

**2019-2020
CITY of WESTFIR
WATER / SEWER PAYMENT POLICY**

INTRODUCTION

The public water supply system and sewer collection system of the City of Westfir, Oregon, including all real estate, reservoirs, pumping and treatment equipment, water mains, sewer mains, manholes, valves, fire hydrants, meters and services up to the lateral lines are owned by the City of Westfir and are under the control of the Public Works Director and his duly authorized agents or employees. City responsibility for installation, maintenance, and quality of materials and workmanship terminates at the customer service valve. All other plumbing is the sole responsibility of the customer and subject to provisions of the Uniform Plumbing Code.

The City does not guarantee to consumers full volume, fixed pressure or an effective continuous supply of water, such matters being subject to the varying conditions which may disrupt the operation and require maintenance of the mains, services, pumping stations, reservoirs and other parts of the waterworks system. The water division will, however, in case of accident or necessity, which requires the cutting off of the water supply, endeavor to notify its customers in advance. This will not occur, however, if a delay would cause a potential hazard to public health and safety or extensive property damage.

APPLICATION FOR SERVICE

Any property owner, or duly authorized agent of the owner, desiring water and/or sewer service must sign for such service in person at the City Recorder's Office located at City Hall (47441 Westoak Road), showing positive identification and proof of property ownership before such service will be provided. If the request for service is a new installation, the Public Works Director or his designee and a Certified Plumber must approve the installation prior to tapping.

A security deposit equal to one month's base rate is required for each new account for water service. A security deposit equal to one month's base rate is required for each new account for sewer service. A deposit will be required of the following specified customers of the City of Westfir who are starting service and maintaining accounts:

1. A new customer with the City of Westfir who has no prior credit experience with the City.
2. A tenant customer authorized to open an account by the property owner.
3. A customer that has had a delinquent account with the City in the past.

The City of Westfir will return any remaining balance of the deposit to a non-tenant customer after a one-year period provided the customer has kept his account current for the preceding 12-month period.

A tenant's deposit shall be held by the City of Westfir and applied to the final billing when tenant moves from account address. Any excess balance between the deposit and final billing shall be refunded to the tenant.

Each water and/or sewer account of a customer shall be treated separately. At the option of the City of Westfir, should a customer of the City of Westfir move from a premise having a water meter on the premises, the City of Westfir may credit the customer's new water meter account with any balance due to the customer on a previous deposit. For a customer moving from the City, credit will be given on the final bill.

Water service can be refused to an applicant under any of the following conditions:

1. When the premises to be served does not abut a public street, road or way, and the City of Westfir does not have accessibility to the property through an existing easement.
2. When a water main has not been installed to the property to be served, and it would be impractical to extend a main as determined by the Public Works Director.
3. When in the judgment of the Public Works director the existing water main is of insufficient size to supply the additional demand and maintain satisfactory service to established customers.
4. When the applicant is delinquent in the payment of previous rents, charges or assessments.
5. When the property to be served is not within the corporate limits of the City of Westfir and an annexation agreement has not been executed by the owner(s) of that property as may be required by the City.

ACCOUNTING & BILLING

Owners of real property supplied with water and/or sewer by the City of Westfir shall be liable for charges for water and/or sewer service supplied to the premises. Service may be terminated or denied at any premise that has any outstanding water or sewer charges, or to any person who has outstanding water or sewer bills with the City of Westfir. The agreement by the City of Westfir to carry an account in the name of a tenant or other non-owner in no way relieves the owner(s) of liability for water charges for the premises.

Bills are processed and mailed by the first day of the month and are due and payable by the 25th of each month, and payment must be received by that date.

Accounts not paid by the 25th day of the month are subject to a late fee of 10% of the account balance, and the billing will be printed on colored paper.

Accounts unpaid by the 10th day of the month following a missed payment shall be considered delinquent and The City will initiate the shut off procedure.

Water shut off procedures will include a post card sent via USPS, and a door hanger hand delivered by a City employee. The notice will state the action needed to maintain service and will provide at least 72-hour notice of shut off.

Accounts that are shut off, will require payment in full for the account balance plus a \$50.00 turn on fee, before services will be restored.

The City Recorder will endeavor to give proper notice of water and/or sewer service charges, but by law, cannot guarantee delivery of mail. Failure to receive a monthly billing by mail shall not excuse customers from prompt payment of bills.

Water accounts are established and assigned to the property itself. Billings are sent in care of individuals. Owners of property will be held responsible for water used on or in their premises, but payments will be accepted from tenants under the following conditions:

1. The tenant must furnish the City Recorder with the name and address of the property owner when beginning service.
2. The tenant must show a current lease or the most recent rental receipt to the City Recorder, or the landlord must sign the service application, and:

Any delinquent accounts by a tenant will have a duplicate bill generated and mailed to the owner of the property where service is provided. Property owners who have tenants on an account that has been activated previous to the implementation of these policies is responsible for contacting the City Recorder to assure that they are properly noted as the owner in the billing records.

Checks returned for insufficient funds are subject to a \$25.00 charge, and this charge and amount of the bill must be paid to the City Recorder's office with cash, cashier's check or money order. The City Recorder will contact the water user by phone or mail with regards to returned checks, however, checks returned on an account that is already delinquent is subject to immediate shut-off. Three returned checks in a 12-month period will authorize the City to refuse payment by check for two years of service from the date of the last check. During the 24-month period, payments must be made with cash, cashier's check, or money order.

WATER AND SEWER RATES AND CHARGES

To provide funds necessary for the operation and maintenance of the municipal water and sewer systems, the Westfir City Council has approved resolutions establishing rates and charges.

Charges for new construction/connections to the water or sewer system

Water Connection (tap) Charge -
3/4" meter (for 3/4" line) \$300.00

Water meters damaged by negligent use or repairs undertaken by the owner shall be repaired or replaced by the Department of Public Works, with the actual cost being assessed to the property owner.

Sewer Connection (tap) Charge -
Single Dwelling \$300.00

All water and sewer taps may be subject to a maximum waiting period of up to 30 days depending upon scheduled Public Works activities and availability of material.

Service Restoration Charge - \$50.00

FEE RATES

Monthly Water Rate -

Individual Detached Residential Dwelling, or any Combination of Business and Dwellings:

3/4" line – Base Rate for first 7,000 gallons used	\$50.00
	(see attached annual rate schedule)
7,001 to 12,000 gallons used	\$5.00 per 1,000 gallons
Usage amounts between 1,000 increments	\$00.005 per gallon
Over 12,000 gallons used	\$10.00 per 1,000 gallons
Usage amounts between 1,000 increments	\$00.010 per gallon
Temporarily Unoccupied Dwelling	\$24.00
(ZERO water usage by a connected dwelling for the billing cycle)	

In the event a single meter services two or more residential units, commercial or industrial establishments, the applicable minimum (base) charge per billing period shall be charged to the owner for each benefited unit served.

Monthly Sewer Rate -

Individual Detached Residential Dwelling, or any Combination of Business and Dwelling:

Base rate for first 7,000 gallons used (All year)	\$53.00
Additional Winter Usage (October 1 – May 31)	
7,001 to 12,000 gallons used -	additional flat rate of \$20.00
Over 12,000 gallons used -	additional flat rate of \$50.00

In the event a single meter services two or more residential units, commercial or industrial establishments, the applicable minimum (base) charge per billing period shall be charged to the owner for each benefited unit served.

The rates and charges listed in this manual are subject to adjustment by the City Council, as they deem necessary. (see attached rated schedule)

RESPONSIBILITIES OF CUSTOMERS

It is the responsibility of the resident or property owner to keep the water meter accessible to City employees for purposes of meter reading, emergency shut off, leak repair, etc. In the event that a meter is inaccessible for any reason, the city reserves the right to estimate the meter reading and to issue bills calculated upon estimated usage.

It is the responsibility of the owner of the property to maintain all piping and plumbing fixtures past the City water meter in good condition.

It is the responsibility of the owner of property to maintain the sewer lateral to the City sewer main. The City will not be responsible for broken, plugged, or otherwise inoperable sewer laterals. When the City sewer main is located beneath a County maintained street, the City will sawcut the paving, tamp the completed backfill in the trench, and repair the street cut. It is the responsibility of the property owner or his contractor to coordinate this operation with the City.

NON-PAYMENT & COLLECTION

Where water and/or sewer charges are unpaid for at least 60 days, and where an unpaid bill has arisen from a service contract made directly with the owner of the property served by the connection as described herein, the City may file a lien against the property by certifying the unpaid amount plus any associated penalties to the Lane County Clerk. The City Recorder will send the property owner notice of the impending certification at least 30 days prior to the certification in accordance with the Oregon Revised Statutes (ORS). If, however, the City determines that a transfer of the property is about to occur, it may file the lien without having to meet the requirements that the rents or charges be unpaid for 60 days and the property owner received 30 days' advance notice of the impending action.

Any lien for unpaid water and/or sewer charges will be immediately released upon payment in full of the amount certified as unpaid rents, charges and penalties.

Water shut off procedures will include a post card sent via USPS, and a door hanger hand delivered by a City employee. The notice will state the action needed to maintain service, and will provide at least 72 hour notice of shut off. If services are shut off, there will be a \$50.00 fee for turning the services back on.

Any water user or property owner may discontinue utilities service and be exempt from regular billing by requesting a final bill from the City Recorder and having the curb stop turned to the "Off" or closed position and locked by Public Works personnel.

DISPUTE RESOLUTIONS

Procedures for resolving disputes involving the customer and the water and sewer utilities or the City Recorder have been established as follows:

Step 1 - Customer notifies the clerk in the billing office, and presents a thorough explanation as to why he/she feels the City is in error. The clerk will thoroughly research the problem within five (5) working days of the customer request. An answer will be transmitted to the customer within ten (10) calendar days of the original complaint.

Step 2 - Should the customer not be satisfied with the answer received in Step 1, The customer may request a hearing before the City Council. The Dispute Hearing shall be held within five (5) working days of the request. The customer shall present all information to the Council to justify their claim. The Council shall make a written decision within ten (10) working days of the hearing. The decision of the Council is final.

SERVICE CALLS

Service calls will be made during regular working hours and without charge for the following purposes:

- 1) Leak investigation
- 2) To locate the City-owned portion of the system
- 3) Meter inspection
- 4) Opening and closing accounts
- 5) Collection of water samples

If during investigation it is determined that the leak is in the customer's portion of the system, the City will turn off the water at the curb stop. The customer is responsible for accurately locating the leak and for repair costs. There will be a charge for turning the service back on and for any additional turn-off by the City. Following repairs, service may be turned back on by a plumber. There will be a charge for service calls made which are not during normal working hours, which will equal the cost of manpower expended by the City.

Any required repair to the curb stop, meter, or customer service will be performed by the City during normal working hours as soon as it can be scheduled.

GENERAL INFORMATION TO CUSTOMERS

Cross Connections

No physical connection between the public water supply and any other source of water or other liquid is allowed unless the auxiliary or other water system, and the method of connection and use of such system, shall have been approved by the appropriate City official and by the Oregon Department of Health. Annual testing and inspection of backflow devices is required at customer expense.

Waste Materials & Discharge

No filth, animal matter or any other substance may be placed in any city water system or reservoir, and no prohibited materials as outlined by City Codes may be discharged into the sewer system. Also, it is not permissible to make any storm sewer connection, such as a rain downspout, to the sanitary sewer.

Freezing

The City will not assume the cost of thawing water services on the customer's side of the service valve. The customer must demonstrate that their portion of the service line is not frozen before the City will attempt to thaw the line on the street side of the curb stop. It is the City's policy not to use electric welders to thaw services.

Repairs

Failure of the property owner to make repairs in a timely fashion when necessary can result in the water being turned off at the curb stop until such repairs are made. Should it be determined that a broken service line is causing a traffic hazard or property damage to others, the water may be turned off at once. The customer should make arrangements for a temporary water supply until such time as the necessary repairs can be made.

Fire Hydrants

No person, except an authorized agent of the Water Department, Fire Department, or a person with a special permit from the City Council, shall take any water from fire hydrants under any circumstance. Water used from hydrants to provide potable water for fire camps or other temporary emergency installations shall be metered and charged at the prevailing user rate and is subject to an administrative charge. Public Works will designate the hydrant to be used. Payment arrangements must be made in advance at City Hall, unless an emergency situation arises and the Mayor or City Recorder gives approval.

Tampering and Theft

No one may connect to, tamper with, or remove any meter seal, or insert a meter bypass to any public water line without the permission of the Public Works Director or his agents. No one may operate, open, or otherwise tamper with any valve after it has been closed for violation of any rule or regulation of the Department of Public Works. No one may, in any way, take water for private use unlawfully or without first having secured the necessary permit from the authorized representative of the Department of Public Works.

Evidence of water being unlawfully reconnected after having been turned off will result in the disconnection of service by removal of the meter. In order to restore services, the customer shall pay a \$200 meter installation fee, and all costs incurred in reconnecting the service branch, including all past due amounts, late fees, a one month deposit if one is not on file, and a \$50 reconnect fee. The City retains the option of replacing the service branch with new materials.

If the Public Works Department finds that a meter seal has been broken, (or any bypass inserted, or there is evidence that the meter has been tampered with), will result in the disconnection of service by removal of the meter. In order to restore services, the customer shall pay a \$200 meter installation fee, and all costs incurred in reconnecting the service branch, including all past due amounts, late fees, a one month deposit if one is not on file, and a \$50 reconnect fee. The City retains the option of replacing the service branch with new materials.

The criminal laws of the State of Oregon provide penalties for tampering with water meters, meter seals, etc. This fee is in addition to the penalties provided by City Ordinance and by the criminal laws of the State Community Services Director of Oregon. Making payment to City Hall will not in any way relieve any person from criminal prosecution.

Scheduled rate increases are as follows:

July 1, 2017 –

Monthly Water Rate -

3/4" line – Base Rate for first 7,000 gallons used	\$46.00
7,001 to 12,000 gallons used	\$ 5.00 per 1,000 gallons
Usage amounts between 1,000 increments	\$ 0.005 per gallon
Over 12,000 gallons used	\$ 10.00 per 1,000 gallons
Usage amounts between 1,000 increments	\$ 0.010 per gallon
Temporarily Unoccupied Dwelling	\$23.00
(means no water usage by a connected dwelling for the billing cycle)	

Monthly Sewer Rate -

Individual Detached Residential Dwelling -	
Base Rate for first 7,000 gallons used	\$50.00
7,001 to 12,000 gallons used	\$20.00 flat rate (October 1 – May 31)
Over 12,000 gallons used	\$50.00 flat rate (October 1 – May 31)
Any Combination of Business and Dwellings -	
Base Rate for first 7,000 gallons used	\$50.00
7,001 to 12,000 gallons used	\$20.00 flat rate (October 1 – May 31)
Over 12,000 gallons used	\$50.00 flat rate (October 1 – May 31)

July 1, 2018 –

Monthly Water Rate -

3/4" line – Base Rate for first 7,000 gallons used	\$48.00
7,001 to 12,000 gallons used	\$ 5.00 per 1,000 gallons
Usage amounts between 1,000 increments	\$ 0.005 per gallon
Over 12,000 gallons used	\$ 10.00 per 1,000 gallons
Usage amounts between 1,000 increments	\$ 0.010 per gallon
Temporarily Unoccupied Dwelling	\$24.00
(means no water usage by a connected dwelling for the billing cycle)	

Monthly Sewer Rate -

Individual Detached Residential Dwelling -	
Base Rate for first 7,000 gallons used	\$53.00
7,001 to 12,000 gallons used	\$20.00 flat rate (October 1 – May 31)
Over 12,000 gallons used	\$50.00 flat rate (October 1 – May 31)
Any Combination of Business and Dwellings -	
Base Rate for first 7,000 gallons used	\$53.00
7,001 to 12,000 gallons used	\$20.00 flat rate (October 1 – May 31)
Over 12,000 gallons used	\$50.00 flat rate (October 1 – May 31)

July 1, 2019 –

Monthly Water Rate -

3/4" line – Base Rate for first 7,000 gallons used	\$50.00
7,001 to 12,000 gallons used	\$ 5.00 per 1,000 gallons
Usage amounts between 1,000 increments	\$ 0.005 per gallon
Over 12,000 gallons used	\$ 10.00 per 1,000 gallons
Usage amounts between 1,000 increments	\$ 0.010 per gallon
Temporarily Unoccupied Dwelling	\$25.00
(means no water usage by a connected dwelling for the billing cycle)	

Monthly Sewer Rate -

Individual Detached Residential Dwelling -	
Base Rate for first 7,000 gallons used	\$56.00
7,001 to 12,000 gallons used	\$20.00 flat rate (October 1 – May 31)
Over 12,000 gallons used	\$50.00 flat rate (October 1 – May 31)
Any Combination of Business and Dwellings -	
Base Rate for first 7,000 gallons used	\$56.00
7,001 to 12,000 gallons used	\$20.00 flat rate (October 1 – May 31)
Over 12,000 gallons used	\$50.00 flat rate (October 1 – May 31)