



Utility Billing Policy and Procedure

Approved: 2014-08-14 ~ Resolution 2014-73
Amended: 2015-07-14 ~ Resolution 2015-77
Amended: 2022-03-22 – Ordinance 503
Amended: 2022-05-31 – Resolution 2022-70
Amended: 2023-09-12 – Resolution 2023-108
Amended: 2025-05-13 – Resolution 2025-45

Definitions: The following words and phrases shall have the meaning as defined below.

- I. *Bill* means the statement of account for municipal utility services rendered by the city to a customer and due and payable to the city by the customer
- II. *City* means the municipal corporation known as the city of Center Point, IA and designated agent authorized to act on behalf of the City Of Center Point
- III. *Customer* means any person, firm, corporation or entity to whom municipal utility services are rendered.
- IV. *Delinquent customer* means and person, firm, corporation or entity who fails to pay any current, charges or portion thereof for any municipal utility by the due date of the bill.
- V. *Municipal Utility* means the water, sewer and sanitation services of the city of center point or any combination thereof.
- VI. *Past due amount* means any current charges or portion thereof for any municipal utility which remains unpaid past the due date of the bill on which such charges first appeared.

Service

There shall be only one address with one meter served by a service line except as listed below, or otherwise noted in the policy and procedures or City Code.

Multiple Occupancy Buildings

There are two types of multiple occupancy buildings:

- Each unit can be considered a separate customer and metered, shut off and billed separately or
- Property owner can assume responsibility for payment of water consumed by the tenants in apartments or offices under one roof. These units are billed under one meter having one shut off.

Meters installed in multiple occupancy buildings with more than one customer must be clearly identified and marked as to which customer is being served by each meter. These meters must be located in a common utility space with outside access. The owner must furnish a key or key code to the Public Works department for all entries necessary by the City.

If the property owner cannot meet these listed requirements, all accounts will be billed to the property owner. Unpaid bills on any of the accounts will result in a shut-off.

Second Meters

A second meter can be installed at the owner's request. The meter will be a system where the water flow is not disposed of through the public sanitary sewer system. A second meter can be used for: swimming pools, irrigation and washing cars. The installation must have proper plumbing to an outside faucet and be of permanent hook-up.

Meter Requirements

All city water furnished to customers of the City of Center Point must be measured through meters furnished and installed by the Public Works Department. Meters remain the property of the City.

The second meter remains with the property. In the event of a sale of the property the new occupant must either pay for the service provided by the second meter or have a licensed plumber remove the meter terminating the account. An inspection of the removal will be required by the Public Works Department along with the return of the City's meter.

Specifications and current rates for installation are shown in the chart below.

5/8 x 3/4 10ft ³	\$122.00
5/8 x3/4 meter couplings	\$12.00
End Unit (60w)	\$80.00
Installation	\$77.00
Watts Series Residential Dual Check Valve	\$50.00
Total	<u>\$341.00</u>

Delinquency on a Second Meter

Failure to pay the bill on a second meter will result in water being turned off for the entire service address. Water bills for second meters will be sent on separate invoices on the same schedule as regular utility bills as set by the City Code 92.04.

Sewer Lien Waivers

The customer will be required to sign a sewer lien waiver form provided by the City of Center Point before the sewer fees will be waived on the second meter sewer lien waivers are available at the City Clerk’s office.

Bulk Water Meters

A hydrant meter issued for use by commercial applicants may be issued on a case-by-case basis, approved by the Public Works Director.

Bulk water customers must complete an application for bulk water at City Hall. Once the use is approved an administrative and installation fee of \$50.00 will be due, along with a \$1,500 deposit, the city will hold the check as the refundable deposit.

It is at the Public Work Director’s discretion as to which hydrant may be used.

It is the bulk water customer’s responsibility to provide backflow preventers and equipment beyond the meter for their desired application.

Service Classification

Service classification shall be based on the type of service supplied and on similarities in customer demand characteristics.

Residential

Residential utility service includes, water, sewer and recycling. Residential recycling cannot be waived pursuant to City Code 107.03.

Commercial

Commercial utility service includes water and sewer. Commercial accounts are not charged for recycling as per City Code section 106.02. Commercial accounts are required to have a dumpster on site with a minimum regular, weekly pickup arranged on their own.

Service Charges

Each Customer shall pay for water service provided by the City based upon use of water as determined by meters. Each location, building, premises or connection shall be considered a separate and distinct customer whether owned or controlled by the same person or not.

Water / Sewer Tap Charges

1. Water Tap Fee \$750.00
2. Sewer Tap Charges \$750.00
3. Meter Fee \$341.00

Contractors and homeowners requesting service at a new address for the first time must first complete and pay for water and sewer taps with their building permit. At the time the meter is installed, a meter hook-up form will need to be completed.

Rates for Service in City Limits

Water Service shall be furnished at the following monthly rates within the City:

1. 0-150 cubic feet, will be billed using the table below (minimum bill).
2. Over 150 cubic feet or any part thereof, will be billed using the table below.

Water rates shall increase for each fiscal year by ~~2%~~ 4% as shown below:

Minimum Bill	Over 150 Cubic Feet
FY25: \$19.29	FY25: \$3.50
FY26: \$20.06	FY26: \$3.64
FY27: \$20.86	FY27: \$3.78
FY28: \$21.70	FY28: \$3.93
FY29: \$22.56	FY29: \$4.09
FY30: \$23.47	FY30: \$4.25
FY31: \$24.41	FY31: \$4.42
FY32: \$25.38	FY32: \$4.60

3. There will a charge for water purchased in bulk directly from the municipal water department as follows:
 - a. \$50.00 per 1,000 gallons or any portion thereof.
 - b. \$50 charge for installation of on-site meter by City Public Water Department.

Second Meter Rates

1. 0-150 cubic feet, will be billed using the table below (minimum bill).
2. Over 150 cubic feet or any part thereof, will be billed using the table below.

Water rates shall increase for each fiscal year by ~~2%~~ 4% as shown below:

Minimum Bill	Over 150 Cubic Feet
FY25: \$19.29	FY25: \$3.50
FY26: \$20.06	FY26: \$3.64
FY27: \$20.86	FY27: \$3.78
FY28: \$21.70	FY28: \$3.93
FY29: \$22.56	FY29: \$4.09
FY30: \$23.47	FY30: \$4.25
FY31: \$24.41	FY31: \$4.42
FY32: \$25.38	FY32: \$4.60

Second Meter Billing

The customer will be responsible for paying a minimum bill from April 1 – October 31 of each year. The minimum for water monthly shall be the same as regular water rates as set by ordinance reviewed annually in June.

During the months of November, December, January and February the customer will not be billed a minimum. However, meters will still be read during these months should usage occur during the off season. The account holder will be charged the minimum for water. Customer will be subject to an inspection of the connections by the Public Works Department if usage continues during off season.

Sewer Service shall be furnished at the following monthly rates within the City:

1. 0-150 cubic feet \$42.72*
2. \$10.26 per 100 cubic feet or any part thereof*

3. Sewer rates shall increase as amended in the City Code of Ordinances by the City Council.

Recycling/Trash Collection shall be furnished at the following monthly rates within the City:

1. \$15.75 for 1 garbage can weighing 40lbs or less and 1 recycling bin collected weekly*

Rates for Service outside City Limits

Water service shall be provided to any customer located outside the corporate limits of the City which the City has agreed to serve at a rate of one hundred fifty percent (150%) of the rates provided by current Code. No such customer, however; will be served unless the customer shall have signed a service contract agreeing to be bound by the Ordinance, rules and regulations that apply to water service established by the Council.

Application for Service

Residential, Commercial and Bulk Water customers may obtain services by visiting Center Point City Hall located at 200 Franklin St, Center Point 52213.

A complete application must include the following

- Full Name of Each Applicant
- Social Security Number (s)
- Billing Address
- Physical Address
- Phone Numbers
- Landlord Contact Information
- Signature
- Photo Id
- The application is available as a pdf file on the website.

The application process shall include

- Payment of all past due accounts owed to the City by the applicant
- Required deposit of \$100.
- Review of completed application and valid state issued photo id of applicant

Deposits

A \$100 Deposit is required from every customer or prospective customer, with the exception of property owners who already have established a current good credit history of at least two years with the City Water Utility. Prior to providing service, Deposit is due to guarantee the payment of bills for service.

A person other than the customer may pay the deposit, however; the deposit refund will be issued to the account holder either in the form of a credit to the account or a check at termination.

Initial Service Deposit

A deposit shall be required if any of the following criteria exists:

- Past payment history (24 months) is unsatisfactory having more than one late payment during the most recent 24 months of billing without a current deposit on file.
- Applicant has no previous utility service with the City of Center Point
- New service if for a different rate classification for which payment history hasn't been established

Receipt for Deposit

Each person making a deposit will be issued a receipt at the time the deposit is made.

The City of Center Point will keep record of the following concerning the deposit:

- The name and address of each account holder
- The amount of the deposit and date of the initial deposit
- Each transaction concerning the deposit

A duplicate receipt may be obtained by calling City Hall at (319) 849-1508

Deposit Transfers

When an applicant moves service from one address to another and has a deposit on file with the first property the deposit will be transferred instead of requiring a new deposit only if a complete application including social security numbers, phone numbers and contact information is provided.

Deposit Refunds

Refund for Prompt Payment

A deposit shall be refunded after 24 months with no more than one late payment during that time. If a customer is eligible for a refund it will be credited to the account the deposit was made on. Cash and checks will not be issued for this type of refund.

Refund for Termination of Service

Upon completing a termination of service form at City Hall, a final meter reading and bill will be prepared. Any deposit refund amount will be

applied to the final bill. Should a credit balance exist, a check will be issued once approved with claims before the City Council. The check will be mailed to the forwarding address provided on the termination of service form.

Unclaimed Deposits

A record of each unclaimed deposit will be maintained for a period of 2 years from the date service is terminated. During that time the City of Center Point will make a reasonable effort to return the deposit to the account holder. If a deposit is not claimed after the two years the unclaimed balance shall be transferred to the State of Iowa, Treasurer in accordance with Chapter 556, Code of Iowa.

Billing Information

Monthly meter readings are taken on dates designated by the City, and bills will be sent out by the 1st of each month.

Customers are billed according to the appropriate rate schedule for metered and non-metered services provided during the billing period.

Billing Form

The following information will be on the bill sent by the City of Center Point

- Account Number
- Due Date
- Amount Due
- Read Dates From - To
- Service Location

Bill Payment Terms

A bill is due and payable when rendered and is considered delinquent if not received by the end of the day on the 15th of the month. If the 15th falls on a weekend day, the bill is due by the end of the next business day. At that time, a service charge of 10% will be applied to the balance remaining on the account. Each account will be granted ~~one-time forgiveness of a late charge fee~~ **one exception every 12 months.** The account will be noted and another will not be given.

Billing Second Meters

The customer will be responsible for paying a minimum bill from April 1 – October 31 of each year. The minimum for water monthly shall be the same as regular water rates as set by Ordinance reviewed annually in June.

A separate bill will be sent for second meters. They will not be included on the regular combined utility billing.

During the months of November, December, January and February the customer will not be billed a minimum. However, meters will still be read during these months should usage occur during the off season the account holder will be charged the minimum for both water and sewer. Customer will be subject to an inspection of the connections by the Public Works Department if usage continues during off season.

Billing Bulk Water

Bulk water will be billed within 24-36 hours of the return of the meter. The file will be entered in a disconnect status and a final bill will be produced and sent to the customer with a 14 day due date as with final bills. If not paid in 14 days a second attempt to collect will be sent with one (1) week to remit. Should a third notice be needed it will be sent utilizing the Offset system to notify the customer that the delinquent account will be sent to the Iowa State Income Offset Program.

Payment Options

Payments can be mailed, dropped off, put in the drop boxes located in both parking lots at City Hall, put in the drop boxes located in the parking lot and front of the building at City Hall, Center Point Foods parking lot, paid by automatic withdrawal or paid online through Payment Services Network. Acceptable forms of payment are: cash, check, cashier's check, money order, credit card and/or debit card. If a resident is paying with a credit card/debit card or check online they will incur the convenience fee that is set by the vendor. If the resident uses a credit card/debit card at City Hall they will also incur the convenience fee set by the vendor. If payment is occurring via Bank Account/ACH, residents will NOT incur a service fee. Public Works employees are not authorized to accept payments; all payments need to be direct to City Hall.

Automatic Withdrawal

Automatic withdrawal (ACH) will be deducted from the checking / savings account designated on the ACH form. ACH draft will be pulled on the tenth day of the month, if the tenth lands on a weekend they will be done the following business day.

The ACH form shall include the following information

- Service Address
- Financial Institutions Name
- Financial Institutions Account number
- Financial Institutions Routing Number
- Date the ACH Draft will Start

- Name of the Account Holder
- Utility Account Number
- Social Security Number

ACH forms are available on the website.

Partial Payments

Partial payments are accepted; late fees are only applied to the balance remaining after the due date. Service will be shut off should the balance on the account exceed ~~\$25~~ \$30 by the cutoff date listed on the delinquent notice.

Payment Exceptions

The City will allow each customer an exception once every 12 months to postpone paying their bill after the due date. ~~The customer must submit, and sign an exception form for approval.~~ The customer will have to pay all late fees and posting fees that have occurred on the account in order to fulfill exception requirements. An exception cannot exceed 5 business days after shut off date.

Returned Check and ACH Rejections

A \$30.00 service charge is assessed to any customer whose check is returned unpaid or ACH payment is rejected by the financial institution on which it is drawn. The service charge shall be in addition to the late payment charge if the check is not made good prior to the delinquent date of the bill. If two or more checks or ACH drafts are dishonored within 12 months the account will be made cash only for 24 months. ~~The cash only comment code shall be utilized in Incode.~~

Public Works will post the service address of the account with the returned check or rejected ACH. The notice shall be folded to protect the account holder's privacy and shall include the account number, the address and the reason for the posting.

Payment of a dishonored check or rejected ACH must be paid including the service fee ~~within 48 hours or be disconnected~~ before the shut-off date. Payment is only accepted by secure payment option such as cashier check, money order or cash.

Disconnections and Reconnections

Customer Initiated (Voluntary)

Temporary Disconnections and Reconnections – Meter (Voluntary)

Upon reasonable notice by a customer the City may make temporary disconnections for the customer's convenience. To complete repairs for example. There is no charge to the customer for this service.

Temporary Vacancy – (Voluntary)

A property owner may request water service be temporarily discontinued and shutoff at the curb when the property is expected to be vacant for an extended period of time. During a period when service is temporarily discontinued as provided herein there shall be no minimum service charge. The City will not drain pipes or pull meters for temporary vacancies.

A termination form should be utilized for this process to ensure the City has proper mailing and contact information.

Permanent Disconnections (Voluntary)

A customer requesting permanent disconnection shall provide a minimum of 1 business days' notice to the city and complete a utility service termination form.

The termination form must include the following:

- Service Address
- Request Date
- Service Date
- Forwarding Address of the Account Holder
- Social Security Number
- A valid photo id must be present at the time of termination only the account holder or their designated reps may terminate service.

Utility Initiated (Involuntary – Due to Nonpayment)

City of Center Point reserves the right to refuse or disconnect service for nonpayment of the bill or deposit, subject to the provision of these policies and procedures and City Code.

The City of Center Point shall give a delinquency notice the next business day following the due date listed on the bill. The delinquency notice will be provided to property owner when requested in writing. The notice will state the date the service will be disconnected if the account is not paid in full by noon on that date.

Written Notice

The Clerk's office shall notify each delinquent customer that service will be discontinued if payment of the combined service account, including late payment charges, is not received by the date specified in the notice of delinquency. Such notice shall be sent by ordinary mail and shall

inform the customer of the nature of the delinquency and afford the customer the opportunity for a hearing prior to the discontinuance.

Notices shall include the following:

- City Hall Contact Information
- Balance Due
- Disconnection Date
- Late Fee
- Right to a Hearing

Notice to Landlords

If the customer is a tenant, and if the owner or landlord of the property has made a written request for notice, the notice of delinquency shall also be given to the owner or landlord. A form for the landlord to use is available on the website.

Hearings

If a hearing is requested within ten days after notice of the proposed disconnect, the City Clerk's office shall conduct an informal hearing and shall make a determination as to whether the disconnections are justified. The customer has the right to appeal the decision within five days, to the Council, and if Council finds that disconnection is justified, then such disconnection shall be made, unless payment has been received.

Posting

The Public Works Department will post the service address of a property that has not paid the delinquent amount 2 days prior to the disconnect date, **starting at 11 a.m. 12:30 p.m. and concluding by the end of the business day.** A posting charge of \$25 will be added to the account at the time the service order is prepared. The City will not waive posting fees once an order is prepared.

Disconnection

Disconnection of a residential customer will take place after 12 p.m. on the date listed on the posting and late notice.

A \$50 re-connect fee during Public Works operation hours (8:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.) and \$100 after hours shall be charged before service is restored to a delinquent customer. No fee shall be charged for usual or customary trips in the regular changes in occupancy of property.

Reconnection

If a disconnected customer makes payment during Public Works business hours 8:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. water will be restored no later than 3:30 that day.

Collections, Liens and DAS Offset Program

The City may assess the taxes of a property to collect utility charges owed through special assessment; however, this is not always feasible with the high number of rental properties in Center Point. Therefore, the City of Center Point also utilizes the State of Iowa's Income Offset program to collect delinquent unpaid utility accounts. The account holder who is delinquent will always be the first sought after for payment. Should attempt to collect payment from the account holder become unsuccessful, the property owner will be assessed through special assessment on the service address taxes.

Collection / Bad Debt

Once an account is disconnected either through voluntary or involuntary means the account is finalized within ~~48 hours~~ 30 days and a final bill is produced. If there is a deposit refund, the amount will be credited to the account. If a balance exists a final bill is sent to the last known mailing address of the account holder. The due date on a final bill is ~~14~~ 15 days from the date it was prepared. A second notice if payment is not received by the initial due date is sent and noted in the account. After ~~one week~~ two weeks has passed a third notice is sent utilizing the Offset letter to notify the customer that if payment is not received within 30 days, the delinquent account will be sent to the State Offset Program for collection. If the account holder is the owner of record, a lien notice will be sent to the owner in place of the Offset letter.

Income Offset Program

A method used by the State of Iowa and its political subdivision to collect money owed to the State under Chapter 8A.504 of the Iowa Code.

Process

An account holder is eligible to be sent to the Income Offset Program when the balance of the account is not paid after three attempts to collect and service is no longer active for the customer.

Documentation

The delinquent account should be in a final status in ~~incode~~ G-Works. A note shall be added when the initial final bill is mailed, and a due date of ~~14~~ 15 days from the date the bill was prepared, should be used. ~~Final bills shall be prepared within 24-36 hours of the termination of service, if voluntary. If involuntary a wait period of 48-72 before a final is sent and documented.~~ If voluntary or involuntary, final bills shall be prepared within 30 days.

A second notice if payment is not received by the initial due date is sent and noted in the account. After one more week has passed a third notice is sent utilizing the Offset letter available in Incode notifying the customer that if payment is not received within 30 days the delinquent account will be sent to the State Offset Program for collection.

Fees

A ~~\$30.00~~ \$50.00 administrative fee will be charged by the State Income Offset Program.

Minimum Amount

The minimum amount is ~~\$50.00~~ \$30.00 however; **NOT** including the administrative fee.

Eligibility

An account holder is eligible to be sent to the Income Offset Program when the balance of the account is not paid and after three attempts to collect. The file sent to the Offset program must include a tax identification number, social security number, or fed tax id.

Tax Matches

The City receives notification of debt matches from the State throughout the year via fax. Upon receiving notification, the City is to notify the debtor within ten (10) calendar days from the date of the notification stating that the debtor has fifteen days to provide proof of payment or pay the debt less the administrative fee.

Notice to the Offset Program should include:

- Contact information of City (agency)
- Account information
- Account holder information
- Amount owed
- Date due

Dispositioning the Lien on the Offset site

If the debt is not resolved following notification with the certified letter, the City has 45 days from the date of the match to notify the income offset program of the actions to be taken. Once a debt is brought to a zero balance, the debtor will be removed from the City's debtor file with the Income Offset Program.

Lien for Non Payment

The owner of the premises served and any lessee or tenant thereof shall be jointly and severally liable for water service charges to the premises. Water Service charges remaining unpaid and delinquent after 45 days from the date of billing shall constitute a lien upon the premises served and shall be certified by the City Clerk to the County Treasurer for collection in the same manner as property taxes.

Process

A lien for delinquent water service charges shall not be certified to the County Treasurer unless prior written notice of intent to certify a lien is given to the customer. If the customer is a tenant and if the owner or landlord of the property has made a written request for notice, the notice shall also be given to the owner or landlord. The notice shall be sent to the appropriate persons by ordinary mail not less than thirty (30) days prior to certification of the lien to the County Treasurer.

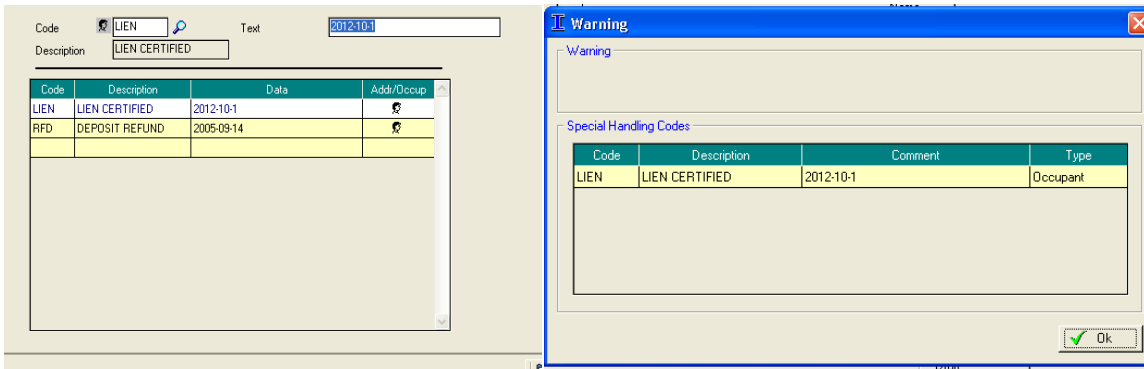
Two form letters are available in Incode one for owner occupied; the other non-owner occupied or rental. They are titled Lien Notice to Homeowner for an owner occupied property or Lien Notice to Owner for a non-occupying landlord. A copy of each letter should be retained.

The owner of record information can be verified at <http://linn.iowaassessors.com/> if the mailing address is not available for the owner of a rental property an e-mail can be sent to the assessor's office with the parcel number. The Assessor's office will provide the mailing addresses for the owner of the parcel.

If payment is not received on the 31st day from the date of the notice the following form should be used to certify the lien to the County Treasurer. Multiple liens can be entered on this form. The original should be mailed to the Treasurer's Office.

Documentation

Each account shall be documented with the date of the certification adding the comment code LIEN and entering the date the lien was certified by the Clerk. The LIEN comment code is setup to pop this warning when you enter that account again.



Fees

The County charges a \$5.00 processing fee. The City will not be applying these fees. They will be added by the Treasurer’s Office when they receive the certified special assessment.

Deadline

Special Assessment deadline annually is July 1st. Certified liens must be received by the Treasurer’s Office by the 1st to be added to the September tax bill. If it is not received by that date it is still a lien on the property and the lien won’t show on that year’s tax statement. If the property were to be sold or transferred for any reason prior to the next mailing of tax statements, the special assessment would show up on a lien search for the property and payment would be required before it would be transferred.

Minimum Lien Amount

None; any amount qualifies

Payment

Payment from the Treasurer’s Office is shown as a credit on our annual tax statement from the Treasurer’s Office listing each lien that was recovered.

Verification

To verify the special assessment was applied to the tax bill go to www.iowataxandtag.org. Search property taxes either by parcel number or by last name.

The screenshot shows the 'Select Amounts to Pay' section of the Linn County Property Tax Payment Service. It displays two tax periods: 2011 Current Real Estate Tax and 2012 Future Annual Special Tax. Each period has a table of installments with columns for Due On, Late On, Balance, Late Int. & Cost, and Add to Cert. A blue callout box points to the 'Add to Cert' column for the March 2013 installment of the 2011 tax, which contains the text 'Lien for unpaid utilities'.

Installment	Due On	Late On	Balance	Late Int. & Cost	Add to Cert
September	9/1/2012	10/2/2012	\$0.00	\$0.00	Zero Tax Due
March	3/1/2013	4/2/2013	\$1,157.00	\$0.00	* Pay full amount of \$1,157.00 or make a partial payment: \$ <input type="text"/>

Installment	Due On	Late On	Balance	Late Int. & Cost	Add to Cert
September	9/1/2013	10/1/2013	\$165.28	\$0.00	* Pay full amount of \$165.28

Lien Exemption

The lien for nonpayment shall not apply to a residential rental property where water service is separately metered and the rates or charges for the water service are paid directly to the City by the tenant. If the landlord gives written notice to the City that the property is residential rental property, the tenant is liable for the rates or charges. The City may require a deposit not exceeding the usual cost of ninety (90) days of water service be paid to the City. The landlord’s written notice shall contain the names of the tenant responsible for charges, the address of the rental property, and the date of occupancy. A change in tenant shall require a new written notice be given to the City within ten (10) business days of the change in tenant. When the tenant moves from the rental property, the City shall refund the deposit if the water service charges are paid in full. A change in ownership of the residential rental property shall require written notice of such change to be given to the City within ten business day of the completion of the change of ownership. The lien exemption does not apply to delinquent charges for repairs to water services.

A form is available for use by landlords on the City’s website.