

## UTILITY DISCONNECT POLICY

The following disconnect policy has been considered and approved on March 12, 2013 by the City Counsel in a meeting duly called and posted:

### Utility billing:

1. All utility meters (electric and water) are normally read during a week beginning on the 16<sup>th</sup> of each month.
2. A preliminary billing calculation is prepared after all meters are read and is reviewed by the Utility Billing/Collection Supervisor for potential billing errors.
3. Potential billing errors are investigated/re-read to determine if actual errors exist. Actual errors are corrected prior to the final billing calculation.
4. A final billing calculation and utility billing statements are prepared and mailed on the last business day of the month (excluding weekends and official City Holidays).

### Utility Collections:

1. Due Dates – all due dates noted are for that date or the next business day if it falls on a weekend or official City Holiday.
2. Amounts reflected on the monthly billing statements are due and payable upon receipt regardless of proper delivery by the postal service.
3. A discount of 2% of the electricity billing is available if payment is received in the City Hall by the 10<sup>th</sup> of each month.
4. The City provides a drop box in the alley behind City Hall as a convenience to customers for payment of utility bills. Drop box payments are collected by the City staff at 8 a.m. each business day and any payment collected in the box at that time will be processed as of the preceding day, excluding any payments being made for an active arrangement which must be received in the Utility offices and posted by 5:00 p.m. on the arrangement date.

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5. No discount is available for payments processed after the 10<sup>th</sup> of each month and all utility bills are payable in full by the 16<sup>th</sup> of each month to avoid penalties.
6. A penalty of 5% of the total utility bill is assessed after the 16<sup>th</sup> of each month.

Arrangements:

1. Arrangements are a verbal contract between the utility customer and the City to provide the utility customer additional time to fully pay for the current month's billing statement and penalties assessed.
2. Arrangements are documented on the customer's account at time of request by the account holder. Requests are required to be made in person or called in over the phone pending verification of the account holder.
3. Full payment of the current utility billing under arrangement must be made no later than the last business day of the month.
4. Any payment under arrangement made after the arrangement date is considered a delinquent arrangement payment and will be placed on a failed arrangement cut off.
5. Utility customers will be allowed unlimited arrangements during the calendar year as long as the arrangement payments are made under the arrangement terms.
6. Once an arrangement has been deemed "failed" or delinquent the customer will be denied an arrangement for the following month, but may receive arrangements after that time as long as the arrangement payments are made under the arrangement terms.
7. If an arrangement date has been set after the 16<sup>th</sup> all late penalties will apply being that full payment will not have been received before the posted due date.
8. No more than two (2) delinquent arrangement payments are allowed within a calendar year for future arrangements to be accepted.

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9. Utility customers under a current arrangement will be excluded from the monthly cut-off list.
10. Once an arrangement date has been set it may not be moved. However, if there are extenuating circumstances the current arrangement would need to be “failed” before creating an additional arrangement for no later than the last business day of the current month. Such an adjustment will be approved at the discretion of the Utilities Supervisor.
11. Arrangements are not permitted to be made into the following month unless approved by the Utilities Supervisor. If an arrangement has been approved into the following month the entire balance at that arrangement date will need to be paid in full.

Disconnects:

1. The cut-off day is any day after the 16<sup>th</sup> of the month and is clearly referenced on the monthly utility bill.
2. All customer accounts not paid in full by the cut-off day is considered delinquent unless a current arrangement has been made. These accounts will be placed on a cut-off list prepared by the utility billing department.
3. Once the cut-off list is completed it is delivered to utility staff in the field for disconnection of services. Customer accounts on this list are deemed cut-off regardless of actual disconnection and a reconnection fee of \$20.00 is assessed.
4. Customers must remit full payment of the account, including the \$20.00 disconnect penalty, in order to be removed from the cut-off list (if actual disconnection has not yet taken place) or to have service be reinstated.
5. Utility customers of the City of Luling whose accounts do not have an active deposit and have been disconnected for non-payment shall be required to pay all amounts due to the City for utility services and to submit a new deposit before service will be reinstated

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Reconnection after normal business hours:

1. The Utility Department will provide the Dispatch Office with a list of all disconnected customers as of 5 p.m. On cut-off day.
2. Customers requesting reconnection after 5 p.m. on weekdays or anytime on weekends or official City holidays must coordinate this activity through police dispatch.
3. The Utility customer must submit full payment of the utility balance in addition to a \$100.00 after hours connection charge in the form of a money order (cash payments will not be accepted) payable to the City Of Luling Utility Department to the dispatch office prior to the reconnection work order.

Contracts for non-payment:

1. Contracts for payment are written agreements between the utility customer and the City of Luling to allow the customer up to 18 months to pay for services under unusual circumstances.
2. Approval or denial of proposed contracts will be based on the account holder's credit history. The City reserves the right to deny any contract agreement proposed.

Public Assistance:

1. There exist certain programs or organizations that provide public assistance for utility bills. It is up to the utility customer to establish this assistance.
2. If said assistance is obtained, direct payment or a confirmation must be faxed to the utility billing and collection office by the program or organization providing support.
3. Certain programs or organizations may require a copy of the utility customer's 12 month's billing history in order to establish assistance. The utility department can have this printed at a flat rate of \$2.50 if requested by the account holder

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4. Any balance on the customer's account remaining after the assistance payment has been applied must be paid in full by the cut-off date to avoid being placed on the cut-off list.

Tampering:

1. As per ordinance no. 2011-0-02 passed, approved, and adopted by City Counsel of the City of Luling, TX on February 10<sup>th</sup>, 2011 "tampering with a water and/or electric meter is defined as the unauthorized act of altering or adjusting the reading on a water and/or electric meter, turning a water and/or electric meter on after it has been turned off by an authorized city representative, piping to the water and/or jumpers to the electric meter or to allow water and/or electric service after water and/or electric meter has been removed by an authorized person, or any other act to provide for or allow water and/or electric service when such services have been otherwise discontinued."
2. Tampering with a water or electric meter will result in the meter being locked or removed from that location, a \$200.00 tampering fee, and a \$25.00 reinstallation fee that will need to be paid in full to the City of Luling along with the current balance on that account in order to restore utility services. Criminal charges may also be filed for the illegal tampering of a water and/or electric meter.

Refusal of services:

1. The City of Luling reserves the right to refuse utility services based on the following: residence or location does not comply with municipal regulations according to our Code Enforcement Office, if the applicant is known to be indebted to the city in the past due to any unsettled accounts, for refusal to submit a deposit, insufficient identification, inability to provide proof of ownership or permission to be at requested location, or any additional reason deemed by the Utilities Supervisor.