

## *Town of Lake Hamilton, Florida*

# Town Services User Rules, Regulations, Policies and Fees

Updated October 1, 2018

1. **Establishment of Water Service.** Every residential dwelling unit and every non-residential land use, be it a business, an industrial operation, a non-profit or a church, shall apply to the Town for water service. Upon payment of deposits and fees by the applicant, the Town will establish the water service connection, which shall be the only potable water connection for the customer. Water service will be immediate and continuous as long the account remains current.
  - a. A water meter set fee, based on the size of the meter that has been chosen by the customer, shall be charged by the Town for tapping the water main and furnishing and installing a water meter. The fee is the same whether the property and the customer are located within or outside the town.
  - b. The Town will construct, extend and provide water service from the water main adjacent to the property requesting water service; shall set the water meter and check valve, and shall connect the water meter to the water service.
  - c. If the property is on the opposite side of the road from the water main, the applicant shall hire a licensed plumber or underground utilities contractor to tap the main and bore a water service line under the road. The plumber or contractor is responsible for applying for and receiving an approved permit from the Town, or in the case of crossing a Polk County or Florida State road or highway, a permit from the appropriate agency. Materials and methods employed shall be specified by the permitting agency.
  
2. **Water Application and Fees.**
  - a. The applicant must apply for water service from the town as a new applicant. They shall complete a Water Service application provided by the town, provide required documentation and pay to the Town Clerk's Office a deposit in the amount established by the Town Council as amended from time to time, which is currently \$200.00. An administrative fee of \$30 is also due at time of application.
  - b. As a part of the application, the applicant shall provide the Clerk with a picture ID; and documents' showing the applicant is authorized to reside or conduct business at the address shown on the application.
  - c. The town will have water turned on at said address within 24 hours of completed application being accepted by the Clerk's office. Applicants may pay an additional service fee to have service established sooner.
  - d. Water may be turned on for inspection purposes with an application and a \$60 fee. Service will remain on for 48 hours.

3. **Other Services Provided.** When you open a water utility account, you are also agreeing to be charged for other services provided by the Town. For residential properties located in the town limits the services and charges include: **Water and associated taxes, Garbage, Trash, and Stormwater.** For commercial customers charges include: **Water and associated taxes and Stormwater.** For accounts located outside the town limits charges include: **Water and associated taxes.**
  
4. **Rates.** Full details on water rates are contained in Ordinance 2014-07. Unless otherwise provided by annexation agreement, all water customers served outside the town limits and all non-residential water customers, whether inside or outside the town limits, shall pay a surcharge of an additional 25 percent of the rates, fees, and charges charged to consumers inside the boundaries. Water rates are set to increase every October per Ordinance 2014-07. Additional fees and charges for Water Service are attached as Exhibit A. Per Florida §166.231, the town is allowed to collect a 10% utility tax charge. Garbage, Trash, Stormwater fees are reviewed annual and set by the Council when adopting the annual budget in September.
  
5. **Payment for Services.** Water meters are read on the 20<sup>th</sup> of every month. Users are billed monthly on the last business day of each month. Payments are due on the 15<sup>th</sup> of every month.
  - a. Payments can be made in person at town hall by cash, check, money order or credit card (service fees apply). Payments can be dropped in the after-hours slot located on the front door to town hall. Credit card payments by phone can only be done on Fridays and the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month. A \$2 service charge is collected for all in person or over the phone credit card payments.
  - b. Service charges not paid on or before the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month will have a late charge added to the bill and said fee shall be payable by the next month on the 15<sup>th</sup>. If the 15<sup>th</sup> falls on a weekend or a holiday, the late charge will be applied to the unpaid bill on the working day following the due date.
  - c. Service Charges not paid by the 20<sup>th</sup> of the month and which are not set up on a payment plan may be subject to **water service** being discontinued and a \$30 disconnect fee applied to the account. Monthly water base fee and all other service charges will continue to be billed.
  - d. **Water service** that has been discontinued for non-payment of a monthly bill shall require the payment of any and all balances due before service will be resumed. A reconnection fee of \$30.00 will be charged on the next bill.
  - e. At any time that the User's Account is delinquent for more than sixty (60) days following the posting of a current invoice, the amount on deposit for the customer may be withdrawn from the deposit account and applied toward payment of the delinquent bill. In the case of an account that has become so delinquent that the original \$200 deposit has been depleted, the deposit to re-establish water service will be double the original deposit, which would currently be \$400.

- f. Upon receipt of payment of the full past due amount from the customer or a signed payment plan with specified fee paid, the Utilities Department shall have the water service restored to the customer within 24 hours.

6. **Insufficient Funds.** Should a payment made by check not be accepted by the bank, water service will be discontinued and all future payments must be paid by cash, money order, certified check or credit card. A \$30 administrative fee, a \$30 disconnect and a \$30 reconnection fee, plus all bank fees associated with such payments will be charged to the account holder.

7. **Destruction and Tampering.** By opening an account for services you agree to not to maliciously, willfully or negligently break, damage, destroy, uncover, deface or tamper with any structure, appurtenance or equipment which is a part of the water system of the town.

- a. If you or any person using your property willfully tampers with, damages, or illegally connects to, diverts or extends the system without first applying for and receiving service from the town, you are in violation of Sections 812.14(2)-(5), Florida Statutes and can be charged with a misdemeanor of the first degree, which is punishable by a fine of \$1,000.

- b. If a meter has been locked by staff because of a delinquent account or no application for service on file to the property and it is determined that the lock was removed without staff authorization, the meter will be removed, the account will be considered delinquent and all past balances must be paid to reestablish a new account and all fees must be paid to reinstall the meter.

8. **Putting Account on Vacation Mode/Transfer Account.** You may submit an Application to modify your account for any time you will be away from your residence for more than six months. This will take off the charges for garbage and trash. The bill will still show the Water Base Rate and Stormwater charges. If you relocate to another property which is served by the Town of Lake Hamilton, you must file an application to establish services at the new property. You do not need to pay another deposit but your account must be current in order to transfer.

9. **Reporting a Possible Leak/Dispute a High Bill.** If a water customer desires the town to check their meter for a leak or possible defective meter or service line, they should report it to the Town Clerk's office and a work order will be completed and given to the Water Department. The water customer should follow up with the Clerk's office to determine the outcome.

- a. The town is not responsible for service lines beyond the meter.

- b. If there is an issue with the meter and components, the town will repair the meter and components at no cost to the customer.

10. **Payment for Water Service in the Event of a Leak.** In the event an inordinate increase in water usage by any customer is discovered in the billing process, it is the duty of the customer to immediately determine if there is a leak within the building or buildings on his property or in the service line from the meter to the building(s). At the same time, the town will investigate the meter and town service lines to determine if a leak exists on the Town side of the water service to the property.
  - a. It shall further be the responsibility of a customer that discovers a leak to make immediate repairs and report their completion to the Town. The customer shall provide the Town with a copy of the invoices related to the repairs. A town employee shall not be used to repair such leaks. It is suggested that the customer take pictures before and after repair to document properly. The Town will send a Town employee to confirm the repairs.
  - b. If a leak results in more than one month of inordinately high water usage before it is repaired, the town may provide the customer financial relief per Ordinance 2018-04.
  - c. This relief shall only be available to a property address once per year.
  
11. **Closing an Account.** The Town must receive a signed application to Modify an Account. When the application is received a final meter reading will take place and the applicant's deposit will be used to pay the final bill and any delinquent charges. If the deposit is not sufficient to pay the outstanding balance an invoice will be mailed to the applicant and payment must be received within 15 days of date the invoice was mailed.

Water Connection and Meter Fees for Residents and Business

Service Charge Description	Amount
New Account Admin Charge (to open an account)	\$30
Closing Account Admin Charge added to the account prior to return of Deposit	\$30
New Account Deposit – required to open a new account	\$200
Non-Sufficient Fund Fee	\$30
Delinquent Account increased deposit	\$400
Restoration of service to existing account 24hr response time	\$30
Turn-off to existing meter not for closing account	\$30
Same day reconnection service in addition to reconnection fee during normal posted utility billing hours	\$30
Same day reconnection service in addition to reconnection fee after normal posted utility billing hours	\$60
Late Fee is 10% of unpaid water use balance assessed after the 15 <sup>th</sup> COB	10%
Water audit and/or disputed meter reading if results of audit determine meter is working accurately. This Fee is Waived if Meter is not Registering within AWWA Standards	\$60
New meter and connection set fee ¾" (new meters installed 4 business days minimum after application is submitted).	\$200 labor + cost of parts
New meter and connection set fee 1" (new meters installed 4 business days minimum after application is submitted). Maximum Residential size.	\$200 labor + cost of parts
New meter and connection set fee 2" (new meters installed 4 business days minimum after application is submitted).	\$300 labor + cost of parts
New Meter and connection above 2" will need to be included in building permit and approved by the town. The installation and cost will be the responsibility of the account holder and must be done by a licensed professional.	
Relocate existing meter.	Set fee minus cost of meter
Construction Meter – Admin new account and closing fee (\$60) + Set up and take down fee (\$60) + monthly service fee for duration of the project + equipment deposit (\$1500.00) + Water Deposit (\$200) + Water Usage	
Penalty for Meter Tampering/Theft of Service 1 <sup>st</sup> infraction	Statutory
Damage to meter Box	Labor and replacement cost
Damage to meter	
Damage to any appurtenances to the water system	
Penalty for Meter Tampering/Theft of Service 1 <sup>st</sup> infraction	Statutory
Penalty for Meter Tampering/Theft of Service 2 <sup>nd</sup> infraction	Statutory
Penalty for Meter Tampering/Theft of Service 3 <sup>rd</sup> infraction	Statutory
Penalty for Obscured Meter	Statutory
Penalty for Cross Connection	Statutory
Penalty for Connection to Other Systems	Statutory