

## UTILITY BILLING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

### **Utility Billing Department**

City Hall, 50 W. 13th St.  
Dubuque, IA, 52001  
M-F, 8:00 A.M.–5:00 P.M.  
(excluding holidays)



**W:** [www.cityofdubuque.org/utilitybilling](http://www.cityofdubuque.org/utilitybilling)  
**E:** [utilityb@cityofdubuque.org](mailto:utilityb@cityofdubuque.org)  
**P:** 563-589-4144  
**F:** 563-690-6688

### **Utility bills consist of:**

- » Water (billed in gallons)
- » Sewer (billed in gallons)
- » Refuse collection
- » Stormwater fee
- » Miscellaneous fees

There is always a monthly utility bill associated with a property, unless the property has no impervious area and no water service line. Properties with water turned off are subject to a monthly stormwater fee and a minimum monthly water bill.

Utility rates are established through the budgeting process, approved by the City Council, and normally change on July 1. Rates can be viewed on the website or contact the office for more information.

### **Utility bill payments can be made as follows:**

- » Automatic clearing house payment (ACH) option, payments are automatically deducted from the customer's financial institution account on the bill due date.

- » Credit card payments may be made over the phone, at City Hall or via our website ([www.cityofdubuque.org/utilitybilling](http://www.cityofdubuque.org/utilitybilling)). A convenience fee may apply.
- » E-check payments may be made on our website.
- » By mail
- » At the Utility Billing counter inside City Hall
- » At drop boxes located inside City Hall and outside City Hall at the 13th St. entrance

### **ESTABLISHING SERVICE**

Customers must contact the City of Dubuque Utility Billing office in person or by phone to initiate service. A minimum notice of two business days is required to guarantee service. A meter reading will be obtained on the date requested and the account will be activated for billing if the procedures below are satisfied.

#### ***New Customers***

Customers who have not previously had City of Dubuque utilities in their name must come to the Utility Billing office to complete an application form and provide proof of identification. Customers requesting service in a business name must also complete IRS Form W-9.

#### ***Existing and Prior Customers***

Customers that have had service in their name in recent years are not required to complete an application form if prior accounts are in good standing. Utility Billing staff will request the necessary information to update the account and initiate service. All account balances for existing and/or prior accounts must be current before a new account is established.

### **DISCONTINUING SERVICE**

Customers must contact the City of Dubuque Utility Billing office in person or by phone to discontinue service. A minimum notice of two business days is required to discontinue service on the agreed upon date. A meter reading will be obtained on the date requested. A final bill is issued when a new owner/tenant is established.

### ***Landlords***

When tenants request service be discontinued and a new tenant has not requested service, utility service is placed in the landlord's name. A notification is sent to landlord indicating the date of vacancy. Water service will only be disconnected per the landlord's request. If the owner prefers to have the water meter turned off, they should contact the Utility Billing office to schedule an appointment. A service worker will disconnect and seal the meter inside the building. There is a \$50 disconnect fee. The owner will continue to receive a minimum monthly water bill and stormwater fee until the water is activated again in the landlord's or new tenant's name. No fee is charged to turn water on.

### ***Owners - Sale of Property***

Property owners requesting service to be discontinued must contact the Utility Billing office. A meter reading will be obtained on the date requested. When new ownership is determined, the seller's account is sent a final bill. The seller may request that the water be disconnected. There is a \$50 disconnect fee. The seller continues to be billed a minimum monthly charge plus the stormwater fee, until the new owner is established. No fee is charged to turn water on.

### **DELINQUENT ACCOUNTS**

Customers receive monthly billings. Customers are responsible for all billings while the account is in their name. Account balances remaining after the specified monthly due date are subject to a five percent monthly penalty. Utility Billing makes automated courtesy phone calls reminding customers that the account is past due. Disconnect notices are mailed to customers whose accounts are more than thirty days past due and have a delinquent balance of \$25 or more. In the event of a disconnection, a \$50 disconnect fee is charged to the customer. The water will not be turned on until the entire account balance and disconnect fee is paid in full. Payment must be made by cash or credit card. The account will

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not be turned on in a new customer's name unless it has been established that the new customer had not occupied the premise when the past due balance was incurred. No fee is charged to turn water on.

### ***Tenant***

When a tenant account is subject to disconnection, a notice is mailed to the landlord and the tenant. If payment is not received and Utility Billing is not contacted by the landlord or the landlord doesn't have preference form on file, the service is transferred into the landlord's name. In the event of disconnection, a \$50 disconnect fee is charged to the tenant. The water will not be turned back on in the tenant's name until the entire account balance and disconnect fee is paid in full. No fee is charged to turn water on. The unpaid balance remains the responsibility of the tenant.

### ***Landlord***

When a tenant's account is subject to disconnection, the landlord is notified by letter of the delinquency. If the balance remains unpaid, the landlord has the following options:

1. Have the service transferred into the owner's name and assume responsibility for all future billings. The landlord is not responsible for the tenant's unpaid balance.
2. Arrange for a City of Dubuque service worker to shut off water at the meter. A \$50 disconnect fee is assessed to tenant. The tenant must pay the entire balance and \$50 disconnect fee before the service is turned back on. There is no fee to reconnect service for the owner or tenant. The water meter will not be turned on in a new tenant's name unless it has been established that the new customer was not occupying the premise when the past due balance was incurred. If the account remains off for 14 calendar days, the account is transferred into the owner's name and the owner will receive a minimum monthly water bill plus stormwater fees.

If Utility Billing is not contacted by the landlord, the service is transferred into the landlord's name. Landlords can fill out Landlord Preference form to state preference and avoid contacting the office each time a delinquent notice is sent.

### ***Final Bills***

Final bills not paid will be turned over to a collection agency with a \$25 administrative fee added and submitted to the State of Iowa Offset Program.

### ***Property Owners***

Utility bills that are delinquent may be turned over to the Dubuque County Treasurer as property tax liens with a \$5 City administrative fee added.

### ***Water Leaks***

The City may provide financial assistance to repair leaks. Please contact the Utility Billing office for details.

### ***Refuse Credit***

A customer may be eligible for refuse credit if their property is vacant for a minimum of 2 months. A refuse credit form must be completed and submitted prior to or at the onset of the vacancy. This form must be completed annually for extended vacancies.

### ***Reduced Monthly Fees***

The City of Dubuque currently offers a 50% reduction in monthly refuse and stormwater fees for residential premises that qualify. The credit does not apply to water and sewer fees.

### ***Sharing Account Records***

Account information can only be shared with account holders and property owners. Customers may allow other individuals access to their utility records by signing an authorization form or providing legal documentation.

### ***Maintenance of Shutoff by Owner***

The curb box and shutoff must be kept in good condition and ready for use at all times by the

owner. Should the owner neglect to maintain either the City Water Department shall have the right to clean or repair without giving notice, and charge the cost to the owner.

### ***Owner's Duty to Protect Meter(s) from Damage***

The owner of premises where a meter and meter interface unit (MIU) or remote reader is installed shall be responsible for its care and protection. In all cases where meters are broken or damaged, necessary repairs will be made by the City and the cost charged to the owner.

Authorized City personnel shall have free access to the meter and MIU or remote reader at all reasonable hours.

### ***Tampering with Devices***

The City will assess a \$50 fee when it has been determined that tampering has occurred.

### ***Service Call Fee***

The City will assess a \$50 service call fee when customer negligence has been determined.

### ***Electronic Billing Option***

The City offers an electronic billing option as a convenience for customers to save paper and energy. Paperless billing participants receive an e-mail notification each month when their bill is available for online viewing. The service also features a secure, web-based interface that allows customers to not only view their bill online, but also past billing history and water consumption totals.

To participate in the paperless billing program, enroll online at [www.cityofdubuque.org/utilitybilling](http://www.cityofdubuque.org/utilitybilling) or call 563-589-4144. To enroll, you must provide an e-mail address, account number, and service address.