

Disconnection Policy

For the purposes of this policy the following definitions apply:

- (A) **Disconnection:** A deliberate interruption of a customer's water and/or sewer service by the City of Freeport.
- (B) **Delinquency:** Failure by the customer to tender payment for a valid bill or charge by the scheduled due date.
- (C) **Business Days:** Monday through Friday, excluding legal holidays and any other time the City of Freeport offices are not open to the public.
- (D) **Dishonored Instrument:** A check or other medium of payment tendered to the City of Freeport of which is denied payment by the payor bank and which is subsequently returned unpaid or uncollected to the City of Freeport.

1. General Rule:

All bills are due to be paid by the 14th of each month unless the 14th falls on a weekend or legal holiday observed by the City of Freeport. If the 14th falls on a weekend or legal holiday observed by the City of Freeport, all bills are due to be paid by the next business day. On the 20th of the month, ANY account with an outstanding monthly balance will be assessed a penalty for late payment in the amount of \$10.00. Once water goes through the city's meter it is billed, customers are responsible for ALL charges once the meter is checked and verified to be working properly. The city is NOT responsible for theft, hoses, proper functioning of sprinkler systems, internal and/or external plumbing breaks, problems or malfunctions and ANY other type of customer private property issue related to the utility service.

The Mayor or City Manager or his/her designee shall have the authority to adjust and/or waive any penalty or other fees. City staff will automatically forgive the penalty when the postmark date is on or prior to the current month's due date. The City of Freeport provides a "Leak Adjustment" once per year with documentation of the leak being fixed. The City of Freeport also provides a One in a Lifetime Adjustment for non-leak events once during the lifetime of the customer at that address.

2. Time and Notice of Disconnection:

In the event the utility bill has not been paid by the close of business on the 27th, or if the 27th falls on a weekend or holiday, then by the end of the next business day, the customer's water and/or sewer service shall be disconnected/terminated on the following business day. In no event will termination of services occur for nonpayment prior to the 28th of the month.

Automated reminder calls (2) will be provided to all customers with an outstanding balance on the 17th or next business day and again on the 23rd or next business day, a third contact attempt (phone, text or email) will be made the 26th and 27th AND PRIOR to disconnect. The city will not be liable if a customer does not receive any of the attempted contact methods AND the customer's account will be noted of all of the time/date of contact attempts.

3. Administration Fee:

A \$25.00 administration fee will be placed on all the utility accounts owing a bill greater than \$75.00 when the disconnect report is printed on the 28th/cut-off day. Please note, ANY customers making

payments under an approved payment plan will not be charged this fee provided ALL terms of the plan have been followed. Also, customers that have a valid charitable organization provide proof they will pay the customer's bill will not receive this fee nor should their services be disconnected.

4. Restoration of Services:

Services will not be reconnected prior to the customer paying the bill in full. The Mayor or City Manager, his/her designee may allow the current month's late penalty and/or the administrative fee to be paid the following month.

Same day reconnect is only available if a customer pays by 4:30 p.m. on the day of disconnection. Any customer paying after 4:30 p.m. on disconnect day will be reconnected the following business day. Reconnects will begin at 3:00 p.m. on disconnect day.

*Customers will be charged for any broken or damaged parts, as well as labor charges, if they attempt to break the lock and turn the water back on themselves. Cutting and/or damaging city equipment constitutes Theft of Utilities, and a report will be filed with the Sheriff's Department if this occurs.

5. Postponement of Disconnection/Early Restoration for Medical Emergency:

The City of Freeport will allow for a postponement of disconnection or temporary service restoration for a medical emergency of not more than ten (10) business days past the scheduled disconnection date if the customer, or a member of the customer's household, has a certified medical emergency. A medical emergency would exist if the customer/household member has a condition that will be aggravated by the lack of water service. A medical emergency has to be certified by a physician or public health official and provided on their letterhead. Request for additional postponement are granted only if the certifying physician or public health official state ten (10) days is not sufficient.

Total postponement/restoration shall not exceed twenty (20) days in a twelve (12)-month-period per household. Postponement/early restoration for a medical emergency in no way relieves the customer of its payment obligation to the City of Freeport. Payment arrangements will be made at the time of the extension/early restoration.

6. Dishonored Instrument:

The customer shall be charged a service charge according to §68.065 Fla. Stat. for every dishonored check submitted as payment to the City of Freeport. The City of Freeport will send notice of the return of payment to the customer stating the disconnection date if not paid or suitable arrangement made. Any customer providing a dishonored instrument to avoid disconnection or to have services restored shall have their services disconnected immediately once city staff is notified of the dishonored instrument. The City of Freeport reserves the right to discontinue accepting checks from anyone that has presented three dishonored checks.