

# City of East Tawakoni Water/Sewer Policy & Procedure Manual

## Application for Service

Anyone may apply for water service to a property provided they are the owner or an occupant of the property with a lease agreement in his/her name to be served. Upon request for service, the utility will require a "Service Agreement" to be completed. Applicants for service may apply by contacting the water clerk either by phone at (903)447-2444 or in person at City Hall. You may download the application online at [www.cityofeasttawakoni.com](http://www.cityofeasttawakoni.com), fill out and return it to City Hall, by mail or fax at (903)447-5080. In order for the application to be completed, the applicant must provide, in addition to the above; a state Driver's License, state Identification Card or photo Identification, deed to house/property or lease agreement. Your process fee and deposit in cash, check or money order. Provided there are no problems with meters or lines, service can usually be activated on the same day provided the application is turned in and processed by 3:00PM. Residences or properties that require a new water or sewer tap may take up to 14 days to install.

January 2018

## Refusal of Service

The City of East Tawakoni water system can decline to serve an applicant until the applicant has complied with the regulations of the city and the state agencies regulation water utilities. In the event an applicant is refused services, the city water system will inform the applicant in writing the basis of the refusal.

January 2018

## Service Agreement/Policy

All terms and conditions of the Service Agreement/Policy must be read and brought into compliance within 30 days of connection or service could be disconnected until the terms are met.

January 2018

## Fees

The City of East Tawakoni has discretion to establish or adjust utility fees at any time. All new billing account applications shall pay a nonrefundable process fee of \$25.00 that will be collected when the application is made for utility service.

January 2018

## Billing

Each account will be billed on a monthly basis according to the appropriate rate schedule on the first day of each month.

January 2018

## Billing Information

The following information will be included on the billing form:

- The actual or estimated meter readings at the beginning and end of the billing period
- The date of the meter reading

- The total balance with due date
- The balance owed including penalty if not paid by the due date

Customers are responsible for their account balance and should be aware of their billing schedule.

January 2018

### **Bill Payment Terms**

Bills will be due and payable on the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month and will be considered past due on the 16<sup>th</sup> of each month. A late charge of \$20.00 will be assessed on all past due accounts and have until the 25<sup>th</sup> of each month by 8:00 AM to pay or all utility services will be terminated on that day. Bills shall be paid direct payment at City Hall by cash, check or money order. Office will not accept any currency in change greater than \$10.00 Coinage Act of 1965 Section 31 U.S.C. 5103, entitled "Legal Tender," which states: "United States coins and currency are legal tender for all debts, public charges, taxes, and dues." This statute means that all United States money is valid and legal offer of payment for debts when tendered to a creditor. There is, however, no Federal statute mandating that a private business, person or an organization must accept currency or coins as payment for goods or services. Private businesses are free to develop their own policies on whether or not to accept cash. Paid by mail with check or money order or paid by ACH (automatic Clearing House) through a bank or credit union. If payment

is sent by mail or electronic check, the bill is considered paid on the day it is received.

Credit/Debit cards are accepted online only at [www.cityofeasttawakoni.com](http://www.cityofeasttawakoni.com)

Failure to receive a bill, late notice in the mail or a disconnect notice hung on the account holder's address shall not entitle the customer relief from payment or penalties for late payment. Night drop box is available for after hours and weekend payments.

January 2018

### **Reconnect and Lock Fees**

Disconnect of water service requires a \$50.00 reconnection fee. The water meter and meter box is the property of the City of East Tawakoni and it is a violation of the City of East Tawakoni's Service Agreement as well as city ordinances to open or tamper with the meter in anyway. Once reconnection fee is paid City of East Tawakoni water department will turn service back on. If the City of East Tawakoni's lock is cut from the meter there is an additional charge of \$25.00. Tampering with the City of East Tawakoni meter and or meter box will result in legal matters with the Police Department.

January 2018

### **Deposits**

Residential: All owned properties require a deposit of \$100.00 for each unit covered by the account. All leased properties require a deposit of \$200.00 for each unit covered by the account.

Non-residential: All commercial properties require a deposit of \$350.00 for each unit covered by the account.

A deposit is intended to guarantee payment of bills for service. It may be required from either an existing account holder or new customers. A person other than the customer may pay the deposit. At the City's discretion if multiple disconnections occur for

nonpayment the city may increase the amount of a deposit for an owner or renter. Payment of deposits can be made in office by cash, check or money order.

January 2018

### **Deposit Refunds**

Any deposit collected by the utility will be refunded to the customer when the account has been closed by the account holder, or disconnected for nonpayment and at zero usage of water. Deposits are refunded to the primary account holder at the end of every month and are mailed to the forwarding address provided by account holder come the first of that following month.

January 2018

### **Transferring Accounts and Deposits**

Any account holder can add a customer to their account but will remain the primary account holder. Any person wishing to turn over their account into someone else's name will have to close their account and have a new customer deposit and account set up. However, the primary account holder can relinquish their account as well as their deposit to someone else. This must be asked in writing and given to city hall. Each property has its own deposit with the water department and deposits will not be transferred to another property. Deposits are only finalized and refunded when accounts are closed.

January 2018

### **Deceased Account Holders**

To close an account whose holder is deceased the water department must be provided a copy of the death certificate and the person providing this information must be listed on the death certificate under a surviving name and/or have power of attorney. If a relative wishes to take over an account that's deceased and change the name to theirs but is not stated in the person who is deceased legal will, may be able to do so if any surviving relatives provide in writing their agreement to do so.

January 2018

### **Old Unpaid Bills**

Unless the property has been purchased by a new owner, services will be denied if an outstanding balance is owed by the property owner. All outstanding balances accrued by a property owner must be paid in full before service can be restored to the property under any account holder's name along with deposit and process fee. Payment agreements can be discussed with the Mayor of East Tawakoni.

January 2018

### **Returned Checks and ACH Rejects**

A service charge of \$35.00 shall be assessed to any customer whose check is returned or unpaid by ACH return. And customer will be notified and given 10 days from the date notified to pay balance before disconnect of service. If the account was in delinquent status at the time of receiving the payment, and the ACH or check was to avoid disruption of service, upon receiving the item back from the bank, the city will discontinue service without further notice. If the returned check/ACH is not paid in the

allotted time given the information will be sent directly to the City of East Tawakoni Police Department for prosecution. **\*\*revised**

**Please Note:** Your account will be discontinued if payment is not made by the cutoff date or a non-sufficient funds check is not paid within 10 days of letter sent to customer. If your service has been disconnected for non-payment or a non-sufficient check, you will be required to pay a reconnection fee of \$50.00

January 2018

### **Unoccupied Properties/Minimum Charges**

Any property where a meter is installed will be billed monthly. Accounts using no water (zero usage) will be billed at the minimum rate.

January 2018

### **Meter Readings**

Readings start 7 business days before the last day of the month. Customers are required to keep meters accessible and cleaned for our meter readers. Lawn must be taken care of for meter readers to be able to get to meter. Any animals must be contained and or put up for the meter readers to be able to read. Failure to comply with these conditions may result in disconnection of service.

January 2018

### **Animals**

If a City of East Tawakoni utility employee is injured by an animal of the owner or occupant of the property while accessing the meter, lines or any other property of the City of East Tawakoni, the owner or occupant may be held liable for all expenses related to the injury. If an account holder has an animal that may cause injury to a city employee it is their responsibility to contact the City Hall to inform of current contact information so arrangements can be made to access the property safely.

January 2018

### **\*\*Revised - Returned Checks and ACH Rejects**

It is up to the clerk's discretion to allow or discontinue accepting checks or ACH drafts that have been returned from a financial institution.

May 2018

### **Easements**

Where recorded public utility easements on the service applicant's property do not exist or public road right-of-way easements are not available to access the property of a service applicant, the retail public utility may require the service applicant or land owner to grant a permanent recorded public utility easement dedicated to the retail public utility which will provide a reasonable right of access and use to allow the retail public utility to construct, install, maintain, inspect and test water and/or sewer facilities necessary to serve that applicant. As a condition of service to a new subdivision, retail public utilities may require developers to provide permanent recorded public utility easements to and throughout the subdivision sufficient to construct, install, maintain, inspect and test water and/or sewer facilities necessary to serve the subdivision's anticipated service demands upon full occupancy.

August 2018

### **Customer Water Shut off Valve**

The customer shall install a shut *off* valve between the meter and their Business/Home. This does not include the city's meter shut *off* valve. The water meter and meter box is the property of the City of East Tawakoni it is a violation of the Service Agreement, City Ordinances and this Policy to open or tamper with the meter in anyway. All customers should have their own water shut *off* valve and should not enter the city's meter at anytime.

January 2019

### **Tampering**

It shall be unlawful for any person, other than a duly authorized employee of the city, to tamper with any meter/meter box; or to in any manner injure any meter/meter box; or to manipulate or attempt to manipulate any meter/meter box in any manner. The customer is responsible to ensure that the meter lid and meter box remains in place over the meter to protect the meter. If the meter box is damaged, it will be replaced at the customer's expense. If a water meter is damaged due to negligence or tampering; the meter will be replaced at the customer's expense.

February 2019

### **Separate Meter for each Residence or Building**

Each meter installed at any premises shall constitute a separate service and all deposits, installation fees, service charges, billing rates, and penalties shall apply. Separate meter for each residence or building in new service. For any service hereafter installed, each individual residence, dwelling or building making connection with the city water system shall have a separate meter, and no new connection shall be made by the city unless such individual residence or building is separately metered. However, in lieu of separate meters as required in subsection (a) of this section, an apartment building, recreational vehicle (RV) park, office building, or shopping center may be permitted to receive water through one meter if approved by the city council. In existing cases where more than one residence, dwelling, or building is served by a single meter, the entire amount of water consumed and registered through such meter shall be billed to the person, firm, or corporation owning or managing such building or apartment and shall include an additional minimum fee for each residence, dwelling, or unit in the apartment building, office building, or shopping center.

February 2019

### **Utility Easements**

City Utility line locates shall be provided as needed by the City utility company. City Utility easements are located and there shall be at least ten (10) feet in width (normally five (5) feet on each side) of the water and / or sewer mains. Easement shall remain accessible to the City utility company. The City utility exercising its access rights to the easement does not have to repair or replace anything they damage or remove from the easement area. If a structure is built on an easement and the easement needs to be accessed, the structure could be removed and /or damaged with no obligation to repair or replace the structure.

August 2022

### **Sanitation Services**

The city has a contract with the current sanitation services that are on file with the city secretary. All trash pickup is mandatory and will be billed monthly along with the water and/or sewer utilities. All garbage must be in bags and highly recommend placing them in cans, they will not pick up bags which are ripped open. No more than 5 bags and less than 30 pounds per bag, this includes house hold trash only. All dumpsters and roll offs are mandatory to be arranged with the current sanitation services.

July 2023