

# CITY OF PALACIOS

## CITY UTILITY SERVICE POLICIES

Adopted 7/1/96

Revised 10/30/12

New policies effective January 1, 2013

### HOURS

Regular customer hours are 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.

For service calls during regular hours call 361-972-3605.

Emergency calls after hours are to be reported to the Police Department Dispatcher at 361-972-3112.

### ESTABLISHMENT OF SERVICE

Customer's signature is required on work orders to connect, disconnect, or transfer service.

Customer's signature is required on Service Agreement before service can begin.

A copy of the customer's driver's license and social security card is required to be on file to establish service.

Application for service requires that a customer's bill include all charges for water, sewer, garbage, applicable sales tax, and any applicable miscellaneous charges.

### DEPOSITS

A deposit is required on all accounts.

Residential deposit amount is \$75 plus a non-refundable \$25 connection fee. Commercial deposit amount is \$100 plus a non-refundable \$25 connection fee.

Customer's deposit will be applied to the final bill and the difference will be refunded by check if the amount of the deposit exceeds the bill.

If the amount of the deposit does not exceed the bill, the customer will receive a final bill.

Customers wishing to leave their deposit for the next occupant may do so if the following requirements are met: The amount of the deposit must be equal to the current City of Palacios deposit requirement.

The account must be current

The customers must agree in writing that any remaining balance will become the responsibility of the new account owner.

Customers requiring temporary service (3 weeks maximum) will be required to give a deposit in the amount of \$50 plus a non-refundable \$25 connection fee. The amount of the deposit will be applied to the bill when the account is disconnected.

### BILLING

Meters are read on or about the 15<sup>th</sup> through the 25<sup>th</sup> of each month, depending on customer's billing cycle.

Each billing cycle is for approximately 30 days.  
Utility bills are mailed on or around the first of the month.

Billing will begin on the day service is connected. Bills issued for a partial billing period for the purpose of new service connection, disconnect with payment, or transfer of existing service, will be prorated. Disconnect for non-payment does not qualify for prorating of bill. Any applicable miscellaneous charges will not be prorated.  
City service rates are set according to City Ordinance or City Council action.

## PAYMENT OF BILLS

Utility bills are due on the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month.  
Payments received after the 15<sup>th</sup> will be charged a \$10 penalty. Checks may be made payable to the City of Palacios.  
No third party checks will be accepted.  
There will be a \$30 fee for returned checks.

## DISCONNECTION FOR NON-PAYMENT

Cut-off day is around the 22<sup>nd</sup> of each month. To avoid disconnect, the total amount due must be received in the office by 4:30 p.m. on the last business day *before* cut-off day.  
All accounts not paid by the 22<sup>nd</sup> of each month will be turned off and a \$25 re-connect penalty must be paid before service is restored.  
A customer whose service is disconnected for non-payment will have their account finalized and their deposit applied toward the balance owed on the first of the following month.  
If a customer requests to be re-connected after hours, the charge will be \$35. This fee must be paid and the account must be current before service can be restored.  
If a customer tampers with a meter (unauthorized re-connection) *and* the city crew pulls the meter, there will be a \$35 charge.

## TRANSFER OF SERVICE

The customer name on a utility account will not be changed unless a copy of a Last Will (in the case of death) or divorce decree (in the case of divorce) is presented showing transfer of ownership of service address property.  
A customer transferring from one service address to another will be charged a \$35 fee.  
A customer may have service at two residences concurrently if transferring from one residence to another. The maximum allowance for this service is 2 weeks. The \$35 transfer fee will apply.  
It is the customer's responsibility to notify City Hall of the disconnect day at the original residence.

## PLACING AN ACCOUNT "ON-HOLD"

Customers who have rental property or will be away from their residence for more than one complete billing cycle will be allowed to place their account "on-hold".

"On-hold" means that the deposit will be held on the account, the customer will not receive a bill for that complete billing cycle, and the customer can have the water turned back on at their request. There will be a \$25 charge for taking an account off hold.

### MISCELLANEOUS

There will be a \$20 charge added to the customer's utility account for each call made at the customer's request that results in a problem in the private service line that is the customer's responsibility.

There will be a \$20 charge added to the customer's utility account for each customer request to re-read a water meter. There will be no charge if the re-read results in an incorrect reading.