



# Town of Warrenton

## Public Works Utility Policies

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## New Services

### Applying for a New Connection

Tap applications are available at the utility counter in Town Hall or may be accessed on the Town's website. Applicant(s) must be the property owner and are required to provide proof of ownership for the property where the tap will be installed. The applicant is responsible for all installation costs. A detailed quote will be provided, and payment must be made in full prior to the start of work.

Upon completion of the tap installation, the meter will be locked. The property owner will be responsible for connecting to the exposed stub-out. The meter box and its contents must not be disturbed during this process. Town staff will inspect the connection and test the meter to verify proper function. If the property owner disturbs the meter or meter box and rework is required, a reset fee will be assessed.

Once the connection has passed inspection and the utility account has been activated, the meter will be unlocked, and monthly charges for service will begin.

### Opening a Utility Account

Applications for service are available at the utility counter in Town Hall or may be accessed on the Town's website. All applicants must be at least 18 years of age and must provide proof of identity and proof of ownership or occupancy. Failure to provide documentation of the Social Security Number of the account holder(s) including business accounts, will result in a higher deposit. Service may be established in person or via fax or e-mail. All required documents must be provided at the time the account is established. A deposit and activation fee are due prior to service activation. For rental properties, the name and contact information of the property owner/landlord must be included on the application.

### Users with Multiple Accounts

For customers who have an existing account that has been maintained in good standing for at least one year, the deposit may be waived for all additional accounts opened. All customers must have at least one active account secured by a deposit. If the account secured by a deposit is closed, the customer will be required to make a new deposit on an existing, active account. If the customer has accounts both in-town and out-of-town, the deposit charged will be the greater rate.

## Service may be Delayed if:

### Vacant Property Requiring System Inspection

When a property has been vacant for one year or more, there must be an assessment completed before service can begin. Assessments will be conducted as Town staffing allows. The cost of restoring service will be as if for a new connection, with the property owner assuming all costs. The cost of restoration will be determined by the evaluation performed by the Town. Existing sewer services must have a clean-out near the property edge for the Town to evaluate the sewer connection. Where there is no clean-out, the property owner is responsible for the cost and installation of the clean-out, according to Town specifications, before the evaluation can take place.

## Service may be Denied if:

### Incomplete Application

All applications for new services must be fully completed in all applicable fields. Incomplete applications submitted to our office will be rejected.

### **Outstanding Delinquency by Applicant**

All outstanding balances associated with an applicant must be fully resolved prior to the acceptance of any new service applications, regardless of where the delinquency occurred.

If an account holder relocates to a new address and has a pending final bill at the time of establishing a new account, any unpaid balance remaining after the due date of the final bill may result in service interruption at the new location. In the event of service disconnection, applicable dis/reconnect fees may be charged to the new account, and service will not be restored until all delinquent balances and fees have been paid.

### **Outstanding Delinquency by Previous Property Owner**

Applications for service submitted by a new owner or occupant for a property with an outstanding balance incurred by a prior owner will be processed only after the delinquent amount has been settled.

### **Tenant Delinquency Situations Requiring Property Owner as Account Holder**

If the total outstanding balance owed by tenant(s) reaches or exceeds \$1,000, the property owner will be officially designated as the account holder for all associated rental properties. For administrative purposes, monthly billing statements and general account communications may be sent to the current occupant of the property; however, all financial responsibilities and account management obligations will remain the sole responsibility of the property owner.

## User Information

### Billing

Meter and consumption data for billing is collected on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of each month. Bills are calculated and processed monthly. The due date is the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the month, with a grace period extending until the 20<sup>th</sup> day of the month. In the event the 15<sup>th</sup> or the 20<sup>th</sup> falls on a weekend or holiday, the deadline will be adjusted to the next business day. The Town reserves the right to vary the dates or length of time, temporarily or permanently.

Any inquiries regarding bills must be made prior to the due date to avoid a late penalty. Failure to receive a bill in the mail does not excuse responsibility for payment nor prevent late penalties and/or service disconnection.

### Rates, Fees, and Penalty Schedule

Rates and fees charged by the Town of Warrenton are listed in the yearly Budget Ordinance and are approved by the Board of Commissioners. Bills are calculated in accordance with the rate schedule then in effect, and usage charges are determined based on the consumption recorded during the billing period. Rates and fees are subject to change without notice if deemed necessary and approved by the Board.

### Payments

Payments received after 4:30pm will be posted the following business day. Payment is considered delinquent if not received by 4:30pm on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the month. Accounts are not considered paid until payment has been received in our office. Our office does not accept the postmark date as sufficient proof of payment. Town of Warrenton cannot be held responsible for the timely delivery of the mail nor for payments lost in transit.

### Late Payments and Disconnections Due to Non-Payment

A late penalty will be applied to the account if payment is not received by 4:30pm on the 20<sup>th</sup> day of the month. Accounts will be flagged for disconnection of service if payment has not been received by 4:30pm on the 25<sup>th</sup> day of the month with disconnections due to non-payment beginning the 26<sup>th</sup> day of the month. Any account where service is disconnected will be charged a dis/reconnect fee. Once assessed, fees for late payments or disconnects will not be waived. No notice will be sent prior to disconnection, and all outstanding charges must be paid before service is resumed.

### Payment Options

The Public Works window at Town Hall is open Monday - Friday, from 8:30am until 4:30pm, except holidays.

Payment may be made in any of the following means:

- By cash, check, money order, cashier's check, or debit/credit card at the window during normal hours of operation.
- By check, money order or cashier's check in the drop box on the Market Street door. Cash is not allowed.
- Electronically by bank draft.
- By US Mail, with remit slip or account number written on check.
- Online at [warrenton.nc.gov](http://warrenton.nc.gov). Multiple payment and alert options are available when an account is registered.
- By phone at 855-490-3335.

*\*\*Additional fees apply when paying online, by phone, or with a debit/credit card in the office, with fees differing based on payment method.*

### **Coin Payments**

Town of Warrenton will not accept more than thirty (30) coins or five (5) coin rolls in a payment. Each rolled coin must display the payer's account number. Any discrepancies, such as shortages or overages in rolled coins, will be reconciled with the customer's account.

### **Payment Plans**

An account holder may submit a request for a payment plan to facilitate the payment of a significant bill over a specified period. To be eligible for a payment plan, the account must be maintained in good standing, with no late payments or service disconnections due to non-payment, and it must not have any active payment plans within the last two (2) years. Accounts with ongoing leaks are ineligible for payment plan requests. Should there be a pending request for a sewer adjustment associated with the account, the amount under review will be excluded from the payment plan calculations until such request has been either approved or denied.

All requests should be submitted to the Public Works office at Town Hall before the due date. Requests for payment plans will be forwarded to the Town Administrator for review. Payment plans will be structured as a specified number of monthly installments, based on the total invoice amount as follows:

- a. Up to 3 payments for balances under \$600
- b. Up to 4 payments for balances \$ 601 - \$1000
- c. Up to 5 payments for balances over \$1001

For approved requests, the first payment must be made prior to the late payment date. Non-compliance with the scheduled payment plan or failure to remit the current monthly bill by the designated late payment date each month will lead to the total outstanding balance being due immediately including any applicable fees and the account may be subject to disconnection of services.

### **Returned Payments**

Payments returned due to insufficient funds, closed accounts, or other reasons will be voided from the utility account upon notification from the bank. The account holder will be notified of the returned payment, and the account will be treated as unpaid accordingly. A returned payment fee will be assessed to the account. A late payment penalty and dis/reconnection fees may be applied, and service may be disconnected in accordance with standard non-payment procedures.

Subsequent payment must be made using guaranteed funds such as cash, cashier's check, or money order, or via credit/debit card. Two instances of returned payments will result in the account being required to settle future payments exclusively with guaranteed funds.

### **Temporary Service Disconnection at Customer Request**

An account holder may request to have service temporarily disconnected and reconnected. A fee will be charged based on when the service is provided, either during business hours or after hours/weekends. Fees incurred by customer requested disconnects/reconnects will be applied to the account when the service is completed and are considered due on the next due date. A temporary disconnection is defined as a period of less than 90 days and is typically arranged to facilitate leak assessment, necessary repairs, or extended absences. During this period, monthly billing will continue as scheduled, including the assessment of any applicable penalties.

### **Setting an Account to Inactive at Customer Request**

An account holder may request to set their utility account to inactive. This includes suspending utility services and monthly billing for an extended period without closing the account, provided the service remains inactive

for less than one year. This typically applies to accounts associated with irrigation systems or accounts maintained by individuals who are not permanent residents of Warrenton. An extension beyond the one-year period may be granted for properties under construction or renovation. To be eligible for inactive status, the account must have no consumption charges pending billing and must carry a zero balance. Accounts that remain inactive for longer than one year will be subject to forced closure by the Town of Warrenton in accordance with the established policy.

### **Requesting a Sewer Adjustment**

An account holder may submit a request for sewer adjustment to offset the sewer cost associated with increased water usage from pool filling, outdoor watering, or plumbing leaks. To be eligible for sewer adjustment, consumption for the requested billing cycle must exceed the account's 12-month average by more than 1,000 gallons. All requests should be submitted to the Public Works office at Town Hall before the due date. Requests for sewer adjustment will be forwarded to the Town Administrator for review. Any request totaling \$200 or more must be presented to the Board of Commissioners at the scheduled monthly meeting for approval. If a request for a sewer adjustment is pending as of the due date, the full invoice amount remains payable to prevent a late payment penalty or disconnect. Any approved adjustment will be subsequently credited to the account.

#### *Pool Filling*

The account's 12-month average for pool filling is calculated using consumption data from a rolling 12-month period. To be eligible for an adjustment, the account holder must provide the exact dates the pool was filled with the request.

If an additional request for adjustment is made due to refilling the pool within the same calendar year, the Town requires photographic documentation confirming the pool was not drained into the sewer system.

#### *Watering*

The account's 12-month average for watering is calculated using consumption data from November through April, as these months typically do not involve regular irrigation.

#### *Leaks*

The account's 12-month average for leaks is calculated using consumption data from a rolling 12-month period. To be eligible for a leak adjustment, the account holder must clearly identify the location of the leak and submit documentation of repair with the request. Documentation may be in the form of a plumber's invoice, a receipt for parts, or in the case of a rental property, a letter from the landlord stating the leak's location and date of repair. Ongoing leaks will not be considered for adjustment. For leaks that span multiple billing cycles, an adjustment will only be considered for a maximum of two (2) billing cycles.

Adjustments may be granted for leaks occurring underground, beneath structures, or in situations where water is not directed into the sewer system. Requests for issues such as continuous flushing toilets or malfunctioning appliances that direct water into the sewer system are ineligible and will not be considered.

### **Who is Responsible?**

#### **Water**

The Town's responsibility to maintain water infrastructure concludes at the customer's side of the water meter. The Town will perform necessary repairs to ensure the safe and reliable delivery of water up to this point. Property owners are responsible for all plumbing systems beyond the water meter, and any water usage

resulting from leaks or issues within this scope recorded by the meter will be billed in accordance with standard procedures.

### **Sewer**

The Town's responsibility for sewer line maintenance extends to the cleanout located at the edge of the roadway. Property owners are responsible for any maintenance or repairs from that point onward, up to and including the building connection. All new sewer service installations must include a cleanout positioned adjacent to the roadway. It is highly advisable for property owners with existing systems, prior to this requirement, to consider installing a cleanout to ensure proper troubleshooting and maintenance access. Where no clean-out exists, the Town is unable to perform sewer system troubleshooting or maintenance for the property.

## **Garbage and Yard Debris Collection – For Properties Located Within Town Limits Only**

### **Garbage**

Weekly garbage collection is provided as a standard service. Each property is permitted to dispose of waste using up to four (4) containers, each with a maximum capacity of 60 gallons. All containers must be fitted with secure lids or covers and maintained free of standing water. Waste containers should be positioned on the side or rear of the premises, away from the front yard and curbside areas. All waste placed in containers must be properly bagged and securely tied; loose garbage will not be collected. Pets on the property must be secured to allow for safe collection. Failure to adhere to these guidelines may result in missed collection services.

Sanitation workers will pick up normal household garbage only. Animal litter or waste, furniture, carpet or flooring, insulation, construction debris, old wood, used oil and oil filters, antifreeze, appliances, tires, lead, acid batteries or any clearly hazardous materials will not be picked up.

### **Yard Debris**

Yard debris pickup is performed year-round. Loose leaves, shrubbery trimmings, and branches must be properly separated and neatly piled at the curbside to facilitate efficient collection. Branches exceeding four inches in diameter or four feet in length are not eligible for pickup. It is the responsibility of the property owner to ensure that all yard debris complies with these guidelines. Items that do not meet these requirements, such as oversized branches or improperly separated mixed piles, will not be collected. Disposal of non-compliant items will be the responsibility of the property owner.

It is recommended that property owners who hire external contractors for tree and shrub maintenance include debris removal services in their contractual agreement.

### **Requesting an Exemption from Garbage Collection**

An account holder may submit a request to be exempt from Town garbage collection service. The Garbage Exemption request must be submitted to the Public Works office at Town Hall and will be forwarded to the Public Works Director for review. Documentation such as a current invoice from the private waste hauler servicing the location, or receipts for monthly tipping fees exceeding \$36.50 must be submitted with the request. If receipts for tipping fees are submitted, they must not include charges for Transfer Station prohibited items including: used oil & filters, antifreeze, white goods (refrigerators, air conditioners, freezers, etc.), aluminum cans, tires, lead acid batteries, yard waste (leaves, branches, dirt, etc.), radioactive or other clearly hazardous waste, furniture, carpet/flooring, insulation and construction materials.

## Tampering with or Obstructing a Water Meter

All water meters are the property of the Town of Warrenton and must not be tampered with under any circumstances. Town staff must have continuous and unobstructed access to all water meters. Property owners and tenants are strictly prohibited from allowing or causing unauthorized individuals to tamper with, disconnect, reconnect, or modify a water meter. Additionally, property owners and tenants are responsible for ensuring clear access to their water meters. This includes removing obstructions such as overgrown vegetation, parked vehicles, unsecured pets, or other objects that may impede access.

Unauthorized use, including but not limited to reactivating a meter that has been turned off by the Town, may result in meter removal. A reset fee, in addition to any applicable costs for parts and labor required for repairs, will be applied to the account. Service will be restored only after all outstanding charges have been settled.

## Discontinuing Service

The Town reserves the right to discontinue service without prior notice for the following reasons:

- To prevent fraudulent activity or abuse
- In cases of willful disregard of the Town's rules
- Emergency repairs
- Insufficient supply beyond the Town's control
- Legal processes
- Under directives of public authorities
- Strikes, riots, fires, accidents or acts of God

## Closing a Utility Account

It is the responsibility of the account holder to notify the Town of Warrenton regarding termination of services. An Authorization to Disconnect form must be submitted to our office, along with applicable forwarding information. The account holder will remain responsible for all charges incurred until the Town receives authorization to disconnect or until forced closure of the utility account occurs. A final bill for the account will be calculated, and the deposit will be applied to the account balance. Any remaining deposit balance will be refunded to the account holder via check mailed to the specified forwarding address. Failure to pay any final balance due on the account will be reported to North Carolina Debt Setoff as described by North Carolina G.S. 105A.

### *Forced Closing of a Utility Account*

Utility accounts that remain unpaid for 60 days will result in forced closure of the account by the Town of Warrenton. To restore services under the same account holder, any outstanding balance must be paid in full, after which the account may be reestablished in accordance with new account procedures.

Utility accounts that remain inactive for longer than one year will result in forced closure of the account by the Town of Warrenton. A final bill will not be generated. Deposits for inactive accounts will be refunded to the account holder via check mailed to the address on file.

## Deceased Account Holders

Utility accounts must be established and maintained in the name of a living individual who is legally able to assume responsibility. Accounts registered under a deceased person or in the name of an estate are not permitted.

For accounts with joint account holder(s), upon the death of one account holder, responsibility for the account will automatically transfer to the remaining account holder(s). Upon receipt of a copy of the death certificate, the name and information of the deceased will be removed from the account.

When the Town becomes aware of the death of a sole account holder through a public source and has not otherwise been notified, a notification letter will be sent to the address on file. A period of forty-five (45) days will be allotted for a new account holder to establish service, in accordance with new account procedures. If no new account is established within this period, the decedent's account will be closed and service will be disconnected, regardless of the account's payment status.

### *Transfer of Service to the Spouse*

A surviving spouse may transfer the service into their name by submitting a copy of the death certificate, proof of identity, and a completed account application. The account activation fee will be waived for this transfer. If the deposit on the existing account is less than the current rate, the deposit must be increased to meet the current deposit requirement.

### *Executor/Administrator of the Estate*

An executor or administrator of the estate may assume responsibility for the account by providing a copy of the death certificate, Letters Testamentary or Letters of Administration, proof of identity, and a completed account application. The account activation fee will be waived for this transfer. If the deposit on the existing account is less than the current rate, the deposit must be increased to meet the current deposit requirement.

Alternatively, the executor or administrator may designate a new account holder. To do so, the executor or administrator must provide a copy of the death certificate, Letters Testamentary or Letters of Administration, proof of identity, and a signed statement or rental agreement confirming the designated individual's authority. The designee's account will be established in accordance with new account procedures.

### *Affidavit of Heirship*

An affidavit of heirship is a legal document that identifies the rightful heirs of a deceased individual and their lawful entitlement to occupy or inherit the property. An affidavit of heirship may be submitted as proof of ownership in such cases where ownership documentation for a property is unclear.