WCWD, the following is required: service and billing information, an application fee (covers the cost of the credit report - \$5.00 for personal, \$25.00 for business), a system connection fee (if new service), a security deposit with is based upon the credit report, and our billing policy must be received and signed for. Fees and Security Deposits are set by WCWD.

#### Normal Monthly Billing Cycles

BILLING CYCLE 1	Approximate date BILL MAILED - 10 <sup>TH</sup>	BANK DRAFTED – 20 <sup>th</sup>
BILLING CYCLE 2	Approximate date BILL MAILED - 15 <sup>TH</sup>	BANK DRAFTED – 25 <sup>th</sup>
BILLING CYCLE 3	Approximate date BILL MAILED - 20 <sup>TH</sup>	BANK DRAFTED – 30 <sup>th</sup>
BILLING CYCLE 4	Approximate date BILL MAILED - 30 <sup>TH</sup>	BANK DRAFTED – 10 <sup>th</sup>

***(\*\*\*\*Past due accounts are locked the following month\*\*\*\*)***

#### 3. Payment of Bill

- Bills must be paid in full as no partial payments are accepted. Bills are due 7 days after bill mailed date above. Bills that are unpaid 20 days after bill mailed date above are delinquently late, and a 10% late fee shall be added. Accounts that remain unpaid (past due) for an additional 10 days will have service disconnected (locked) for non-payment. A \$30.00 administrative fee will be added to accounts that are unpaid after 4:30pm on the day BEFORE “Lock” day.  
**\*\*\*\*\* Initial Here \_\_\_\_\_**
- Types of Payment – Payment can normally be made by any of the following methods: 1. Cash, 2. Check (no third party checks will be accepted), 3. Money Order, 4. Bank Draft, 5. Travelers Checks, 6. Online Payments (Web ID # on bottom of bill, **allow 3 days for processing**), 7. Visa/MasterCard/Discover (Credit or Debit - \$4.00 charge), 8. Certified Checks. Payments may be mailed to the Water Department or paid at our office (a 24 hour drop box also available – no attendant). WCWD is not responsible for cash payments made in drop box.  
WCWD reserves the right in its sole discretion to require all payments be made by cash or money order.
- Returned Checks – If a check is returned for any reason, a \$30.00 returned check fee is added. More than two (2) returned checks during a twelve-month period would put an account on a **cash only** basis for a period of twelve months.  
If a check is returned for any reason before the regularly scheduled “Lock” date, a notice may be sent and the customer can make arrangements to pay at any time before the “Lock” day. All late fees and penalties will apply until the payment is made.

#### 4. Disconnection for Non-Payment

Accounts that have a past due amount and are not paid by the “Lock” day will be disconnected for non-payment. Accounts that are disconnected for non-payment will be reconnected only after full payment of all past due amounts plus the \$30.00 administrative fee have been received in the WCWD office.

**WCWD personnel are not authorized to collect payments outside the Water Department office.**

We strongly encourage prompt payment of water bills. Please notify the WCWD of any changes in contact information.

## 5. Extension Time of Payment

Payment must be made on time for water service to be continued. There are exceptions where special short-term arrangements for payment can be made:

- Disconnecting of water service causing a life-threatening situation with a homebound patient. The attending physician must notify us of this life-threatening situation in writing before the "Lock" day. It is the responsibility of the customer to make special arrangements for payment with us. All late fees and other charges will apply.
- A certified governmental social agency guarantees that payment will be made through the agency. Under this situation, arrangements must be made prior to the "Lock" day and the extension can be made no longer than one week. All late fees and other charges will apply.
- The items listed above must be coordinated with WCWD when they first exist. It is the sole responsibility of the customer to coordinate between the doctor and/or agency and WCWD.

## 6. Appeal

A customer shall have the right to request a review of any contested bill within 15 days of billing date. At the discretion of WCWD payment of contested amount may be postponed until review is complete. All other charges are due as billed. Review shall be completed within ten (10) business days. Customer shall be notified in writing of findings of review. If customers are not satisfied with the outcome of the review, they may request a meter test. If the meter tests accurate, they will be responsible for the cost of the meter test not to exceed \$50.00.

## 7. Meter Tampering

**All water meters, mains, and fire hydrants are the property of the Walton County Water Department and are to be handled ONLY by our authorized personnel.**

Tampering is defined as any: (a) Unauthorized altering or reconnecting of a water meter that has been disconnected or removed for any reason; or (b) Any altering with WCWD's mains, fire hydrants, water or hardware on the source side of the meter. Tampering constitutes theft and creates a possible health hazard.

The first offense of tampering by a customer will result in a minimum \$500.00 charge per meter plus all other applicable fees and charges. Tampering may also result in criminal prosecution at the sole discretion of WCWD.

## 8. Closing of Accounts

Inactive (deposit retained): A customer may request in writing that their account be made inactive and their deposit retained by WCWD if water service is temporarily not needed (no minimum bill will be sent).

Closed (Finaled & Deposit Refunded): A customer may request in writing to have their account closed (finaled). The meter will generally be read on the date requested by the customer, excluding weekends & holidays. A bill will be generated and the customer's deposit will be applied to their account. After the deposit is applied to the customer's bill, any credit balance will be refunded to the customer and any balance due will be billed to the customer.

Abandoned: If a meter has been locked for 30 days and the bill still has not been paid, the account will be finaled, the deposit will be taken out of what is owed and legal proceedings may be initiated for any balance.

## 9. Water Service with Fire Sprinklers

Water service, which includes a fire sprinkler system demanding greater fire flow than domestic water use, is covered under the Fire Service "Silent Demand" Policy of WCWD.

## 10. Responsibilities

Water is being provided and sold to the customer in good faith. **We all have a responsibility to conserve our resources. It is the customer's responsibility to monitor their system to prevent leaks and water loss.** The Water Department is responsible for the system up through the meter. The customer's responsibility takes over from the meter and includes all parts of the system on the customer side to include, among other things, the water line, pressure-reducing valves and back flow valves. Once water is metered it is considered purchased and the customer is obligated to pay for the water. An adjustment due to a leak on the customer side is not a right of the customer, but may be granted in some cases as a customer convenience on a one time per customer basis. No adjustments are made for leaks in sprinkler systems, ruptured hoses or leaks inside the house such as toilets, dripping faucets or hot water heaters. Also, please note, County ordinances prohibit most improvements in the right of way to include sprinkler systems, shrubbery, fencing, flowerbeds and extensive landscaping, among other things. The County does not repair or replace items that are damaged or removed by work crews working in the right of way that violate County ordinances.

# Walton County Water Department Deposit Policy and Credit Report Authorization

Walton County Water Department deposit policy is designed to assess the credit risk associated with all applications for new or continued service, while protecting the assets of our utility.

Customers who act responsibly and pay their bills on time should not have to pay a deposit. Likewise, it is not fair that those good-paying customers to pay the financial burden of those who act irresponsibly and do not pay for their service as agreed. We provide services prior to payment and therefore are extending credit to the customer. Thus, the deposit is used to shift the financial burden of potential bad debt away from our best customer to those who pose credit risk.

The Walton County Water Department uses a technology-based screening tool called the ONLINE Utility Exchange to assess credit risk at the point of application and charge deposits only to those potential customers and existing customers who pose credit risk. An application fee of \$5.00 for consumer and \$25.00 for business is charged to cover the cost of the ONLINE Utility Exchange credit report. The ONLINE Utility Exchange is designed to screen service applicants to determine their credit risk based upon three criteria: 1. Social Security Number (SSN) verification; 2. Deposit decisions based upon credit risk; and 3. Payment experience with other utility providers. Each of these criteria reflects upon the credit risk associated with Walton County Water Department providing service to the applicant.

Walton County Water Department holds the deposit for the period that the service and account are still active.

1. Deposits are required to be paid prior to the time a connect order is issued.
2. Deposits are not transferable from one service address to another.
3. Upon termination of service, the deposit will be applied against any unpaid balance.
4. Any remaining balance will be returned to the customer.

### Bankruptcies

It is our belief that the fact that the applicant has declared bankruptcy indicates substantial credit risk and shall require a maximum deposit of the individual who has a bankruptcy returned as part of their credit record.

### Exchange Matches

It is also our policy that any applicant who has an Exchange Results returned indicating that they have a utility bill that remains unpaid and is returned as part of the Utility Exchange Report indicates significant credit risk and shall require a maximum deposit.

### Delinquent Accounts/ Collection Activities

Walton County Water Department reserves the right to require additional deposit funds if the customer's account appears on the cut-off list within the first six months of service or anytime thereafter if the record necessitates. This charge will be made to the customer's account and must be paid by the due date of the next bill or service will be disconnected.

If an account is closed, the deposit will be credited toward the final bill. If monies are still left, a refund will be made to the customer. In the event that a balance remains unpaid on the account after the deposit is applied, WCWD reserves the right to begin collection activities which may include: 30, 60, or 90 day notices, door hanger, referral to the Consumer's Credit file, referral to the ONLINE Utility Exchange, and Placement with a Third Party Collection Agency, or legal action.

Deposit transfers from one customer to another are not allowed.

Meters are read once a month. The bill is then mailed the next business day after the read date with payment due upon receipt.

**\*\*\*\* I understand that my deposit will be based upon the credit report that will be obtained from ONLINE Utility Exchange.**

An adverse action letter will be printed and given to each applicant who is denied service, or charged a deposit. The Federal Trade Commission and the Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA) mandate that a consumer who is charged a deposit based upon their credit information are given notification as to where that information was obtained and detailed procedures as to how they might dispute the information. By signing below I authorize the Walton County Water Department to request and pull my credit information from ONLINE Utility Exchange.

(X) \_\_\_\_\_  
SSN: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Walton County Water Department

Walton County Board of Commissioners

2171 Highway 81 SW \*\* P.O. Box 880

Loganville, GA 30052

Phone: 770 466 4887 Fax: 770 466 6129

(Please Print)

Date Service to Begin: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Service Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_ Social Security #: \_\_\_\_\_

Employer: \_\_\_\_\_ Work #: \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Spouse's SSN: \_\_\_\_\_

Rent:  Property Owner's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Own:

I have received a copy of the water service accounts policy and procedure.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

## EMAIL ADDRESS:

\*\*\*\*\*FOR OFFICE USE ONLY\*\*\*\*\*

Reading: \_\_\_\_\_

Account#: \_\_\_\_\_ Route#: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Deposit Amt: \_\_\_\_\_

Taken By: \_\_\_\_\_ Sub. Div.: \_\_\_\_\_ Lot#: \_\_\_\_\_ S/O#: \_\_\_\_\_