



UTILITY CUSTOMER SERVICE POLICY & PROCEDURE

1. PURPOSE:

The City of Priest River (City) provides municipal Water and Wastewater utilities. The policies and procedures described herein apply to any customer supplied with one (1) or more of the above-referenced utility services. City regulations relating to these policies and procedures can be found in the Priest River City Code in Title 8 (Public Utilities). The Priest River City Code is available on the City's website at www.priestriver-id.gov.

It is the policy of the City of Priest River to provide utility services without discrimination and in accordance with sound business principles. User charges for services are set to cover the full costs of operation, maintenance, and capital improvements of the utilities. Thus, accuracy and timeliness in billing and collecting user charges is important.

These policies and procedures are intended to provide guidance to City of Priest River utility customers and staff to achieve the common goal of efficient and economic utility service. The City's official utility regulations are set forth in the Priest River City Code.

2. RELEASE OF INFORMATION:

A. CUSTOMER ACCOUNT INFORMATION:

Disclosure of account information is made in accordance with Idaho law. The City of Priest River may make customer records available to third party credit agencies in connection with the management of delinquent accounts.

B. RECORDS REQUESTS:

Public records requests can be submitted in-person at City Hall, 552 High Street, Priest River, Idaho, 83856, or by email at lthomas@priestriver-id.gov.

3. NEW ACCOUNTS:

All property owners must contact City Hall to initiate utility services as follows:

A. PROPERTY OWNERS:

All property owners must complete an Application and Agreement for Services Form and submit it with a copy of their warranty deed or deed of trust (provided by title company as part of real estate settlement documents).

B. LEASED PROPERTY:

The City of Priest River does not establish utility accounts for renters who lease property. Instead, the property owner is responsible for all utility charges. However, as a courtesy to the property owner, and upon receipt of a fully executed Application and Agreement for Services, the City will mail a copy of the utility bill to the current occupant of the property. The property owner may elect to continue to receive a copy of the utility bill if preferred.

4. WATER SERVICE:

All City of Priest River water usage is metered and billed by actual gallons used. Each equivalent residence (ER) is allocated 10,000 gallons per month and charged for every 1,000 gallons used thereafter. Radio Frequency Meters are read twelve months per year, and Manual Read Meters are read from April through October, weather permitting. Manual Read Meters are allocated 10,000 gallons for each month they are not read, and any water use over the allocated amount is charged for every 1,000 gallons and will be reflected on the customer's May utility bill.

5. TAMPERING WITH WATER SYSTEM:

Tampering with the water system in any way may result in criminal charges. It is unlawful to turn your own water on or off at the meter. Regulations governing tampering of the water system is set forth Title 8 of the Priest River City Code.

6. SEWER SERVICE:

Residential customers are billed for a fixed monthly charge for sewer service based on an equivalent residence (ER) table. Commercial customers are billed for sewer service based on an ER table and are allocated 10,000 gallons per month and charged for every 1,000 gallons used thereafter, based on their water usage.

7. UTILITY BILLS:

Utility bills are sent via US Postal Service or by email (if the property owner has requested paperless statements) to the account mailing or email address on record at the time bills are generated.

- Customers are billed monthly in accordance with the current rate structure, established by resolution of the City Council.
- Utility bills include charges for Water, Water Improvement Bonds, Sewer, Sewer Improvement Bonds, and Meter Replacement Fee.
- Bills are generated for services already rendered and reflect costs for the prior month's usage.
- Opening and closing bills will reflect pro-rated charges for Water, Sewer, and Meter Replacement Fee. Water Improvement Bonds and Sewer Improvement Bonds are not pro-rated and will be billed to the customer in possession of the property the longest within the billing cycle. If both parties were in possession of the property the same number of days, the Bonds will be billed to the property owner taking possession of the property.
- Water meters are read at regular intervals around the 10th of every month.
- Bills are mailed or emailed on the last business day of every month.

10. BILLING ERRORS/ADJUSTMENT OF UTILITY BILLS:

The City of Priest River makes every effort to ensure that accounts are set up correctly and conducts audits of accounts to identify errors. However, ensuring that the billing is correct is a shared responsibility with utility customers. If you do not receive a current or past due bill, it is your responsibility to contact the City to inquire as to the status of your account. The City of Priest River is not responsible for delays or lost mail caused by the US Postal Service or email service providers.

The City of Priest River recommends you review your bill monthly and discuss any questions or billing discrepancies with City staff. In the event a billing error is discovered, corrections will be calculated, and the customer will receive notification of the error and the corrections made.

11. DELINQUENT ACCOUNTS:

To keep costs of operations as low as possible, the City of Priest River pursues collection of all delinquent accounts. No account shall be written off or reduced for any reason. Please refer to the City's Doorhanger Policy & Procedure and Title 8 of the Priest River City Code for more information.

12. UTILITY DISCOUNT PROGRAM:

Customers that qualify for this program will receive a discount of 25% of the base unit charge of the water and wastewater utility service charges of their personal residence providing they meet the following criteria:

1. Applicant must be the owner of the home as recorded by Bonner County; and,
2. Applicant's annual household income must be at or below 150% of the Federal Poverty Level as shown on the Utility Discount Program Application; and,
3. Applicant must have the utility account in their name; and,
4. The application must be completed with the name, age, relationship to the account holder, and annual income of all household occupants, signed, and returned; and,
5. Applicant must apply each year during the month of April. If the renewal is not received by April 30th, the account will be taken off the reduced rate program with no further notice.

* If customers qualify for Bonner County's Property Tax Reduction Program, they will be approved with the submission of the receipt from Bonner County along with a complete application.

This discount applies to the base unit charge of the water and wastewater service charges only. Allowable water consumption under this discounted service charge is 10,000 gallons/month. Improvement bond charges and water overage consumption charges will not be discounted.

13. LOCATING UNDERGROUND UTILITIES:

The City of Priest River strongly recommends that you contact 811 ("Call Before You Dig") to assist excavators and contractors in identifying the existing location of the City's underground utilities. Should you not do so, you will be held responsible for actual costs and consequential damages resulting from damage to the City's services.

14. OFFICIAL CITY REGULATIONS:

The City of Priest River's official utility regulations are set forth in the Priest River City Code. In the event that any of the statements in this document conflict with the Priest River City Code, the Priest River City Code shall control.

15. CONTACT INFORMATION:


A. DURING BUSINESS HOURS:

Priest River City Hall
552 High Street
PO Box 415
Priest River, ID 83856
Monday through Friday, 8:00 am to 5:00 pm
Closed for lunch from 12:00 pm to 1:00 pm
Phone: 208-448-2123
Fax: 208-448-2232


B. AFTER BUSINESS HOURS:

All utility billing messages will be returned the next business day: 208-448-2123
Bonner County Non-Emergency Dispatch: 208-265-5525

Approved by the City Council on the 15th day of August, 2022.



Kevin Wylie
Mayor



Laurel Thomas, CMC
City Clerk/Treasurer