



City of Fort Meade
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CITY OF FORT MEADE UTILITY POLICIES

The following customer information is provided so you may better understand the policies followed by City staff when dealing with matters related to the municipally-owned and operated utilities. If you have questions after reading this information, contact City Hall at 285-1100. Customer Service will assist you in answering any questions you may have.

ESTABLISHING UTILITIES SERVICES

All customers are required to complete an application for utilities services. A nonrefundable fee of \$25 is required at the time of application. A lease or purchase agreement is required when applying for new service. Any lease, lease option, rental, rent-to-own property is subject to a yearly rental inspection. When purchasing a mobile home (whether established or new) in any Mobile Home Park within the City limits you will be required to show proof of ownership by providing either a title or proof of title request thru the State of Florida. Failure to provide this document will require that you have a yearly rental inspection on the mobile home. The person(s) applying for service must be listed on the agreement. Social Security verification and photo ID are also required. Customers will need to sign the initial work order verifying that they want services on. In the absence of a customer signature, Customer Service will verify the customer's identity and sign the work order. The same process will be followed for customers wishing to have their service disconnected. Commercial accounts will also be required to have appropriate business/occupational licenses.

METER DEPOSITS

All meter deposits must be paid in full before services will be turned on. Customers must ensure that meter readers are consistently able to access all meters. Failure to do so will result in termination of utilities services.

Residential

The City of Fort Meade utilizes customer credit histories to determine required deposits for primary residential accounts. If a customer's history returns a "Green Light" response, the electric deposit will be waived. If a customer's history returns a "Yellow Light" response, the customer will be required to pay an electric deposit of \$200. If a customer's history returns a "Red Light" or "No Credit History" response, the customer will be required to pay an electric deposit of \$300. All other deposits must be paid in full. A meter deposit of \$72 is required for each residential customer of water/sewer. A residential customer who is transferring to a new location within the City will be required to apply for service at the new location. A credit history check will be required for any customer who has had NSF's, delinquent disconnects or two or more delinquencies. There will also be a \$40 disconnect fee to have services disconnected at the previous location. Customers with multiple accounts will be required to pay full deposits on all accounts regardless of payment or credit history.

Commercial

Commercial meter deposits will be set to cover two months billing for each account. These deposit amounts will be based on prior customer billing at that location. If there is no previous customer or the current customer's business is significantly different from prior customers at that location then the customer will be required to pay the minimum commercial meter deposits. The account will be reviewed after two full months of utilities service to determine if deposits are sufficient to cover two months billing. Based on the review, commercial meter deposits will be adjusted accordingly. Commercial customers who are required to increase their deposits will have thirty (30) days to do so. Failure to comply with this policy will result in termination of utilities services. A minimum meter deposit of \$300.00 is required for all commercial electric customers. Deposits for water service are based on meter size. A minimum meter deposit of \$50 is required for all commercial sewer customers.

Service Connection Fees

Electricity	Same day - \$60 Next day - \$40	Read only - \$30
Water	Same day - \$43	Disconnect fee-\$40

Connection fees are charged in addition to meter deposits. A \$30 Read Fee will apply instead of connection fees where services are already on and only reads are required. Connection fees may be added to the customer's first bill. Services may not be turned on after 4PM if resources are not available. When a City employee is called out after hours, an after hours call out fee of \$60 will be assessed in addition to any applicable fees

Rental

In the case of non-owner occupied properties, the owner will be required to maintain full residential deposits on the property. In locations where multiple residents share a single meter, the landlord will be billed the whole amount. The City will not divide usage among residents. All rental units within the City of Fort Meade are required to have a yearly rental inspection, (See Municode Article I Sec 15.5-1-15.5-14) failure to comply with this policy could result in denial of utility services.

The City of Fort Meade also requires an inspection of existing services when they have been disconnected for any safety reason, been repaired, expanded or otherwise modified or have been inactive for more than one year. The City can also require re-inspection of a service at any time if, in the opinion of the City, providing electrical service has created, or could create an unsafe condition. Service restoration cannot occur until it has been inspected by a licensed electrician.

REFUSAL OF SERVICE

The City of Fort Meade may refuse service if: Applicant(s) or Lessee(s) is indebted for past services and refuses to satisfy debt; deposits are not paid; or the customer has tampered with the utility meter. In addition, customers must ensure that meter readers are consistently able to access all meters. Customers are required to comply with all city and code enforcement policies. Failure to do so May result in termination of utilities services.

SERVICE AND LIABILITY LIMITATIONS

The City of Fort Meade shall not be liable for any loss or damage resulting from interruption, reduction, delay or failure of electric service not caused by the willful negligence on the part of the City, or resulting from any cause or circumstance beyond the reasonable control of the company. Disruptions considered beyond the control of the utility include, but are not limited to, outages resulting from storm conditions, lightning, interference by animals, unanticipated equipment failures, tree contacts, high water conditions, public interference (such as vehicle accidents, vandalism, etc.), failure of Customer equipment, etc. The City is also not liable for any loss of service resulting from the need to de-energize lines and equipment without notice to allow employees and/or its contractors to safely perform work or to respond to emergencies.

BILLING AND PAYMENT PROCEDURES

Meter Reading and Billing

The City will have the meter read upon the beginning and termination of service. In addition, utility meters are read on a monthly basis. Each customer is assigned to one of three billing cycles based on the service location. Billing for the first cycle is mailed out on or about the 15th of the month and due by the 5th of the following month. Billing for the second and third cycles are mailed out on or about the 31st of the month and are due by the 20th of the following month. Billing for the fourth cycle is mailed out on or about the 20th of the month and is due by the 10th of the following month. Meters are read up to two weeks prior to the billing date. Each month utility service billed is for prior usage.

Due Dates and Extensions

If utility bills are not paid by 5:00pm on the due date, a late penalty of \$10.50 will be assessed. Payments mailed must be received by the City on the due date. Postmark dates are not considered. There are two after hours drop box locations. The first is located to the left of the entrance to City Hall and the other is a beige drop box on the north east corner of Langford St and North Seminole. Drop box payments should be made by money order or check. Do not place cash in the drop boxes. Staff cannot grant extensions. In the event of an extreme hardship a extension may only be granted by a supervisor in the finance department. All requests for extensions must be delivered to City hall in writing. Hardship extensions may only be granted once a year per household. In addition a fifty dollar balance may only be carried over only once a year and must be paid in full before the next bill due date.

Billing date	Due Date	Payment deadline before Disconnection	Disconnection Date
Bill Mailed out on or around 15 th of each month	Cycle 1 Due 5 th of each Month	14 th day of Each month By 5:00 P.M.	15 th day of each month
Bill Mailed out on or around 31 st of each month	Cycle 2 Due 20 th of each Month	29 th day of each Month By 5:00 P.M.	30 th day of each month
Bill Mailed out on or around 31 st of each month	Cycle 3 Due 20 th of each month	29 th day of each month By 5:00 P.M.	30 th day of each month
Bill Mailed out on or around 20 th of each month	Cycle 4 Due 10 th of each month	19 th day of each month By 5:00 P.M.	20 th day of each month

Utility Assistance Programs

The utility assistance program chosen must send a written commitment to the City of Fort Meade utility department stating the amount of assistance they are committing to help with. All financial assistance with utility bills must be committed prior to the bill due date. Any commitments made on the disconnection day may result in disconnection and acquire reconnection fees before utilities will be reinstated.

Meter Read Errors

If a customer feels their electric meter has been misread, they may contact customer service at (863) 285-1100 to request a re-read. The meter will be read and/or pulled for testing. If the meter is pulled for testing, results could take up to a month. No extension on the utility bill will be granted while the meter is tested. If the meter is found to be inaccurate, an adjustment will be made to the customer's account. In the case of water meter re-reads, if the read is accurate the customer will be billed a \$30 read fee. If the meter is tested and found to be accurate the customer will be billed a \$45 meter test fee. If the meter or the read are found to be inaccurate the customer will not be charged for the re-read or meter test.

Estimating Usage

The City will take every step possible to obtain monthly meter readings. If a meter cannot be read, usage will be estimated based on past usage. Customers must ensure that meter readers are consistently able to access all meters. Failure to do so will result in termination of utilities services.

Delinquent Accounts

If services are turned off for non-payment, customers will be required to pay their past due balance, connection fees and may be required to update deposits before being reconnected. Customers who have been turned off for non-payment must pay all delinquent charges within 10 days of disconnect or account deposits will be applied to the outstanding balance and the account will be closed. The customer will then have 30 days to pay the final bill on the account before it is turned over to a collections agency.

DISCONNECTION OF SERVICE

The City may disconnect any and all utility services for any of the following reasons AND/OR other reasons permitted by federal, state or municipal law:

1. Failure to meet the applicable provisions of law
2. Violation of the ordinances, regulations or policies pertaining to utility service
3. Nonpayment or failure to pay all charges and penalties from past or present bills
4. Willful, negligent waste of service due to improper or imperfect pipes, fixtures, appliances
5. Tampering with any meter, seal or other equipment controlling or regulating the supply of utility services.
6. Theft, diversion and/or use of service without payment thereof
7. Failure to keep an agreement to satisfy a continuing debt
8. Failure to grant the utility access to read and inspect and maintain any utility meter
9. Vacancy or abandonment of premises

The City has the right to discontinue service to any and all properties listed under the same name as the account in question. This applies to both residential and commercial properties. The City will disconnect utilities at any time and has no policy prohibiting the disconnection of services during inclement weather. Interruptions of service or disconnections made pursuant to repair, maintenance, health or safety reasons shall not constitute a disconnection for the purposes of this policy.

DELAY OF DISCONNECTION FOR MEDICAL REASONS

A statement received by the City to the effect that the customer or a resident of such a household has an existing illness or handicap which would cause the individual to suffer an immediate and serious health hazard by the disconnection of utility services will delay discontinuance of service for a period of 24 hours. Such statement must be from a physician who shall certify that utility services are required for the use of medical equipment such as oxygen, heart monitor, etc. Such certificate must be filed with the City immediately after receiving letter from a physician. If disconnection is pending for non-payment, this will allow customer to make other arrangements. Customers with medical seals will be notified when possible, if utility services will be off due to work being conducted by the City.

SERVICE CHARGES

INSUFFICIENT CHECKS: A fee will be assessed for each check returned to the city for non-sufficient funds (NSF) or if payment was stopped by the customer. They will be as follows:

Check Amount	Return Fee
< \$50	\$25
>\$50 and <\$300	\$30
>\$300	\$40

LATE PENALTIES: \$10.50 for residential and commercial customers.

RE-CONNECTION FEES FOR DELINQUENT ACCOUNTS: During regular working hours of 8AM - 5 PM, standard connection fees will apply. After hours connections are not supported for delinquent accounts.

TESTING OF METERS: Customers may have their meters tested. If the meter is found to be inaccurate there is no charge to the customer. If the meter is within normal operating parameters there will be a charge of \$45 to the customer.

METER TAMPERING: If an electric meter is found to be tampered with the customer will be assessed a \$150 fine and the Polk County Sheriff's Office will be contacted to investigate. If a water meter is found to be tampered with the customer will be assessed a \$460 for the first offense and \$2000 for any subsequent offenses and the Polk County Sheriff's Office will be contacted to investigate.

APPLICATION FEE: A nonrefundable fee of \$25 will be due for applicants applying for utility service with the City.

SOLID WASTE

Solid waste and recycling services are provided by an outside contractor. Collection days for household solid waste are Monday and Thursday for residents located north of Broadway St and Monday for recycling; Tuesday and Friday for residents located south of Broadway St and Tuesday for recycling. Yard debris is collected citywide on Wednesday. These dates will vary around holidays. If a debris pile is too large for the solid waste contractor to pick up on their regular route, the City can arrange to have the solid waste contractor quote a price on the pickup that will be the responsibility of the customer. In cases of non-owner occupied properties the owner will be billed.

WASTEWATER/SEWER SERVICE

Wastewater service is provided throughout the city. Any customer who utilizes a septic system where wastewater service is available will be required to pay the flat rate sewer charge.

VACATION RATES

City of Fort Meade Residential Utility Customers who will be out of town not less than 60 days or more than 180 days may apply for reduced utility rates. The customer's utility bill shall be placed on minimum monthly billing charges or "Vacation Rate" for each utility service provided to their home for a maximum of 6 months. Customer service will verify account information when these rates are requested.

- Electric Service: \$14.58 (includes tax) base fee, plus usage and tax on usage
- Solid Waste collection: \$5.00 (no tax charged) base fee
- Water Service: Base fee is based on meter size, plus usage and taxes
- Sewer Service: Base fee is based on water meter size, plus usage
- Storm water: \$6.06 (no tax charged) base fee

Owner Occupied Residential Units that chose the "Vacation Rate" and do not turn their utility services on and off shall avoid reconnection fees.

Residential Units on Vacation Rates will be required to notify the City upon their return. Residents who fail to notify the City upon their return will be responsible for full billing rates applied from the date of their return to the City.

Owner Occupied Residential Unit that turned their utilities on and off each season shall be required to pay a monthly availability fee of \$60.00 per month, in addition to all reconnection and service fees required to reestablish utility service.