

How utility bills are calculated (residential customers):

Based on meter readings and current rate schedules, the City bills customers for electric, water and sewer consumptions. The City's utility bill may contain a monthly garbage and trash collection service fee and other service fees, depending on services provided to the customer (i.e., monthly security light fee).

Sewer effluent in residential cases is based on the amount of metered water, with a maximum sewer service charge per month of 1,600 cubic feet of metered water for 5/8 inch and 1 inch water meters. It is not cost effective to separately meter sewer effluent except for our largest customers. Sewer charges may exceed water charges. The City strives to set utility rates so that each type of service covers its own costs. On the topic of wastewater treatment costs, the City must abide by State and Federal laws governing discharge of treated wastewater. In most cases, the treated wastewater that the City discharges into the river is cleaner in some respects than the water we take from the river into our water treatment plant.

One component of the City's electric rate is the Wholesale Power Cost Adjustment (WPCA). This WPCA factor is multiplied times the kilowatt hours used, and the resulting dollar value is either added to the bill or deducted from the bill, depending on whether the WPCA factor is positive or negative. Rates are based to a large extent on past history (units sold during the previous year, amount paid to the City's power supplier during the previous year). The WPCA factor is used to adjust the electric bill to reflect the current cost of power paid by the City to its supplier, which usually is different from the test period used in setting the rates.

EXAMPLE (ONE RESIDENTIAL CUSTOMER, INSIDE CITY LIMITS WITH 5/8 WATER METER)

ASSUMPTIONS: Electric Meter Readings

Prior month	14555
Current reading	15755
Usage =	$15755 - 14555 = 1200$ kWh
WPCA Factor	+0.00039 (actual August 2011 factor)

Water Meter Readings

Prior month	156000
Current reading	157800
Usage =	$157800 - 156000 = 1800$ cubic feet

USING RATE SCHEDULES IN EFFECT 7-01-11, A SAMPLE MONTHLY RATE CALCULATION FOLLOWS FOR ELECTRIC, WATER AND SEWER SERVICES:

Electric (on 1200 kWh)

Service Charge		14.20
First 500 kWh per month @ .1000 per kWh	500 x .1000=	50.00
Next 500 kWh per month @ .0960 per kWh	500 x .0960=	48.00
Next 200 kWh per month @ .0940 per kWh	200 x .0940 =	18.80
WPCA 1200 x +.00039		.47

Electric charge on utility bill \$131.47

Water (on 1800 cubic feet)

First 300 cubic feet @ .0286 per cubic foot	300 x .0286 =	8.58
Next 700 cubic feet @ .0225 per cubic foot	700 x .0225 =	15.75
Next 800 cubic feet @ .0186 per cubic foot	800 x .0186 =	14.88

Water charge on utility bill \$ 39.21

Sewer (water measured at 1800 cubic feet, but maximum is 1600 cubic feet)

First 300 cubic feet @ .0580 per cubic foot	300 x .0580 =	17.40
Next 1300 cubic feet @ .0250 per cubic foot (Maximum of 1600 cubic feet in effect.)	1300 x .0250 =	32.50

Sewer charge on utility bill \$ 49.90

Items to bring with you to connect services:

Correct service address.

If owner of property, need proof of ownership. If renter, need letter from owner giving tenant authority to connect services. The City has a form letter for the landlord to give this authority (available at our office or on our website), or landlord can write a letter stating the address to be connected in renter's name, date services can be connected in renter's name and name(s) to whom the service address is being rented.

Positive I. D. (with a picture).

Must be current, not expired.

If applicant does not have positive I.D., the applicant may take an affidavit form available at City Hall or on our website to the notary of his choice and present the notarized affidavit to the City instead of the positive I.D.

Social security number.

Social security number is requested and placed on our file for identification purposes. The City does not disclose social security numbers except by court order or to other governmental units.

Service fee.

The service fee must be paid before connection of services occurs. For current fee schedules, please check the City's website or call the Finance Department at 803-321-1007.

In order for possibility of same-day service connection, applicant must complete paperwork and pay fees prior to 4:00 p.m. If any delinquent bill is owed by applicant or anyone residing in household, the delinquent bill must be cleared prior to new service connection.

Requests for new water or sewer taps are made in the Utility Department located at 1323 College Street. The telephone number is 803-321-1018. Paperwork and payment are required prior to installation of taps. Annexation may be required if the new service address is contiguous to the City limits.

Other miscellaneous utility matters:

Office hours: open at 8:30 a.m., close at 5:00 p.m.

Office location: 1330 College Street

Telephone: 803-321-1007

Fax: 803-321-1009

Letters of Credit may be obtained by contacting our office at 803-321-1007.

Billing dates/due dates are driven by service address only and cannot be changed at present. The City bills all customers in one of three zones. Customers billed on the first have a due date of the sixteenth. Customers billed on the tenth have a due date of the twenty-fifth. Customers billed on the twentieth have a due date of the fifth of the next month.

A customer's utility bill is driven by two factors: the customer's metered usage and the City's utility rates. The customer's metered usage may be driven by weather (for example, use of air conditioning during the summer months to stay cool). The customer's metered usage may also be driven by choices made by the customer in the purchase and use of appliances or equipment. One good source of information dealing with electrical consumption is the Energy Information Administration of the Department of Energy's website at [www.eia.doe.gov](http://www.eia.doe.gov).

Charge for fire hydrant/sprinkler

The City's fire flow access fee applies to residential, commercial, and industrial customers located outside the City limits who receive benefit from the placement of fire hydrants installed along the City's distribution system.

Bill payment-related questions:

The City accepts credit/debit cards online only. Please check the Home Page of our website for the link to pay by your card. The customer is responsible for paying the bill plus any associated card fees.

The City's Budget Utility Billing Alternative (BUBA) is a method of payment by which a customer's prior consumption history is used to estimate the upcoming 12 months of utility bills. The annual estimate is pro-rated into 11 equal installments and the customer is billed for eleven months at the same amount. Month 12, the settlement month, reflects billing to the customer to bring into balance the amount the customer has paid according to the predicted consumption and the actual amount billed. The BUBA year begins in May, with the following April as the settlement month. BUBA, available to residential customers who meet the eligibility guidelines, keeps the monthly bills level for the first 11 months. However, BUBA customers are on the same rate schedules as non-BUBA customers, so the settlement bill may reflect a higher or lower number when compared to the amount billed per month of the first eleven months of the period, depending on actual usage by the customer.

BUBA information details follow:

### CITY OF NEWBERRY

#### REGULATIONS

#### BUDGET UTILITY BILLING ALTERNATIVE (BUBA)

1. Enrollment period for BUBA is April 1-20 of each year. (If April 1 and/or April 20 are not valid working days for City Office, the first working day in April will begin the enrollment period and the most immediate City Office working day prior to April 20 will end the enrollment period.) The BUBA program begins the following month, May, and settles in April of the following calendar year. At the customer's choice, any overpayment from the year's BUBA program may either be reflected as a credit on the next utility bill or refunded by check.
2. To be eligible for BUBA, a customer must be one of the following: (1) owner-occupied residential in good standing with no more than two late payments on his/her account for the most previous twelve months, or (2) rental residential in good standing with no more than two late payments on his/her account for the most previous twelve months. If a customer has been terminated during the past twelve months for non-payment, BUBA is not offered until that customer has accomplished twelve months in good standing. BUBA is not offered to any mobile home customers unless the customer owns and has owned the land on which the mobile home sits for one year and meets the guidelines of owner-occupied residential as outlined above.

3. The program is offered to residential customers as follows:

A. The residential customer must have an established usage history at the same location for both summer and winter usage. Twelve consecutive months of history is preferred.

B. The BUBA program is offered to a customer at a particular location. If a customer finalizes at one address, he/she must make application to enroll the next April to participate again in the BUBA program. The finalized address will settle immediately to avoid termination at the current address, if an amount is due to the City. If the settlement is a credit, this credit balance will be refunded to the customer.

C. The method for calculating the BUBA monthly installment is as follows: normal twelve months history divided by 11. The accounts will be subject to review during the BUBA year and the City reserves the right to re-estimate the monthly installment in extraordinary cases. However, the customer will be notified prior to a change in the BUBA monthly installment.

D. The BUBA customer is required to pay the assigned monthly installment on time (by the due time and date). If a BUBA customer fails to pay on time, the account may be immediately settled and removed from BUBA and may be subject to termination as required by ordinance.

E. If a BUBA customer or if someone residing in the household is found to owe a previous debt to the City, the customer will be contacted to settle the debt. If the debt is not satisfied, the customer will be removed from BUBA and the prior and current accounts settled to prevent termination at the current address.

Bank drafting:

The City has the capability to electronically deduct the amount of the customer's monthly utility bill from the bank account selected by the customer. The utility bill is still mailed to the customer at the normal time. The amount of the bill is deducted from the customer's bank account on the bill due date. The notation "PAID BY DRAFT" appears in the "AMOUNT PAID" block on the bill when the bank draft is in effect. The enrollment form is available on the back of the monthly utility bill, by mail, for pickup at City Hall, and on the City's Website. It is necessary to provide a voided check from the account to be drafted together with the signed enrollment form.

Partial Payments:

The City accepts any payment. However, payment in full must be received to guarantee that the service address is not subject to non-payment cutoff.

# Procedures for the Termination of Utility Services Due to Nonpayment

These procedures are established to ensure that the disconnection of utility services by the City for nonpayment is fair with regard to all utility customers and uniform among all customers. The procedures are established in accordance with State Law Sections 5-31-2510, 5-31-2520, 5-31-2530, 5-31-2540 and 5-31-2550. These procedures are applicable for disconnections due to nonpayment of active bills. The City has sole discretion on payment arrangements when active customers/residents are found to have unpaid past debts due to the City.

## **Definitions:**

- (1) “Licensed health care provider” means a licensed medical doctor, physician’s assistant, nurse practitioner, or advanced-practice registered nurse.
- (2) “Special needs account customer” means the account of a residential customer where the customer can furnish to the City a certificate on a form provided by the City and signed by a licensed health care provider that states that termination of utility service would be dangerous to the health of the customer or a member of his household at the premises to which utility service is rendered.
- (3) “Satisfactory payment history” means that the customer’s record of payment with the City for the past 12 months indicates no terminations for nonpayment and no more than two returned checks.
- (4) “Third party notification program” refers to a City program to allow a residential customer to designate a third party to be notified if the utility services are scheduled for termination.
- (5) “Standards for determining weather conditions” means that the City will not disconnect any utility service for nonpayment when the published forecast available at or about 9:00 a.m. shows that the high temperature for the day is forecast to be 96 degrees Fahrenheit or higher during cooling months or 38 degrees Fahrenheit or lower in heating months. These guidelines shall reflect actual temperature forecasts and not the projected heat indexes or wind chill temperatures. The temperature forecasts reported by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration ([www.noaa.gov](http://www.noaa.gov)) will be used to determine weather forecasts.

## **Collection Cycle and Schedule for Disconnection of Service for**

**Nonpayment.** The City will observe the following collection cycle and schedule for disconnection of service for nonpayment:

- The collections cycle begins on the day the bill is printed and dated. This is day 0 in the cycle.

- On Day 16, the bill is past due.
- On Day 16, the bill is noted as delinquent and a 10 percent penalty charge, not to exceed \$100.00 per utility account, is assessed.
- On or about Day 16, a delinquent notice is mailed, providing notice of the time within which the customer must make arrangements for payment prior to service termination.
- On Day 26, the service is eligible for disconnection.

If any of the above dates in the collection cycle fall on a Saturday, Sunday, or official holiday of the City, the collection event occurs on the next business day.

The customer has up to four possible options prior to service termination, on the day of service termination, or on the workday immediately following termination: (1) pay in full, (2) enter into a payment plan if the customer has satisfactory payment history, (3) present a valid Special Needs Customer Medical Certification Form, or (4) accept service termination. These options shall not be combined.

**Notification and Disconnection Procedures for Nonpayment.** The City is committed to notifying all customers of an impending termination for nonpayment. The notice will state the time within which the customer must make arrangements for payment prior to service termination. As a general practice, the notice is placed in the mail at least seven days prior to the scheduled disconnection date. The City shall observe the following disconnection procedures:

- The City will generate a list of all customers eligible for disconnection.
- City staff members will review each account in the morning to see if the customer has made payment to prevent the disconnection. Staff will also check to see if the customer is a Special Needs Customer and/or if the customer participates in the Third-Party Notification Program.
- Customers eligible for disconnection are added to the cutoff list.
- Customer service staff will check the weather in accordance with City standards for determining weather conditions to ascertain whether a disconnection is appropriate for that day.
- Service technicians will make disconnections. The City ensures that all disconnections are completed by approximately 2:00 p.m. to enable the customer to pay before 4:00 p.m. of the same business day which is the end of the daily connection/reconnection period.

- After disconnection, if the customer pays in full, if the customer has satisfactory payment history and arrangements are made to enter into a payment plan, or if a valid Medical Certification Form is timely filed by a Special Needs Customer, the City will use reasonable efforts to reconnect service as soon as possible, provided the customer offers positive identification and pays the appropriate reconnection fee as specified by City Code of Ordinances. Service will not be restored until such time as the customer meets these identification and financial obligations.

Usually the City does not disconnect utility services for nonpayment on Fridays or on days immediately preceding an official City holiday. However, at the City's discretion, disconnections may occur on any day of the week provided the City has followed the Notification and Disconnection Procedures for Nonpayment.

**Payment Plans for Customers with Satisfactory Payment History.** The City recognizes that at times customers face extraordinary circumstances which lead to difficult financial situations. It is for these times the City has established a payment plan program to assist customers who meet the definition of satisfactory payment history. Pledges from social service or charitable agencies recognized by the City are accepted by the City as payment.

Payment plans for customers with satisfactory payment histories will be managed as follows:

- A payment plan of up to 90 days may be offered customers experiencing extraordinary circumstances. An extraordinary circumstance is broadly defined as a significant event or events affecting a customer's life and ability to pay. Utility customer service representatives will use their best judgment in applying the extraordinary circumstances determination and are expected to seek advice and confirmation from supervisory staff as needed. The representative granting approval must enter appropriate account notes. The customer who enters a payment plan with the City is required to pay current billings so as not to again be subject to service termination due to nonpayment during the payment plan in addition to paying the delinquency in installments as agreed in the payment plan.
- Payment plans may be entered into prior to disconnection of services, on the day of disconnection of services, or on the workday immediately following disconnection of services.
- The payment plan will require payment of the reconnection fee, if applicable, and a minimum 33 percent of the total delinquent amount to be paid by the time the payment plan is agreed upon and the remaining delinquent amount paid in scheduled installments within a maximum period of 90 days.

- Payment plans may be entered into only one time per customer in a 12-month period. No Special Needs Customer option is offered in conjunction with the payment plan option.
- In the event any payment plan term is not met on the scheduled date or current bills incurred during the payment plan time period are not paid so as not to again be subject to service termination due to nonpayment of the current bills, service will be disconnected without further notification by the City and the total current and delinquent amount due to the City will be due prior to reconnection of service.
- Payment plans may not be entered into to satisfy service fees for new accounts, reconnection fees, tap fees or any other administrative fees.

**Availability of Public or Private Assistance in Paying Bills.** Annually, the City will provide information related to available social service agencies known by the City to offer financial assistance to City utility customers. The information may be provided either as a bill message that a list of social service agencies is available at City Hall or as a bill stuffer or separate mailing of the names and contact information of available social service agencies.

As part of the normal process of working with customers with delinquent accounts, the City will provide the names of these social service agencies to customers on request. If interested, customers may apply directly to these agencies for assistance. The agencies evaluate the customer's application for assistance and, if appropriate, notify the City of the results. The City does not make any financial assistance determinations.

**Third-Party Notification Program.** The City is committed to a third-party notification program for its utility customers. At least once each year the City will advise all customers to contact the City for information on the Third-Party Notification Program. The City will assist any customer interested in participating with the completion of the required Third-Party Notification Form that will be kept on file by the City. The form must be updated by the customer upon any change to information provided on the form by the customer to the City.

Disconnection procedures for customers participating in the Third-Party Notification Program are as follows:

- On the day prior to the scheduled disconnection date, the City will call the telephone numbers for the customer and the third-party listed on the Third-Party Notification Form to notify them of the City's intention to disconnect the customer's service by approximately 2:00 p.m. the following day for nonpayment.

**Recognition of Special Needs Customers.** The City is committed to meeting the requirements of our Special Needs Customers. To be recognized as a Special Needs Customer, the customer and a South Carolina licensed health care provider are required to complete the Medical Certification Form certifying that the customer or a member of the customer's household suffers from a health condition which would be dangerous to the patient's health if the utility services are disconnected for nonpayment. The certifying health care provider must be licensed in South Carolina as a medical doctor, physician's assistant, nurse practitioner or advanced-practice registered nurse. The City will provide the Form to the customer directly or will fax the Form to the customer's health care provider at the customer's request. The customer is responsible for ensuring that the completed form is returned to the City. The City must receive the executed Medical Certification Form prior to termination of services or on the day of termination only.

Once the executed Medical Certification Form is received by the City, the customer shall have seven calendar days from the health care provider's signature date to pay the delinquent bill. No payment plan option is offered in conjunction with the Medical Certification Form option. If a Special Needs Customer is subject to disconnection, the City will observe the following schedule for disconnection of service for nonpayment:

- The City will attempt notification of the Special Needs Customer **and** the authorized third-party (if the Special Needs Customer is participating in the Third-Party Notification Program) on the day prior to the scheduled service disconnection date. That notification will communicate the payment terms required to avoid service disconnection. The City will attempt personal contact of the Special Needs Customer or the City will call the telephone numbers for the customer listed on the Special Needs Customer Medical Certification Form. The City will call the telephone numbers for the third-party listed on the Third-Party Notification Form if the customer is a participant in that program.
- If contact by phone or in person is not made to either the customer or the designated third party when applicable, the City will leave a notice at the front door of the Special Needs Customer on the day prior to the scheduled disconnection date. The notification will state the payment terms required to avoid service disconnection. In the event the stated terms are not met, the City will disconnect service and may do so at any time after the time specified in the notification.

After disconnection, if the customer pays in full, the City will use reasonable efforts to reconnect service as soon as possible, provided the customer pays the appropriate reconnection fee and offers positive identification.

Special Needs Customers are in no way released from their obligation to pay their monthly bills according to the terms as noted on the monthly bill.

A Special Needs Customer will be encouraged to participate in the Third-Party Notification Program as outlined above.

**CITY OF NEWBERRY**

**Telephone: (803) 321-1007**

**Fax: (803) 321-1009**

**SPECIAL NEEDS CUSTOMER MEDICAL CERTIFICATION FORM**

**(Please Type or Print all Information)**

**Customer Information:**

Customer Name \_\_\_\_\_

Social Security Number \_\_\_\_\_ Acct. # \_\_\_\_\_

Work Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Account Address \_\_\_\_\_

Patient's Name \_\_\_\_\_

**Please read the following and initial each one:**

\_\_\_\_\_ I hereby give permission to release medical information on behalf of the patient named above to the City of Newberry.

\_\_\_\_\_ I certify that the patient named above is a member of my household residing at the above address.

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand that this Certificate will expire on the seventh calendar day following the date of signature by the licensed health care provider.

\_\_\_\_\_ I further understand that this in no way releases me from my obligations to pay my monthly bill in accordance with the City's standard payment terms.

Customer's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Patient, Patient's Power of Attorney, or Guardian if Patient is a Minor:

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Medical Information below to be completed by a SC Licensed Health Care Provider**

I certify that I have examined the patient named above and, in my professional opinion as a medical doctor, physician's assistant, nurse practitioner or advanced-practice registered nurse licensed by the State of South Carolina, I certify it would be dangerous to my patient's health if utility services are disconnected for nonpayment of bills.

Health Care Provider Name \_\_\_\_\_ Office Phone \_\_\_\_\_

SC Medical License Number \_\_\_\_\_

Circle one that applies: Medical Doctor, Physician's Assistant, Nurse Practitioner, Advanced-Practice Registered Nurse

Office Address

\_\_\_\_\_

Health Care Provider Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**CITY OF NEWBERRY**

**Telephone: (803) 321-1007**

**Fax: (803) 321-1009**

**THIRD PARTY NOTIFICATION FORM  
(Please Type or Print all Information)**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Account Number \_\_\_\_\_  
Social Security Number \_\_\_\_\_  
Work Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Account Address \_\_\_\_\_

The City of Newberry is committed to a third party notification system for its residential utility customers. The intent of this program is to offer our customers the opportunity to have a third party notified in the event of disconnection of utility services due to non-payment of bills.

Customers wishing to take advantage of this system must complete this form in its entirety and return it to the City of Newberry, 1330 College Street, Post Office Box 538, Newberry, South Carolina 29108. By submitting this form, the customer authorizes the Utility to release his/her utility account information to any or all of the parties listed by the customer below. The customer also assumes the responsibility to notify the City of any changes to the contact information listed on this form.

In the event that service for the above utility account is scheduled for disconnection, the City will call the telephone numbers for the customer and the third-party listed on the Third-Party Notification Form to notify them of the Utility's intention to disconnect the customer's service.

**In the event that the City attempts to notify the account holder (customer) and the authorized third party listed below and is unable to reach any or all parties, the City will continue with service disconnection as scheduled.**

**IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE CUSTOMER TO KEEP THE INFORMATION PROVIDED ON THIS FORM CURRENT. ALL CHANGES MUST BE REPORTED TO THE CITY OF NEWBERRY (803-321-1007).**

**Authorized Third Party:**

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Work Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Street Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

**Customer Authorization:**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, understand and agree to the terms listed herein and authorize the City to notify the above authorized third party as to the status of payment or non-payment of my City utilities account. I further understand that failure of the City, upon reasonable attempt described here, to notify me or the authorized third party will not preclude the City from disconnecting utility services.

Customer Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Customer Printed Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Third Party Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Third Party Printed Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Returned Check/Draft/Credit or Debit Card payment:

Upon notification by your bank or card company that you have closed the bank account or have insufficient funds in your account to cover a payment made to the City, please contact the City Finance Department at 803-321-1007. Once the City receives notification from the bank/card company that a payment instrument has been returned, we attempt to contact the customer by hand-delivering a notice to the service address or by telephone. If payment to cover the returned check/draft/credit or debit card and the returned payment instrument fee is received by the date stated by phone or on the notice, service delivery is continued. If the matter is not cleared by the date stated by phone or on the notice, utility services are discontinued due to nonpayment. If services are terminated, the amount of the returned payment instrument and any other outstanding bill due to the City, the applicable fee allowed under South Carolina Law for returned payment instruments, and a reconnection fee are due and payable at the City office. All payments to cover returned payment instruments and other fees/bills stated above must be in cash or by money order. Additionally, the customer in whose name the services reside must show positive identification in order for services to be reconnected. If a customer has two payment instruments returned to us within 12 months, payments to the City must be in cash or money order for a period of 12 months from the return date of the second payment instrument.