

Title: Utility Billings and Collections

Resolution: 071-2013, 2023-0185

Revised:

Aug 14, 2023

Special Notes/Cross Reference:

Next Review Date:

Water and Sewer Utility Bylaw

**Waste, Recyclables, Organics Collection &
Disposal Bylaw**

Fees and Rates Bylaw

POLICY STATEMENT : There shall be a process established to invoice utilities in the Town of Westlock.

PURPOSE : To establish a billing and collections process that ensures a consistent method is used to invoice Owners for utilities.

1. DEFINITIONS

- 1.1. **"Chief Administrative Office"** or the **"CAO"** - the person appointed as chief administrative officer of the Town of Westlock or his/her designate.
- 1.2. **"Council"** – the municipal Council for the Town of Westlock.
- 1.3. **"Owner"** - the person registered as the Owner of a property pursuant to the provision of the Land Titles Act (Alberta) and shall include a person who is purchasing a Property under an Agreement for Sale.
- 1.4. **"Town"** – the Town of Westlock, in the Province of Alberta.

2. GUIDELINES / PROCEDURES / RESPONSIBILITIES

- 2.1. The Town calculates utility services at the beginning of every month for the previous month.
- 2.2. **Meter Readings** - Water meters shall be read as reasonably practicable during the last three (3) business days of the month during which the utilities were consumed.
- 2.3. **Billings** - Owner shall be invoiced within the first seven (7) days of the month immediately following the month the utilities were consumed or used.
- 2.4. **Fees & Charges**

The billing will include the following utility services:

- a) Water Consumption
- b) Water Distribution System Charges

- c) Sewer Collection
 - d) Sewer Collection System Charges
 - e) Waste and Recyclable Collection Charges
 - f) Westlock Regional Waste Reserve
 - g) Infrastructure Fee
 - h) Green Fund Surcharge
 - i) Storm Water Infrastructure Charge
- 2.5. All accounts for utility service shall be due and payable upon receipt of the bill.
- 2.6. Accounts not paid on or before the last calendar day of each month shall be liable to a penalty.
- 2.7. A 2.5 % penalty will be applied to all charges, levies, and previous penalties that are in arrears, on the day following the due date.
- 2.8. The utility supply to any Owner who fails to pay his account for a period of thirty (30) days from the due date, may be shut off for non-payment.
- 2.9. A Utility Reminder Notice will be mailed or emailed to the Owner providing notice that their account is in arrears and that if these arrears are not paid within seven (7) calendar days, the utility service may be disconnected. The Utility Reminder Notice shall be in the form outlined in Schedule "A" of this policy.
- 2.10. If the utility bill is not paid within the specified time or payment arrangements acceptable to the Town are not made in the Utility Reminder Notice, a twenty-four (24) hour Notice of Disconnection will be delivered to the premises. The sample Notice of Disconnection form is outlined in Schedule "B" of this policy and may be amended from time to time to ensure effectiveness of the form.
- 2.11. If arrears owing is \$25.00 or less, the premises will not receive a twenty-four (24) hour Notice of Disconnection or an arrears letter.
- 2.12. If the arrears are not paid within the twenty-four (24) hours' notice period, the utilities may be disconnected. The utilities will not be reconnected until:
- a) all utilities owed on the account are paid in full;
 - b) applicable reconnection and administration fees are paid in full;
 - c) suitable payment arrangements have been made by the Owner;
 - d) twenty-four (24) hours after the payment is received or suitable arrangements are made.
- 2.13. An Administration Fee, as determined by the Town of Westlock Fees and Rates Bylaw will be charged for the following:
- a) Transfer of utility account balance to the property tax account;
 - b) Non-sufficient funds (NSF) charges for each cheque or automatic withdrawal for which there is insufficient funds to cover the amount of the payment.
- 2.14. Section 553 of the Municipal Government Act, any utility charges remaining



unpaid can be levied and collected in a like manner as municipal taxes. Utility charges can be transferred to the Owner's tax account. Outstanding utility charges that are over ninety (90) days past the due date may be assigned to the Owner's tax account.

2.15. Payments can be made the following ways;

- a) Town Office either cash, cheque, debit or credit card. After hours drop box available;
- b) the Customers bank;
- c) preauthorized Town of Westlock payment plan;
- d) through the Customers on-line banking services;
- e) through the mail;
- f) e-transfer;
- g) Option Pay or other online payment service that may be available.

3. PROVISION FOR BAD DEBT AND DOUBTFUL ACCOUNTS

3.1. This section of the Policy shall apply to utility charges outstanding after 90 days from the date of invoice.

3.2. Guidelines

- a) Provision for bad debt and doubtful accounts will be determined on an annual basis;
- b) Estimates of the outstanding obligations that will likely become uncollectable will be determined by the Director of Finance;
- c) The provision amount is calculated to be the amount that will reduce the accounts receivable to their estimated net realizable value;
- d) Annual estimates are to be included in the Town's annual operating budget for Council approval;
- e) Any write-off of an uncollectable account shall be applied against this provision.

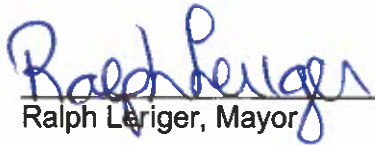
4. WRITE OFF AND REMISSION

4.1. This section of the Policy shall apply to all utility account debts and obligations owed to the Town and have become uncollectable.

4.2. Guidelines

- a) On an annual basis, accounts deemed uncollectable that collectively are below \$2,500 will be submitted to the CAO for approval for write-off by the Director of Finance. When the account amounts collectively exceed \$2,500, a list will be prepared and submitted to Council for approval prior to write-off upon recommendation of the Director of Finance;
- b) A write-off is the removal of all or part of a debt or obligation owed to the Town. A write-off does not extinguish the right of the Town to collect the debt, obligation or claim at a later time;
- c) Where it is in the public interest, the Chief Administrative Officer can recommend the cancellation of an outstanding obligation to Council.

- Council has final approval of any cancellation;
- d) Cancellation is the forgiveness of a fee, penalty or sum due to the Town. The cancellation may be conditional or unconditional, complete, or partial. If all conditions are met, cancellation extinguishes the debt and the Town's right to collect;
 - e) Debts and obligations discharged through the courts under bankruptcy do not require write-off approval from Council but will be reported to Council by the Director of Finance on an annual basis.


Ralph Leriger, Mayor


Simone Wiley, CAO

Schedule "A"

UTILITY REMINDER NOTICE

Town of Westlock
10003 106 Street
Westlock AB T7P 2K3



UTILITY REMINDER NOTICE

DATE
UTILITY ACCOUNT
MUNICIPAL ADDRESS

Our records show that your utility account with the Town of Westlock is in arrears in the amount shown above.

Payment of the utility account arrears is due in our office by [insert date] at 4:30 p.m.

If we do not receive full payment of the arrears in our office by [insert date] or if suitable payment arrangements have not been made by you, under the provision of Utility Bylaw 2013-05 your water service will be disconnected until such time as the account is paid in full. You will be charged further fees for reconnection of services and a fee will be levied in the event a transfer of utility account balance to property tax account is deemed necessary.

Thank you for your time and prompt attention to this matter. In the event that payment has been made, please disregard this notice.

Town of Westlock
10003 106 Street
Westlock AB T7P 2K3

**OWNERS
ADDRESS**

UTILITY ACCOUNT

TOTAL

AMOUNT PAID

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'JH' or similar, located in the bottom right corner of the page.

Schedule "B"

Below is the sample Notice of Disconnection form which may be amended from time to time to ensure effectiveness of those receiving the notice.

IMPORTANT NOTICE	
<input type="checkbox"/> REMINDER <input type="checkbox"/> FINAL NOTICE	
To Owner and/or Occupant:	
<input type="checkbox"/> Your Utility Bill is now past due. You are requested to PAY YOUR UTILITY BILL IN FULL , by the Due Date shown below at the Town Office located at 10003 - 106th Street.	
<input type="checkbox"/> PLEASE CONTACT THE TOWN OFFICE AT 780-349-4444 , with regard to your Water and Sewer Hook-Up Service.	
<input type="checkbox"/> PAYMENT OF SECURITY DEPOSIT OF \$ _____ IS REQUIRED , to be paid at the Town Office.	
<small>If we do not hear from you by the Due Date shown below, YOUR SERVICE WILL BE DISCONNECTED, without further notice. If you are unable to make the payment required by the due date indicated, please CONTACT THE TOWN OFFICE at 780-349-4444 TO DISCUSS ALTERNATE ARRANGEMENTS. If your SERVICE IS DISCONNECTED due to circumstances stated above, in addition to payment of the total amount outstanding on your Utility Account, payment of a RECONNECTION FEE OF \$ _____ WILL ALSO BE REQUIRED, prior to your service being reconnected.</small>	
DUE DATE: _____ 1:00 P.M.	
Your cooperation is appreciated.	
Town of Westlock • UTILITIES (Water / Sewer) DEPARTMENT • PHONE: 780-349-4444	

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