

GENERAL UTILITY AND BILLING POLICIES

GENERAL

Cashmere provides three utility services - water, wastewater and sanitation. Water meters are read the last three working days of the month and statements are mailed within the first week of the succeeding month.

CONFLICT

In case of conflict between the provisions of any ordinance, rate schedule or special contract and these service regulations, the provisions of the ordinance, rate schedule or special contract shall apply.

APPLICATION AND CONTRACT FOR SERVICE (CMC 13.01.070)

Application for utility service may be made by visiting City Hall. City Hall staff will assist you in filling out a short application and collect an account service charge.

OWNER OF RENTAL PROPERTIES RESPONSIBILITIES

The owner of all property, including rental property, is ultimately responsible for payment of any utility service provided to the property. The owner of rental property may sign an agreement authorizing the renter to contract for utility services for single family residences. The agreement does not, however, absolve the landowner of responsibility for unpaid utility bills after a tenant has moved out. As a courtesy, the City provides notification of tenant delinquency to the property owner.

When service is put back into the landowner's name between renters, the landowner shall pay a prorated share of the minimum billing for that month, plus any usage over the prorated minimum gallons.

All utility charges for multi-family dwellings shall be billed to the property owner, not the tenant. Utility billings for single-family dwellings shall be billed to only one person, whether the owner or tenant. Duplexes with only one water meter shall be considered multi-family dwellings for the purposes of this section. (CMC 13.01.260)

METER READING, BILLING, AND ADJUSTMENTS

Meters are read within the last three working days of the month and statements are mailed within the first week of the succeeding month. The reading and billing dates may vary as much as five (5) days because of holidays, Saturdays and Sundays.

Access to meters shall be kept clear of permanent obstructions such as dirt, debris, landscaping, rock, etc. The City may remove such obstructions at the property owner's expense.

In cases where two or more customers receive service during a calendar month, the City Clerk-Treasurer shall prorate the charges per day. In no case will more than one minimum charge per utility service be charged during one month.

Bills will be mailed to the billing address furnished by the customer, and failure to receive a bill will not release the customer from obligation of payment when due.

PAYMENT OF UTILITY BILLS (CMC 13.01.120)

All charges are due by the 17th of the month in which the bills are issued and become delinquent the following business day at which time a penalty will be assessed and delinquency notice issued. If the 17th of the month falls on a non-business day, the bill is due the next business day following the 17th and becomes delinquent the following day.

- See “Disconnection of Service for Non-Payment”.

UTILITY EQUAL PAYMENT PLAN

During the month of May utilities may be set up on an equal payment plan by filling out an application at City Hall. The equal payments will be calculated by dividing the previous twelve months utility bills for the residence by eleven. Equal payments are due as detailed above under Payment of Utility Bills.

May of each year will be an adjustment month. Any overpayment will be applied to the bill for the next year, any underpayment will be due on the regular May due date. Equal payments for the next year will be adjusted either up or down to reflect the average for the previous year.

If at any time, the account becomes more than 30 days past due, the full amount owing becomes due and payable, and the equal payment agreement shall terminate.

AUTOMATIC PAYMENT PLAN (RCW 80.28.010)

The City has the capability to automatically debit your utility payment directly from your checking or savings account. Enrollment forms are available at City Hall. After enrollment in the plan you will continue to receive your monthly bill as usual. On the 17th of each month, (or the next working day if the 17th falls on a weekend or holiday) the amount of your bill will be automatically debited from your account and paid to the City.

If sufficient funds are not available in the account at the time the payment is due, the payment will be considered delinquent, a late payment penalty will be added, and the return will be treated as an NSF check. See the returned check policy in this section. If an automatic payment NSF is received two times during a twelve-month period, the customer will be withdrawn from the Automatic Payment Plan.

DELINQUENCY NOTICE (CMC 13.01.120)

If a bill is not paid by 5:00 p.m. on the due date, there will be a delinquency notice prepared, which will be sent by mail to the customer, for the amount past due plus an administration fee. If the customer is a renter, a notice will also be mailed to the property owner.

DISCONNECTION OF SERVICE FOR NON-PAYMENT (CMC 13.01.120)

When utility payment has not been received by 5:00 p.m. on the last working day of the month, City personnel will place a door hanger on the premises the morning of the next working day stating the following:

Non-payment Notification Fee

- A non-payment notification fee has been added to the account, and
- If payment in full is not received in City Hall office by 10:00 a.m. the following morning the service will be disconnected and an additional reconnection fee will be added.
- Drop box may be used *in this instance only* to avoid disconnection.

The non-payment notification fee is due and payable after 5:00 p.m. on the last working day of the month regardless of receipt of notification.

If payment has not been received by 10:00 a.m. the following morning City personnel will disconnect utility service and leave a door hanger with the following information:

Disconnection Notice Doorhanger

- Amount due including an additional reconnection fee.
- If reconnection is to be performed after 3:00 p.m. an after-hours reconnection fee will be charged.

The reconnection fee is payable after 10:00 a.m. regardless of whether or not disconnection has been performed.

RETURNED CHECKS

There will be a returned check fee for all checks returned to the City for non-sufficient funds or account closed. The customer will be notified by telephone or mail of receipt of a returned check, at which time the customer must make arrangements with the City Clerk-Treasurer to pay the amount of the check plus the returned check fee in cash. Failure to make satisfactory arrangements for payment of the returned check will result in disconnection of the service for which the check was originally written.

The City shall require cash payment of utility or other billings after receipt by the City of three returned checks in a 24-month period.

CUSTOMER RIGHTS

The City shall enclose with each delinquency notice, details of the City's credit and disconnection policies and the customer's rights including:

Informal Conference: The customer's right to an informal conference to discuss a disputed bill or inability to pay their bill. The customer may appear in person at City Hall, or may confer by telephone at (509) 782-3513 during normal business hours (9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday).

The customer may be represented by counsel of his/her own choosing. The customer shall be entitled to present his/her position to the Clerk-Treasurer. The City shall advise the customer of the reasons for the City's determination.

Disputed Bills: A customer who disputes the amount of his/her bill, shall have the right to an informal conference with the City Clerk-Treasurer prior to the date shown on the

disconnection notice. The Clerk-Treasurer shall review the amount of the disputed bill and may adjust it if it is found to be in error.

Appeal: If the customer is not satisfied with the determination of the Clerk-Treasurer concerning his/her request for adjustment of a disputed bill, the customer shall have the right of appeal to the Cashmere City Council. The customer shall give notice to the City Clerk-Treasurer of his or her request for appeal. The Clerk-Treasurer shall place the appeal on the earliest possible council meeting agenda. The customer may appear in person before the Council or appeal in writing to the City Council.

Specific Rights: The customer has the right to inspect City records regarding customer's account during regular City business hours; to present independent evidence to the Clerk-Treasurer; and to be represented by an attorney, or other agent.

APPEALS OF HIGH USAGE WATER BILLS DUE TO LEAKS

When abnormally high usage is determined by the City Water Department to be due to a leak, a significantly high billing may be appealed to the City Clerk-Treasurer provided the leak was not caused by the intentional act of the utility customer or his agents or employees.

Significantly high means the water portion of the utility billing is over \$100 more than the ordinary billing for that month according to the billing history for the account. The Clerk-Treasurer or designee may agree to limit the affected billing to not more than the historical billing for the month in question plus ten percent of the total actual metered water billing amount. Such appeals may only be made for the first month's billing that is significantly high as a result of the leak.

If billing relief is granted, the customer shall be responsible for documentation to the city, in the form of a receipt or City inspection, that the leak has been repaired within 30 days of the first significantly high billing resulting from the leak. Failure to repair the leak and provide the required documentation within 30 days will result in the entire bill, plus all applicable penalties, becoming due and payable to the City.

DEFERRED PAYMENT PROGRAM

A customer who is unable to pay the full amount of his or her bill due to financial difficulties shall have the right to request payment deferment for a specified amount of time.

The customer shall complete a "Deferred Payment Application" form. Deferred payments may be requested only once per quarter. Deferred payments must be approved by the Clerk-Treasurer. Permission to defer payment must be received from the property owner before a deferred payment agreement will be entered into by the City.

The Clerk-Treasurer shall make every effort to arrange a reasonable and feasible payment program for a customer with financial difficulties making it impossible to pay the full amount of the bill.

CONNECTION AND DISCONNECTION OF SERVICE

The disconnection of service for any cause shall not release the customer from the obligation to pay for services received or amounts specified in the City's service regulations or any written contract with the customer. The City shall not be liable for injury, loss or damage resulting from disconnection.

CHANGE OF OCCUPANCY

When a change of occupancy or of legal responsibility takes place on any premises being served by the City, notice of such change shall be given at the City Hall within a reasonable time prior to such change. The outgoing customer may be held responsible for all service supplied until such notice has been received by the City.

SERVICE CHARGES (CMC 13.01.070 C)

Account Service Charge: An account service charge is to be collected when processing each service application, for each new account.

After Hours Connection/Callout Charge

Public works department hours are 7:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. There will be an additional charge, which shall include the account service charge, for connection of service or other calls that require public works personnel attention after 3:00 p.m.

Reconnection Charge

Whenever service has been disconnected for non-compliance with the City's service regulations, for non-payment or for fraudulent use, the service will not be restored until the situation requiring such action has been corrected to the satisfaction of the City. The customer shall be advised that there will be a reconnection charge for service reconnected before 3:00 p.m., and an additional charge for holiday or after-hours reconnection.

TRANSFER OF PREVIOUSLY UNPAID ACCOUNTS

The City may transfer to an existing or new service account any unpaid charges for service previously furnished to the same customer at any location in the City's service area. The City may permit arrangements for payment of such transferred balance under the guidelines and procedures of the Section entitled "Deferred Payment Program". The City may apply any payment received from the customer toward the customer's transferred balance.

RATE DISCOUNT FOR LOW-INCOME SENIORS AND DISABLED (CMC 13.20)

A rate discount is available to qualifying low-income seniors 62 years and older and low income disabled authorized in State of Washington RCW 74.38.070. The rate discount will not exceed the amount of the monthly bill and will be applied to one account only. To qualify for the discount applicants must provide satisfactory proof of the following:

Low Income Seniors

1. Total household income of less than 40% of the state median income for the size of the family. RCW 74.38.020 (6).
2. Ownership or occupancy of property being served utilities within the City's service area.

3. Utility service must be contracted by a person qualifying for the discount.

Low Income Disabled

1. Physical disability prior to application as defined in State of Washington R.C.W. 46.16.381 (1) (a) through (g) qualifying for special parking privileges or a blind person as defined in R.C.W. 74.18.020(4).
2. Household income less than 40% of the state median income for the size of the family. RCW 74.38.020 (6).
3. Ownership or occupancy of property being served utilities within the City's service area.
4. Utility service must be contracted by the disabled person requesting the discount.

FROZEN PIPES (CMC 13.10.050)

Each winter season, the City will install meter frost protection material in each customer meter box.

If pipes freeze between the meter box and water main, the City will thaw the frozen pipe, at its expense, one time only. Tenants will be informed to leave water running to avoid freezing again.

If a pipe freezes between the meter box and the home, business, industry, or other point of use, the customer shall thaw the pipe at his/her expense. The City will not thaw interior piping because of the risk of fire. If the customer elects to thaw his/her piping, he/she shall inform the City Water Department and Chelan County P.U.D. so that measures can be taken to prevent fire.

FIRE HYDRANTS

Obstruction Prohibited (CMC 13.10.220)

It is unlawful for any person to obstruct or hinder the access to any fire hydrant.

Unauthorized Use Prohibited (CMC 13.10.230)

It is unlawful for all unauthorized persons to open any fire hydrant or attempt to draw water therefrom or willfully or carelessly injure the same.

MANUFACTURED HOME PARKS

Pursuant to Washington State Law and the City of Cashmere Comprehensive Land Use Plan, manufactured homes shall be designated as single family dwellings. Each manufactured home shall be charged the single family rate for water and wastewater.

Vacant Spaces

Credit shall be given for vacant spaces upon presentation of the required documentation. Charges will be prorated per half month. If a space becomes vacant on or before the 15th of the month, half the normal wastewater rate will be charged for that space; if the space becomes vacant after the 15th of the month no credit will be given for that month. There will be no reduction in rate if a home is removed and replaced in the same month. Rate reductions shall begin the month the space becomes vacant or upon notification, whichever is later. An account service charge shall be paid each time a change is requested.

A penalty of double the wastewater bill for that space times the number of months not billed shall be charged when a home is replaced and the City is not notified within the required time limit.

Required Documentation

1. Rate Reduction
 - Proof of vacant space in the form of a photograph or other acceptable evidence of vacancy, and
 - Affidavit signed by the park owner.
2. Replacement of home
 - Notification within 10 working days of re-occupation
 - Copy of building permit or other City-approved verification of date of placement

MISCELLANEOUS BILLS

The City bills for services, materials and labor that cannot be added to a utility bill. Miscellaneous bills under \$500.00 are due and payable when issued. For miscellaneous bills over \$500.00, monthly payments may be arranged by signing a time payment agreement. A finance charge, compounded monthly, will be charged on balances of \$50.00 or more.

Late Payments

Payments are due and payable on the last working day of the month in which the statement is issued. Bills not paid by 5:00 p.m. on the date due are subject to a late payment penalty.

Payment default

Payments over 30 days past due will be considered in default. In the case of water/wastewater service repairs, failure to pay an invoice in a timely manner or neglecting monthly payments will result in disconnection of the service for which the invoice was presented, and/or a utility lien on the property. Cemetery plots may be repossessed upon default of payments, and payments received prior to default shall be retained by the City as liquidated damages. All other bills may be turned over to a collection agency upon default.

DEVELOPMENT FEE POLICIES

General Information on Fees

- A. Payment of the base fee for development applications is required at the time of application submission. Payment of base fees for annexations, vacations, and other related activities, which do not require submittal of permit applications, are due prior to commencement of any staff work on the activity. Typically, this would be following submission of an initial letter of interest and/or petition. Payment of all fees will be required regardless of approval/non-approval of the activity.
 - i. Hourly fees are in addition to the underlying permit/action flat fees.

- ii. Hourly fees are typically billed on a monthly basis.
 - iii. Any billing more than 30 days overdue shall result in progress on the application ceasing and/or withholding of final approval/permit issuance.
- B. The City may contract work to consulting agencies and firms at its discretion for any type of permit activity.
 - i. The applicant shall be responsible for all consultant costs, any related staff time, and a ten percent (10%) fee for other City expenses involved in working with the consultant and the applicant. Examples of consultant costs: attorney fees, engineers, geotechnical specialists, etc.
- C. Applications that require both City and County approval are still subject to the City's fees.
- D. All project types may not be listed in the Rate Booklet. If they are not, fees will be applied as determined by the City.
- E. The direct cost of the Hearing Examiner's work on a case shall be billed to and paid by the applicant. This shall be in addition to any other fees
- F. Hearing Examiner and related legal, specialized study and staff services (for proceedings and appeals not covered in the City of Cashmere *Rates and Fees* resolution, as amended):
 - i. The appellant, applicant, and/or involved party shall reimburse the City for all costs billed to the City by the Hearing Examiner, staff time, consultant time and if utilized, for City legal counsel and/or specialized study services reasonably required by the appeal.

SOLID WASTE DISPOSAL

CONTAINERS-REQUIREMENTS-PLACEMENT

- A. Each unit of living quarters shall have a separate can, including manufactured housing located in a manufactured home park.
 - 1. Each multi-family structure shall be provided at least an equivalent of one thirty-five (35) gallon automated cart or container per dwelling unit per week. (Example: A four-unit apartment building would be provided an equivalent of four thirty-five gallon cans, minimum.)
 - 2. Each commercial business shall be served by an equivalent of at least 1 35-gallon container.
 - i. Multiple-tenant buildings shall be billed to the property owner.
 - ii. Multiple businesses operated by one person or organization and on one or adjoining lots shall be considered one service.
 - iii. Each separate building containing multiple businesses each having it's own water meter shall be billed by meter.
 - iv. Each business with multiple locations shall be served by location.
- B. Collection will be declined for overfilled or improperly placed containers. Reasons include, but are not limited to:
 - 1. Improper placement

2. Blocked or restricted access
3. Locked dumpsters
4. Overfilled or overweight containers

Weekly Collection

A. Weekly collection service is mandatory for all occupied premises or any other premises generating solid waste. Unless otherwise defined, for purposes of this section, "occupied" means either:

1. Water or other utility service is currently supplied to the premises; or
2. There are other signs of physical occupancy or human habitation.

B. Monthly rates are based on once per week pickup, regardless of the presence or absence of a container to empty.

C. The City may require collection more frequently than on a weekly basis, considering the public health and safety, where necessary.

Vacation/Vacancy Shut-off

A. Minimum vacation shut-off is one calendar month.

B. Charges for service will not be prorated for vacancies less than one calendar month except when all utility services are permanently discontinued for a customer.

C. Notice is required at least 24 hours in advance of the beginning of the month in which suspension of service for vacations is requested.

Changes in service

Changes in service shall normally take effect the beginning of the next calendar month. When a change in service, either frequency or size up or down, takes effect during a calendar month, the customer will be charged the higher rate for the entire month.

Collection Schedule-Days of service-Holidays

A. Collection service is provided Monday through Friday except on holidays. It is essential for operations that customers have carts ready, easily accessible and available for collection at the designated location prior to the beginning of the collection day, which is 7:00 a.m. in residential areas, 6:00 a.m. for commercial.

1. "Available for collection" includes:

- i. Snow removal
- ii. Clearing the area of vehicles or other blockages
- iii. Proper placement for pickup by the automated truck
 - a. Cart turned the correct direction with the opening facing the street
 - b. Cart placed with the proper distance and clearance

B. The City observes the following holidays:

1. New Year's Day
2. Martin Luther King Day
3. President's Day
4. Memorial Day
5. Independence Day
6. Labor Day

7. Veteran's Day
8. Thanksgiving Day
9. Friday after Thanksgiving
10. Christmas Day

C. The day of collection will normally be the day following the holiday for those customers whose collection day falls on a holiday. (Exception: When the City is closed for two consecutive weekdays, collections for the first day will be the day before and for the second day will be the next working day after the holiday.)