

# Town of Hamilton Utility Connection and Procedure Ordinance

PO Box 249, Hamilton, NC 27840  
#020521

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## Section I: Application for Services

- A. All users must apply for service from the Hamilton Town Hall and make any deposit that is required.
- B. All new utility connections and reconnections that occur after a 6 month vacancy of the property must comply with the county and local codes and ordinances. This shall occur at the home owner's cost. Any residence that is vacant for 6 months or more is required to be inspected and cleared by the county building inspector.
- C. Any new water/sewer connections put in are required to have back flow preventers installed at the customer's cost.
- D. For safety reasons all water faucets must be turned off when service is connected.
- E. Someone at least 18 years or older, must be at the place of residence at the time in which the services are connected, to ensure satisfaction and safety.
  - a. Initial service connection will be turned on within a 24 hour period from when the deposit was placed via appointment made between the resident and maintenance department.
- F. The ONLY person able to ask for services to be disconnected on any account is the person whose name is on the account, regardless of who pays the bill.
- G. The only people that have authorization to look at an account are the account holder and those people that are listed on the authorized account person's form.
- H. In the event of someone's passing any deposit will be remitted to the Estate of the deceased unless proof of Executor of the Estate can be shown, and then will be remitted to that person.
- I. To close an account of someone whom is deceased the account may remain open as long as it is current for a time period of 6 months during the closing of the estate. It may be closed earlier than that at the request of the family. Once a request to shut off a deceased persons estate is submitted the account must be put in someone else's name and it will not be reopened in the name of the person whom is deceased. If there is a family dispute with this situation proof of executor of estate must be shown or the account will remain on, unless unpaid until the 6 month time period has lapsed.

## Section II: Security Deposits

- A. Security Deposits are as listed below unless otherwise authorized by the Town of Hamilton Board
  - a. \$500.00 Security Deposit for (Inside Town Limits) Residential Customers
  - b. \$450.00 Security Deposit for All Commercial Customers
  - c. \$300.00 Security Deposit For All Outside of Town Limit Customers
  - d. \$200.00 Hamilton Ridge Security Deposit (Electric Connection Only)
  - e. \$250.00 Security Deposit for the subsequent properties owned if more than one property is owned inside town limits, and the original deposit was placed on the primary property.
- B. Deposits placed WILL NOT draw interest.
- C. Letters of credit WILL NOT be accepted to wave security deposits with the town.
- D. Additional Security Deposits may be required after a 12 month time period, if:
  - a. The utilities are disconnected twice within that 12 month time period



- b. The deposit placed would not cover 2 times the average utility bill during that 12 month time period.
- E. When a deposit is placed with the Town of Hamilton, the deposit amount in full will NOT be returned to the customer until a time in which the customer closes the account with the Town of Hamilton. The deposit will be applied to any balance on the account at the time of the accounts closure, and any remaining balance will be forwarded in the form of a check to the mailing address on file for the customer.
  - a. If you are moving you MUST indicate the new address to remit the check. If you do not it will be sent to the last mailing address on file.
  - b. The Town of Hamilton is NOT responsible for a check being forwarded to the incorrect mailing address if not informed that the mailing address has changed.
  - c. The Town of Hamilton will remit these checks during the next payroll cycle after the disconnection date after proof of deposit can be established.

### Section III: Billing & Fees

- A. Town of Hamilton Utility Bills is ONLY billed for the usage indicated by the resident's meters. We WILL NOT bill you for any usage that is not indicated by your meter.
- B. Meter Readings and information regarding meter readings is as follows:
  - a. Meters will be read on or around the 25<sup>th</sup> of each month
  - b. Accounts are billed for the previous month's usage.
    - i. Example: A bill dated January 5<sup>th</sup>, 2021 is for the time period 11/25/2020-12/25/2020
  - c. Bills are printed at the end of the business day on the 5<sup>th</sup> of every month to ensure all payments are posted and are reflected on their utility bill.
  - d. These bills will be mailed on approximately the 6<sup>th</sup> of each month.
  - e. They are due by the 5<sup>th</sup> of the following month
  - f. Please refer to the chart below for a detailed explanation:

Example	
Bills dated:	December 5 <sup>th</sup> 2020
Meters were read on or around	November 25 <sup>th</sup>
Bills were printed	December 5 <sup>th</sup>
Bills were mailed	December 6 <sup>th</sup>
Bills are due	December 25 <sup>th</sup>
Bills are late	January 5 <sup>th</sup> 2021
Bills are subject for disconnection	January 27 <sup>th</sup> 2021

### C. Disconnections:

- a. If utilities are disconnected you will be responsible for paying the reconnection fee listed in the fee chart below.
- b. Disconnections apply only to the amount past due amount including any late charges that are still on the account 52 days after the original bill date. Please refer to the example chart above to see example listed.
- c. Utilities will not be reconnected until the account has been paid in full including any fees associated with the disconnection. Service may be restored the same day if payment is made before 12:00pm on that business day. Any payments made for reconnection after 12:00pm will be handled on the next business day between the hours of 8:00-12:00. No reconnections will be made on weekends or holidays.

D. Payments:

- a. Payments may be made in Cash, Check, Money Order, or by Credit or Debit card (Excluding American Express)
- b. NO TWO PARTY CHECKS WILL BE ACCEPTED
- c. Payments may be put in the drop box located at the front of the building before or after business hours. The drop box is checked once daily.
- d. Partial Payments will be accepted and applied to your account, but DOES NOT alter the Town's policy on Disconnection and does not grant you a payment extension.
- e. PAYMENT EXTENSIONS ARE ONLY AUTHORIZED BY THE TOWN OF HAMILTON BOARD. Please review the section below to indicate how to request a payment extension.
- f. Payment extensions will ONLY be authorized a maximum of 2 times during a calendar year as approved by the board.
- g. Budget Billing is offered to any Town of Hamilton customer that has had service with the Town of Hamilton for 12 consecutive months.
  - i. Payment is required to be made by the 5<sup>th</sup> of the month following the signing of the budget billing contract.
  - ii. If you take part in Budget Billing and do not make your payments your services will be disconnected on the 27<sup>th</sup> of the following month as those who are not in budget billing.
  - iii. If you take part in Budget Billing and discontinue your payments and pay your normal bill you are not allowed to participate in the program for another 12 months.

E. Fees

- a. Reconnection Fee: \$25.00
- b. Returned Check Fee: \$35.00
- c. Meter Tampering Fee: \$100.00 (plus any subsequent usage accumulated during that time)

F. Billing Disputes:

- a. At the customer's request a meter will be checked at the cost of the Town of Hamilton
  - i. If the meter is tested and found to be in compliance, the cost of any testing items will be the sole responsibility of the customer. Cost will be as listed for the flat rate as established and amended from time to time by the board on the fee schedule.
  - ii. If the meter is faulty the bill will be adjusted on the average % of the last 12 month time frame. If this time frame is not applicable it will be averaged for the amount of time the account has been active.
  - iii. If the customer is still unhappy with the resolution of the situation they may put in a formal request to the Town of Hamilton Board in the form of a Meter Error Form for formal review and final decision.
- b. If the customer believes their bill was done in error the customer must fill out a Billing Error Review Form, which will be reviewed by the Town Clerk as well as the Mayor. If the customer is unhappy with the resolution of the situation they may resubmit the issue to the Town of Hamilton Board for formal review and final decision.
- c. Water leaks are eligible for adjustments 2 times during a calendar year. This is once any receipt or information can be provided to the Town of Hamilton stating the water leak was addressed.



- i. If a water leak is detected by a resident of the town and proof of repair is submitted, the town will make an adjustment to the sewer bill. The town will adjust the bill to the average annual bill amount for that customer. It is not to exceed 50% of the sewage billed cost. Any time the effects of a leak are on the following months bill it will also be adjusted for those days.
- ii. If the water leak can be proven to not drain into the sewer system (i.e. a leaking pipe outside the home, under the home, a pipe in the yard from the meter to the home) the sewage cost will be removed in full for that month but the water must be paid
- iii. If an amount in excess of half the sewage is requested to be adjusted the resident may fill out a Sewage Adjustment Excess Form to be submitted to the Board for their approval and final decision.
- iv. Property Owners are responsible for the service of their water lines from the point of the Town of Hamilton's meter to the house and inside the home. They are not responsible for a faulty meter or lines that are before the meter.

G. Any issues and concerns involving maintenance may be addressed by submitting a Maintenance Request Form to the Maintenance Supervisor. If the resident is concerned or would like their request addressed further they may submit that request form to the Town of Hamilton Board.

H. Forms Listed above available to any Town of Hamilton Active Account Holder

- a. Account Authorization Form
- b. Sewage Adjustment Form
- c. Billing Error Review Form,
- d. Meter Error Form
- e. Maintenance Request Form

If new internal controls and billing procedures are adopted from this information it will be amended on February 5<sup>th</sup>, 2021 and will supersede any prior internal control ordinance. Submitted for review to the Town of Hamilton Board of Commissioners and for public review on January 7<sup>th</sup>, 2021