

CITY OF NIXA UTILITY BILLING DEPARTMENT

UTILITY BILLING COLLECTION POLICY STATEMENT & PROCEDURES

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| Effective: | 8/1/2015 |
| Initiated by: | Deanna Allen Utility Office Supervisor |
| Approved by: | Mayor and Council |
| Approved date: | 07/20/2015 |

Purpose:

- To establish fair, consistent, and effective procedures related to billing and collection of current and delinquent charges for utility services provided by the City of Nixa.
- To follow City ordinance while providing good customer service by billing accurately and promptly, while taking timely and reasonable actions to collect past due bills.

Definitions:

Delinquent account: Being overdue in payment.

Returned Check: Any check tendered to the City of Nixa which is dishonored by the bank.

Notices-Past due or Shut-Off: Notice provided to the customer regarding payment requirement to maintain utility service.

Procedures:

1. General Procedures

- 1.1 All outstanding balances shall be paid in full prior to initiation of a new service.
- 1.2 Deposits for Utility Service shall be required when making application for service. Amount of deposit shall be in accordance to City ordinances.

RESOLUTION NO. 2015-072

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF NIXA, MISSOURI,
AMENDING THE UTILITY BILLING DEPARTMENT UTILITY BILLING
COLLECTION POLICY STATEMENT AND PROCEDURES**

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF NIXA, MISSOURI,
AS FOLLOWS:**

That the attached document of the City of Nixa Utility Billing Department Utility Billing Collection Policy Statement and Procedures is adopted and approved as amended, effective August 1, 2015.

This resolution shall be in force from and after the date of its passage.

Passed and approved this 20th day of July, 2015.

Mayor

ATTEST:

City Clerk

- 1.3 A customer that requires a post-bankruptcy utility account will be required to pay a deposit that will be equal to two (2) times the average monthly bill.
- 1.4 Deposits will be applied to the final billing.
- 1.5 It is the customer's responsibility to give notification when service is no longer required. The customer is responsible for the bill until notice is given, regardless of whether they occupy the premises. The customer will be asked to provide the last 4 digits of the account holder's social security number if the disconnect of service request is handled by phone. If the requesting party does not know the information, the work order will be cancelled until the required information is provided.
- 1.6 Customers wanting to establish service or transfer service must provide proof of identification and a rental inspection, if required. A 24-hr notice is requested.
- 1.7 Customers requesting to establish services remotely will incur a one-time fee for this service. This fee may be waived provided customer begins participation in the ACH (auto-pay) program.
- 1.8 Customers are required to provide timely notification when a property changes ownership or tenancy.
- 1.9 Customers are required to provide accurate and current account information including address and phone number.
- 1.10 To protect the safety of our customers and the integrity of the City's utility system, persons caught tampering with any City meter or caught stealing any City utility service shall have charges brought against them and will be held responsible for the cost of any damage to the City's meter.

2. Billing

- 2.1 The City of Nixa sends out a monthly bill for each billing cycle.
- 2.2 The utility bill is the notice to the customer that payment is required for utility service. The bill includes: the billing date, dates of service, charges for utility service, total amount due, and payment due date. Failure to receive a bill does not waive penalty or fees.
- 2.3 It is the customer's responsibility to contact the City of Nixa Utility Office if they have not received their bill.

3. Payment

- 3.1 Bills are due within 16 days from the billing date.
- 3.2 Payments can be made by cash, check, money order, credit/debit card, bank ACH draft, in person, by mail, in our 24-hr drop box, online, or by any other means offered by the City.
- 3.3 A 5% penalty is added to the amount of the bill if it remains unpaid 17 days after the billing date.
- 3.4 Accounts shall be subject to utility disconnect if the bill remains unpaid 18 days after the billing date.

4. Returned Check Policy

- 4.1 Notification of a returned check will be provided with a door hanger placed on the customer's door indicating a payment requirement.
- 4.2 The returned check shall be paid by cash, money order or credit/debit card.
- 4.3 Customers are only allowed three returned checks. Any payments made to the account after the third incident shall be paid by cash, money order or credit/debit card.
- 4.4 Customers that do not pay for the returned check within one business day from notification will be disconnected. In order to have utilities reconnected; the customer must remit the following: cash, money order or credit/debit card for the amount of the returned check, a \$25.00 return check fee and a \$25.00 per service reconnection fee.
- 4.5 Partial payments shall not be accepted for returned checks.

5. Payment Arrangements

- 5.1 The City of Nixa may allow a customer to enter into an agreement for acceptable payment arrangements if the customer is unable to pay the full amount of the utility bill by the due date; however, at no time shall the outstanding balance exceed \$50.00.
- 5.2 A customer shall contact the City of Nixa by phone or in person to initiate payment arrangements and shall be allowed one (1) payment arrangement per bill.
- 5.3 The City of Nixa will provide agency assistance information to its customers who are in need of financial assistance.
- 5.4 If a customer does not honor the payment arrangement, the City shall disconnect City utility service(s).
- 5.5 Pledges or guarantee of payment from state agencies or other entities does not constitute payment. Customers are required to pay the remaining balance or other fees in order to retain utility service.

6. Average Monthly Payment Plan

- 6.1 The City of Nixa may allow a residential customer to enroll in the Average Monthly Payment Plan (AMP) providing the customer meets all the requirements for enrollment and completes the required application. AMP will be calculated by averaging the dollar amount of the past twelve (12) utility bills on the customer's account.
- 6.2 Customer must have a minimum of twelve (12) consecutive months' history at current location to qualify for AMP.
- 6.3 Customer must have a good payment history with not more than two (2) late fees, no disconnects for non-payment, and no returned checks in the last twelve (12) consecutive months.
- 6.4 Customer must have a zero (0) balance to enroll in AMP.
- 6.5 Customer must agree that the AMP payment must be paid in full and on time in order to remain on the AMP plan. Failure to do so will result in possible disconnection of service and termination of AMP plan for one (1) year.
- 6.6 AMP accounts are not eligible for payment arrangements or time extensions.
- 6.7 If a customer moves, AMP will terminate at previous address and will not be eligible to sign up for AMP at current address until twelve (12) months' history is established.

7. Disconnection for Non-Payment

- 7.1 Failure to pay by the 18th day after the billing date will result in the mailing of a past due notice. This past due notice usually allows 7 additional days for payment. Failure to pay or set up an agreeable payment arrangement shall result in immediate disconnection.
- 7.2 All payments made to prevent disconnection must be made in the City of Nixa Utility Billing Office prior to disconnect. No payments will be accepted in the field to prevent disconnect.
- 7.3 Although partial payments are accepted, partial payments will not prevent utility services from being discontinued for non-payment. A customer may be disconnected for any amount after the date of the second billing or pre-arranged extension.
- 7.4 Once an account has been disconnected for non-payment, full payment of the past due amount, a reconnect fee of \$25.00 per utility service, and an additional deposit based on utility service shall be made in order for reconnection of service.
- 7.5 The additional deposit after disconnection may be waived one (1) time for the life of the account if the customer signs up for ACH bank draft. If the customer has a returned bank draft or otherwise terminates the draft, upon the next disconnection a deposit will be required.
- 7.6 Charges shall be filed against anyone that has tampered with a meter that has been disconnected for non-payment.

8. Reconnection

- 8.1 Once an account has been disconnected for non-payment, the entire balance must be paid by cash, money order, or credit/debit card before utility services will be restored.
- 8.2 A \$25.00 fee per utility service is required for reconnection of services that have been disconnected for non-payment, bad check, tampering with City meters, or disclosure of false information.

9. Collection of Amount Due by Another Party

- 9.1 All utility bill payments shall be made payable to the City of Nixa Utilities.
- 9.2 After 90 days, delinquent accounts may be referred to a collection agency. The collection agency will attempt to obtain payment, however, if no payment is collected, the collection agency will report the debt to the credit bureau.

