



**48318 East 1<sup>st</sup> Street**

**541-782-2258**

**CITY OF OAKRIDGE**

**WATER and SEWER SYSTEM  
POLICIES and PROCEDURES**

## **INTRODUCTION**

The public water supply system and sewer collection system of the City of Oakridge, Oregon, including all real estate, reservoirs, wells, pumping and treatment equipment, water mains, sewer mains, manholes, valves, fire hydrants, meters and services are owned by the City of Oakridge and is under the control of City Hall and his duly authorized agents or employees. City responsibility for installation, maintenance, quality of materials and workmanship, and size of service line terminates at the customer service valve. All other plumbing is the sole responsibility of the customer and subject to provisions of the Uniform Plumbing Code.

The City does not guarantee to consumers full volume, fixed pressure or an effective continuous supply of water, such matters being subject to the varying conditions which may disrupt the operation and require maintenance of the mains, services, pumping stations, reservoirs and other parts of the waterworks system. The water division will, however, in case of accident or necessity, which requires the cutting off of the water supply, endeavor to notify its customers in advance. This will not occur, however, if a delay would cause a potential hazard to public health and safety or extensive property damage.

## **APPLICATION FOR SERVICE**

Any property owner, or duly authorized agent of the owner, desiring water service must sign for such service in person at the Utilities Billing office, located at 48318 East 1st Street, showing positive identification and proof of property ownership before such service will be provided. If the request for service is a new installation, the Public Works Supervisor or his designee and a Certified Plumbing Inspector must approve installation prior to tapping, and a sketch map showing water and sewer service laterals must accompany the request, as required by City Ordinance.

A water deposit of \$135.09 and an initial sewer service payment of \$40.56 is required for each new account. A deposit will be required of the following specified customers of the City of Oakridge who are starting service and maintaining accounts:

1. A new customer with the City of Oakridge who has no prior credit experience with the City.
2. A tenant customer authorized to open an account by the property owner.
3. A customer that has had a delinquent with the City in the past.

Upon request, the City of Oakridge will return any remaining balance of the deposit to a non-tenant customer after a one-year period provided the customer has kept his account current for the preceding 12-month period.

A tenant's deposit shall be held by the City of Oakridge and applied to the final billing when tenant moves from account address. Any excess monies between the deposit and final billing shall be refunded to the tenant.

Each water meter account of a customer shall be treated separately. At the option of the City of Oakridge, should a customer of the City of Oakridge water move from a premise having a water meter on the premises, the City of Oakridge may credit the customer's new water meter account with any balance due to the customer on a previous deposit. For a customer moving from the City, credit will be given on the final bill.

Water applications are required for all accounts. Accounts that do not have a water application on file will be required to complete the application and return it to the Water Department 20 days from the date of request. Applications not received within that time period may be subject to disconnection until the application is received.

Water service can be refused to an applicant under any of the following conditions:

1. When the premises to be served does not abut a public street, road or way, and the City of Oakridge does not have accessibility to the property through an existing easement.
2. When a water main has not been installed to the property to be served, and it would be impractical to extend a main as determined by City Hall.
3. When in the judgment of City Hall the existing water main is of insufficient size to supply the additional demand and maintain satisfactory service to established consumers.
4. When the applicant is delinquent in the payment of previous rents, charges or assessments.
5. When the property to be served is not within the corporate limits of the City of Oakridge and an annexation agreement has not been executed by the owner(s) of that property as may be required by the City.

## **ACCOUNTING and BILLING**

Each owner of real property supplied with water by the City of Oakridge shall be liable for charges for water and/or sewer service supplied to the premises, and service may be terminated or denied at any premises where there are outstanding water or sewer charges, or to any person who has outstanding water or sewer bills with the City of Oakridge. The agreement by the City of Oakridge to carry an account in the name of a tenant or other non-owner in no way relieves the owner(s) of liability for water charges for the premises.

A bill for applicable services will be issued for each billing period or part of a billing period during which the meter is listed on the records of the Utilities Billing Office as being in the "on" position, and the charge will be determined from the difference between two consecutive meter readings.

Accounts that are closed and have a credit balance of less than \$5.00 will not be refunded.

Bills are processed and mailed in the first work day of the month, and are due and payable on the 20th of each month, and payment must be received at the billing office by that date.

Accounts not paid by the 20th day of the month are subject to a late fee of 10% of the account balance. Accounts unpaid by the due date of the next consecutive bill shall be considered as being delinquent and water service may be discontinued at any time thereafter.

The Utilities Billing Office will endeavor to give proper notice of water and/or sewer service charges, but by law, cannot guarantee delivery of mail. Failure to receive notice by mail shall not excuse customers from prompt payment of bills.

Water accounts are established and assigned to the property itself. Billings are sent in care of individuals. Owners of property will be held responsible for water used in their premises, but payments will be accepted from tenants under the following conditions:

1. The tenant must furnish the billing office with the name and address of the property owner when beginning service;
2. The tenant must show a current lease or the most recent rental receipt to the billing office clerk, and;
3. All water bills must be paid in full, unless the billing office is provided a signed and notarized statement by the property owner giving the City permission to accept partial payments from the tenant.

Any delinquent accounts by a tenant will have a duplicate bill generated and mailed to the owner of the property where service is provided. Property owners who have tenants on an accounts that has been activated previous to the implementation of these policies is responsible for contacting the Utilities Billing Office to assure that they

are properly noted as the owner in the billing records. Delinquent accounts are closed administratively. Final account balances must be paid in full 10 days after closing the account. Accounts not paid in full 90 days after closing the account will be sent to our collections department.

Checks returned for insufficient funds are subject to a \$15.00 charge, and this charge and amount of the bill must be paid to the Utilities Billing Office with cash, cashier's check, or money order. The Utilities Billing Office will contact the water user by phone or mail with regards to returned checks, however, checks returned on an account that is already delinquent or becomes delinquent before payment is made at the Utilities Billing Office is subject to immediate shut-off.

## **WATER AND SEWER RATES AND CHARGES**

To provide funds necessary for the operation and maintenance of the municipal water and sewer systems, the Oakridge City Council has approved resolutions establishing rates and charges.

### Charges

#### Water Connection (tap) Charge :

¾" Meter	\$ 1,500.00 (Minimum)
1" Meter	\$ 1,700.00 (Minimum)
1 ½" Meter	\$ 4,100.00 (Minimum)
2" Meter & Over	\$ 4,500.00 (Minimum)

Water meters damaged by negligent use or repairs undertaken by the owner shall be repaired or replaced by the Department of Public Works, with the actual cost being assessed to the property owner.

#### Sewer Connection (tap) Charge:

Single Dwelling	\$ 700.00
Multiple Dwelling	\$ 750.00 + \$50.00 for each additional unit using same tap point
Other Buildings	\$ 750.00 + \$50.00 for any additional unit using same tap point
Mobile Home Park	\$ 750.00 + \$50.00 for each additional space using same tap point

All water and sewer taps may be subject to a maximum waiting period of up to 30 days depending upon scheduled Public Works activities and availability of material.

#### Service Restoration Charge

Regular-hours service call	\$60.00
After-hours service call	\$90.00
Processing Fee for delinquency	\$60.00 first time \$75.00 thereafter

In the event of an emergency, the charge may be waived at the discretion of the City Administrator or his designee.

#### Water / Sewer Main Extensions – Contact City Hall

#### Storm Water Charge                      \$3.07

This fee covers treatment of storm water, and maintenance and upgrades to the storm drain system.

#### Monthly Water Rates:

Residential Users (Base Rate includes 1,000 gallons, more than 1,000 gallons charged at Use Rate)

<u>Meter Size</u>	<u>Flow Capacity</u>	<u>Base Rate</u>	<u>Fire Flow Charge</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Use Rate</u>
5/8" & 5/8"x3/4"	20 gpm	\$ 44.03	\$1.00	\$ 45.03	\$3.97/1000 gal.

Commercial Users (Base Rate plus Use Rate on the gallons used)

<u>Meter Size</u>	<u>Flow Capacity</u>	<u>Base Rate</u>	<u>Fire Flow Charge</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Use Rate</u>
3/4"	30 gpm	\$ 44.03	\$1.00	\$ 45.03	\$3.97/1000 gal.
1"	50 gpm	\$ 69.51	\$1.00	\$ 70.51	\$4.74/1000 gal.
1-1/2"	100 gpm	\$143.46	\$1.00	\$144.46	\$4.74/1000 gal.
2"	160 gpm	\$244.26	\$1.00	\$245.26	\$4.76/1000 gal.
3"	300 gpm	\$521.06	\$1.00	\$522.06	\$4.76/1000 gal.
4"	400 gpm	\$952.26	\$1.00	\$953.26	\$4.76/1000 gal.

In the event a single meter services two or more residential dwelling units, commercial or industrial establishments, the applicable minimum (base) charge per billing period shall be charged to the owner for each benefited unit served in addition to the applicable volume charge.

Water service users outside of the City limits will be charged an additional 100% of the calculated rate, but are not charged for fire flow.

Flat rates: If water service is not metered, the user shall pay the customer charges as set forth above according to the meter size of the connection, paying an estimated monthly use charge.

Monthly Sewer Rates:

<u>Type of Dwelling, Unit, or Use</u>	<u>Rate per Month</u>
Individual Detached Residential Dwelling	\$40.56
Any Combination of Dwelling Units, Hotels Rooming Houses, Apartments, and Mobile Home Parks (without RV spaces)	\$38.44 per Occupied Unit
Mobile Home Parks with RV Spaces	\$38.01 for the first 19,000 gal. of water used, plus \$ 37.99/ 5,000 gallons for each additional.
Any Combination of Businesses, or Businesses and Dwellings	\$38.44 for first 5,000 gal. per Dwelling Unit, plus; \$38.44 for first 5,000 gal. per Business Unit, plus; \$ 38.44/1,000 gal thereafter.
Individual User with Primarily Industrial Waste	Established by City Council based on an analysis of expected flows and nature of waste.

The rates and charges listed in this manual are subject to adjustment by the City Council, as they deem necessary. **The base rate and the usage rate shall be increased each July 1 by the percentage change in the January Portland CPI-U published in the LGPI monthly newsletter.**

**WATER AND SEWER CREDITS**

Vacancy credits may be given by the Utilities Billing Office for rental units that were not occupied for a full billing period. The application for credit must be given to the billing office clerk prior to the due date, either in person or in writing, and must specify the address and living unit that is unoccupied.

The Utilities Billing Office, under the direction of City Hall, may adjust the sewer portion of the utility bill if the charge is above the flat rate of sewer service. This may occur when water has been used, but not drained into the sewer collection system.

## RESPONSIBILITIES OF CUSTOMERS

It is the responsibility of the owner of property to maintain all piping and plumbing fixtures past the City water meter in good condition, adjustments will be made at the discretion of the City and will be calculated as follows:

- Adjustments will be for a 2 month period only, based on customer consumption during the same 2 month period the prior year and will only be considered after documents are presented showing the repair has been made.

**It is the responsibility of the owner of property to maintain the sewer lateral line to the City sewer main. The City will not be responsible for broken, plugged, or otherwise inoperable sewer laterals. When the City sewer main is located beneath a City maintained street, the City will saw-cut the paving, tamp the completed backfill in the trench, and repair the street cut. It is the responsibility of the property owner and his contractor to coordinate this operation with the City.**

## NON-PAYMENT & COLLECTION

Where water and/or sewer charges are unpaid for at least 60 days and where the unpaid bill has arisen from a service contract made directly with the owner of the property served by the connection, as described herein, the City may file a lien against the property by certifying the unpaid amount, plus any associated penalties, to the Lane County clerk. The Utilities Billing Office will send the property owner written notice of the impending certification at least 30 days prior to the certification in accordance with the Oregon Revised Statute (ORS). If, however, the City determines that a transfer of the property is about to occur, it may file the lien without having to meet the requirements that the rents or charges be unpaid for 60 days and the property owner receive 30 days' advance notice of the impending certification.

Any lien for unpaid water and/or sewer charges will be immediately released upon payment in full of the amount certified as unpaid rents, charges and penalties.

As an alternative to the above procedure, delinquent water bills may be turned over to the City Attorney for collection.

It is the established policy of the Utilities Billing Office to accept only total and complete payments for water and sewer charges billed. At any time prior to the due date of the bill, the Utilities Billing Office may accept partial payments of unpaid charges, but only under the following guidelines:

1. A minimum of 50% of the outstanding bill must be paid,
2. Accounts must be brought current by the next billing period; and
3. Only two such partial payments may be made within a period of one year.

Any water user or property owner may discontinue utilities service and be exempt from regular billing by requesting a final bill from the Utilities Billing Office and having the curb stop turned to the "Off" or closed position and locked by Public Works personnel.

## DISPUTE RESOLUTIONS

Procedures for resolving disputes involving the customer and the water and sewer utilities or the Utilities Billing Office have been established as follows:

Step 1 - Customer notifies the clerk in the billing office, and presents a thorough explanation as to why he/she feels the City is in error. The clerk will thoroughly research the problem within five (5) working days of the customer request. An answer will be transmitted to the customer within ten (10) calendar days of the original complaint.

Step 2 - Should the customer not be satisfied with the answer received in Step 1, the customer may request a hearing before City Hall. The Dispute Hearing shall be held within 5 working days of the request. The customer shall present all information to the Director to justify their claim. The Director shall make a written decision within 10 working days of the hearing. The decision of the Director is final.

## **SERVICE CALLS**

Service calls will be made during regular working hours and without charge for the following purposes:

- 1) Leak investigation
- 2) To locate the City-owned portion of the system
- 3) Meter inspection
- 4) Opening and closing accounts

If during investigation it is determined that the leak is in the customer's portion of the system, the City will turn off the water at the curb stop. The customer is responsible for accurately locating the leak and for repair. There will be a charge for turning the service back on and for any additional turn offs by the City. Following repairs, service may be turned back on by a plumber. There will be a charge for service calls made which are not during normal working hours, which will equal the cost of manpower expended by the City.

Any required repair to the curb stop, meter or customer service valve will be performed by the City during normal working hours as soon as it can be scheduled.

## **GENERAL INFORMATION TO CUSTOMERS**

### Cross Connections

No physical connection between the public water supply and any other source of water or other liquid is allowed unless the auxiliary or other water system and the method of connection and use of such system shall have been approved by the appropriate City official and by the Oregon Department of Health. Annual testing and inspection of backflow devices is required at customer expense.

### Waste Materials & Discharge

No filth, animal matter or any other substance may be placed in any city water system or reservoir, and no prohibited materials as outlined by City Codes may be discharged into the sewer system. Also, it is not permissible to make any storm sewer connection, such as a rain downspout, to the sanitary sewer.

### Freezing

The City will not assume the cost of thawing water services on the customer's side of the service valve. The customer must demonstrate that their portion of the service line is not frozen before the City will attempt to thaw the line on the street side of the curb stop. It is the City's policy not to use electric welders to thaw services.

### Repairs

Failure of the property owner to make repairs in a timely fashion when necessary can result in the water being turned off at the curb stop until such repairs are made. Should it be determined that a broken service line is causing a traffic hazard or property damage to others, the water may be turned off at once. The customer should make arrangements for a temporary water supply until such time as the necessary repairs can be made.

### Meter Testing

If a customer request that the meter be tested, they must pay the following deposit:

1" and smaller meters	\$30.00
Greater than 1"	Estimated of cost as determined by Public Works.

### Fire Hydrants

The Water Department shall install and maintain fire hydrants as authorized by the council for adequate fire protection. No person except an authorized agent of the Water Department, Fire Department, or a person with a special permit from City Hall, shall take any water from fire hydrants under any circumstances. Water used from hydrants to provide potable water for fire camps or other temporary emergency installations shall be metered and charged at the prevailing user rate and is subject to an administrative charge. Public Works will designate the hydrant to be used. Payment arrangements made with City Hall must be made in advance at the Utilities Billing Office, unless an emergency situation arises and approval is given by the City Administrator or City Hall.

### Tampering & Theft

No one may connect to any public water line, tamper with or remove any meter seal, or insert a meter bypass without the permission of or his agents, and no one may operate, open, or otherwise tamper with any valve, after it has been closed for violation of any rule or regulation of the Department of Public Works, or in any way take water for private use unlawfully or without first having secured the necessary permit from the authorized representative of the Department of Public Works. Continuous evidence of water being unlawfully reconnected after having been turned off for will result in the disconnection of service by removal of the meter, in which situation the customer shall pay all cost incurred in reconnecting the service branch, with the City retaining the option of replacing the service branch with new materials. If the Public Works Department finds that a meter seal has been broken or any bypass inserted, or there is evidence that the meter has been tampered with, the water shall be shut off and shall not be turned on again until the consumer or owner of the premises shall pay for the estimated quantity of water which has been used and not registered, and in addition, be charged a fee for turning on the water.

The criminal laws of the State of Oregon provide penalties for tampering with water meters, meter seals, etc. This fee is in addition to the penalties provided by City Ordinance and by the criminal laws of the State of Oregon and making payment to the Utilities Billing Office will not in any way relieve any person from criminal prosecution.