



# **TOWN OF BURGAW**

## **UTILITY POLICY**

**(APPROVED OCTOBER 13, 2015)**

### **REQUEST FOR SERVICE**

Any customer requesting services will complete an application and agreement for services. The customer will provide:

- a. Photo identification, and social security number (for collection purposes)
- b. NC GS 105A-3 (c)) or Federal Tax ID in the case of a business account.
- c. Signature on the application.
- d. Online credit check. The current cost to the applicant is \$5.00.
- e. The customer may pay a deposit of \$300.00 and waive the credit check.

Customers requesting same day service must complete the application process before 2:00 pm in order for Public Works employees to provide service.

Account information changes - Any changes of account information, mailing address or account name should be made in writing by the account holder to avoid mistakes.

- a. Notwithstanding the exception below, all residential utility accounts must be in the name of an individual who is at least 18 years of age who residents at the address associated with the account.
- b. For rental property (residential and commercial), the owner of the property may be allowed to keep the utilities in their name despite not occupying the property associated with the account.
- c. Upon the death of any utility customer, a surviving spouse must transfer the service into their name within 90 days of the date of death. In the event that service is not transferred within 90 days, the Town reserves the right to discontinue service and apply the deposit (if applicable) to all outstanding balances owed to the Town in the name of the deceased individual's estate.
- d. Under circumstances where service is transferred into the name of a surviving spouse, no new credit check or deposit will be required, however, all held deposits will be transferred into the name of the surviving spouse.
- e. Unless otherwise provided by this section, existing service may not be continued in the name of a deceased person unless provided by Section 2 (c). In the event that no surviving spouse resides at the address of service the account will be closed 90 days

after the date of death. Any deposit held by the Town, shall be applied to any outstanding balance. Any remaining portion of the deposit shall be mailed to the address associated with the account.

Business accounts – Business accounts are required to provide a Federal Tax ID and signature of an officer if it is a corporation or the social security number and signature of the owner of an unincorporated business.

The Town may decline service to any applicant if the owner of the property or the applicant has delinquent water accounts at any location with the Town.

### CUSTOMER DEPOSITS

Deposits for residential customers are determined by the online credit check and range from 0 to \$150.00 based on the results. The fee for the credit check and the deposit must be paid in full prior to services being connected. If a credit check cannot be completed because a social security number is not provided, the deposit will be \$300.00.

Business deposits are based on anticipated usage of the business or similar business:

<u>Gal. Mth. Usage</u>	<u>Deposit</u>
0-3000 gals.	\$125.00
3001-9000 gals.	\$250.00
9001-25000 gals.	\$700.00
25001-50000 gals	\$1250.00
50001-100000 gals.	\$2500.00
100000-**	\$2500.00 min

\*\* Deposits for high volume users will be determined on a case by case basis based on the best information available. For existing businesses that change ownership or discontinue service in one name and reestablish service in other name, the deposit will be based upon the average monthly usage over the last 12 months of service. For new businesses, deposits will be based on the anticipated usage, as determined by town staff, based on any existing similar uses present in the Town of Burgaw. Similar uses used for comparison will be determined based on the nature of the business conducted, number of employees, square footage of business, as well as other factors that are typically present with similar uses. Deposits may also be based on usage of similar businesses outside the Town of Burgaw.

Note: All previous balances associated with an existing business must be paid in full prior to the establishment of a new account in the event of a business relocating within Burgaw.

Master meter deposits for multi-family complexes are \$150.00 per unit. All newly constructed multi-family complexes are required to be on a master meter for the entire complex

Irrigation meter deposits are \$25.00.

All deposits are maintained by the Town until termination of service.

## **BILLING PROCEDURES**

Water meters will be read every month by Town employees. The reading dates will vary slightly from month to month due to weekends, holidays and inclement weather. The optimum monthly billing period is 30 days; however, it may range from 27 to 33 days. Readings will begin on the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the month when possible.

After meters have been read the Customer Service Representative will upload readings to the utility billing system.

The readings will then be reviewed for excessive use, manually read meters that are unusually high or low, and meters that have not been read. The Customer Service Representative will then prepare a list of meters to be re-read and/or examined for leaks by the meter readers. The Customer Service Representative will make adjustments and corrections as needed before bills are prepared.

Bills are mailed before the first day of the month.

All bills are payable upon receipt and are due by the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the month. The town has a grace period until the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the month at 5:00 pm. If the 15<sup>th</sup> falls on a weekend, all fees are due the prior business day before 5:00 pm. On the 16<sup>th</sup> or next business day, an administrative fee of \$35.00 is imposed on all delinquent accounts. All fees must be paid in full before the 21<sup>st</sup> day of the month to avoid disconnection of service.

Failure to receive bill in mail does not excuse responsibility for timely payment or prevent disconnection.

## **BILLING ADJUSTMENT PROCEDURES**

### **LEAKS**

Usage charges questioned within six months of billing may be eligible for adjustments to water and /or sewer charges. Adjustments are made for inside and outside city limit customers with water & sewer service with the Town of Burgaw.

Adjustments are made on high bills due to identifiable water leaks that do not enter the sanitary sewer system.

The following outlines the procedures for making adjustments:

- a. The customer's account is averaged for four months (or history available) for an average consumption. If no history is available, the customer will be required to pay a minimum bill for that month and billed based on usage for future bills, until four months after repairs have been completed for an adjustment on the beginning month's charges.

- b. If a leak is indicated by high usage during a particular month, only the prior two (2) months are eligible for adjustment. These adjustments will be made pursuant to this policy.
- c. The leak has been discovered and repaired. Adjustments are allowed only if a preventive repair has been made to the source of the water leak.
- d. Adjustments made to an account for repairs will not exceed more than two per calendar year.
- e. Documentation of leak and repair may consist of plumber's bill, recent receipts for plumbing repair parts or Town staff verification in writing.
- f. When a leak is confirmed to have not entered the sanitary sewer system, the applicable sewer charge is calculated based on the process described above for calculating the four month average consumption. When applicable, the current bill will reflect any sewer charge adjustments.

Except in extenuating circumstance, no consideration will be given to usage not questioned within six months of billing.

### **FILLING OF SWIMMING POOLS**

The Town will provide adjustments to customer's utility bills related to the filling of swimming pools according to the terms below. All inquiries regarding the filling of swimming pools should be directed to the Town's Customer Service Representative.

- a. The customer must notify the Town's Customer Service Representative prior to beginning the filling of the pool.
- b. All water utilized as part of the pool fill up will be charged on a per gallon basis according to the Town's approved fee schedule.
- c. Customer must provide the Town with hard copies or digital files of the meter reading prior to and immediately following the completion of the filling of the swimming pool as well as pictures of the filled pool.
- d. Customer must provide the town with verification of the pools dimensions. Verification includes, but is not limited to, shop drawings or technical specifications of the pool, aerial photo of the pool along with dimensions and depth information, etc.
- e. The sewer charges will be adjusted by the amount of the usage between pool fill-up meter readings. However, 360 gallons a day of usage will be deducted from the adjusted amount in order to account for the domestic sewer that is used at the residents during the filling process.
- f. Adjustments will not be made on pools less than 1,000 gallons.
- g. Adjustments made for a leak in the pool after initial fill-up will be done only if the owner produces a receipt from materials bought for repair or plumber's receipt.

- h. Pools with maintenance problems will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

### **SUSPECTED METER ERRORS**

Upon the determination by the Town that a meter error may exist, the Town will remove the water meter for accuracy testing. The accuracy of the meter will be tested and verified by a qualified third party of the Town's choosing. In the event that the meter test at an accuracy level of 100% or less, the customer shall pay the full cost of the meter testing plus a \$200 administrative fee to cover the cost of removing and reinstalling the tested meter. Any meter tested which indicates a reading over 100% will result in a credit being applied towards future billing to the active account. If the account is inactive, a refund will be issued to the customer.

### **DELINQUENCY PROCEDURES**

A list of delinquent customers will be prepared after 5:00 pm on or around the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the month and the administrative fee will be imposed on those accounts.

- a. On or around the 11<sup>th</sup>, the Town will mail delinquency notices to all customers who have not paid their current bill.
- b. On or around the 21<sup>st</sup>, drop box payments will be processed and a shut off list prepared. Any customer who has not paid all fees by 8:00 am on the 21<sup>st</sup> will be cut off, unless a payment arrangement was made prior to the 15<sup>th</sup>. The shut off list will be reviewed by the Customer Service Representative and the Finance Office or Town Clerk prior to it being sent to Public Works before 10:00 am on the shut off day. Accounts will not be shut off on Fridays or the day before a holiday.
- c. The Public Works Department will work from the shut off list and record the meter reading for each meter, shut off service and send the list of meter readings to the customer service clerk. The Public Works Department does not collect money. All accounts scheduled for shut off must be disconnected.
- d. As payments are received by the Customer Service Representative, work orders will be sent to Public Works to reconnect paid accounts. However, all disconnects on the shut off list will be completed prior to Public Works conducting any reconnections.
- e. After 2 business days, if customer has not paid for service to be reconnected, a list of delinquent accounts will be sent to Public Works. This list will include meter readings from the day of shut off. Public Works will record the current meter reading for each meter on the new list and send to the customer service representative. If the readings indicate usage, Public Works will lock or pull the meters.

- f. Reconnection of service will occur between the hours of 11:00 am and 5:00 pm on the day meters are shut off for non-payment and between 8:00 am and 4:00 pm on regular work days. Meters will not be reconnected until all fees have been received. If delinquent bills are paid after 3 pm, the Town will try to reconnect service by 5 p.m. No reconnects will be done after 5:00 p.m.

### **WAIVER OF ADMINISTRATIVE FEE**

The assessment of the administrative fee as referenced above may be waived under the following circumstances:

- a. The administrative fee can be waived once a year on request by the customer prior to the 15<sup>th</sup> at 5:00 pm, if the account has not been delinquent in the previous 12 months.
- b. The administrative fee can be waived for a customer with a good history of paying before the due date, who is willing to have future payments made by bank draft.
- c. The administrative fee can be waived by the Town Manager based on extenuating circumstances.

### **DISCONNECTION OF SERVICE**

The Town may disconnect utility service for one of the following reasons:

- a. Failure of the customer to pay bills for utility service as required by this policy.
- b. Failure of the customer to allow Town employees access to meters at reasonable hours for the purpose of reading or maintenance and repair.
- c. Upon discovery of meter tampering including unauthorized connection for service, bypassing the meter or altering its function.
- d. Failure of the customer to repair plumbing systems after being advised by Public Works of leaks which result in excessive water use.
- e. Emergency repair and maintenance as required by Public Works.
- f. Service may be terminated due to a returned check if repayment and returned check fees are not paid within 7 days.

The customer should request disconnection of service. The customer can call or come into the Town Hall to submit a disconnect order. The following information will be required upon request: name on the account, address to terminate, customer's SSN or verification of SSN (last 4 digits), date of termination, forwarding mailing address for final billing. Until service is requested by a new customer at that location, the current customer will be responsible for any water consumed until disconnection.

Water service can be discontinued by the customer or by the Town. The water meter will be turned off and locked after disconnection for any reason has occurred. Service will only be restored when a new customer has made proper application for service at that location and all fees and deposits have been made.

### **BULK WATER PURCHASE: HYDRANT METER**

In order to provide for the bulk water purchase from the Town, the following procedures shall apply for person(s), firms, or corporations that request over 10,000 gallons of water or requires temporary access to water for a period of less than one (1) year. Customers requiring temporary water access for more than one (1) year must have a permanent water service installed at that location. All appropriate permits and fees must be paid for by the contractor and in accordance with Town policy. For bulk water purchases of less than 10,000 gallons please reference the next section of this policy. All customers will be required to complete a hydrant meter service application (appendix A) for the use of fire hydrant metering devices.

The use of a hydrant meter shall be contingent upon strict adherence to the following requirements and conditions:

Failure to comply with the conditions below will result in the immediate suspension of hydrant meter privileges.

- a. An RPZ backflow and/or air gap is required during all hydrant usage pursuant to this policy. Only Town of Burgaw hydrant meters with approved backflow assembly provided by the town may be used to obtain water from a fire hydrant in the Town service area.
- b. Hydrant meter assemblies are subject to availability.
- c. Customer will be billed on a monthly cycle by Town of Burgaw billing for all water usage and rental fees at the current applicable outside Town rate per the Town fee schedule. The customer will send their readings to Town Hall by the 7<sup>th</sup> day of each month. Readings can be sent by fax to 910-259-6644, by e-mail to [customer.service@townofburgaw.com](mailto:customer.service@townofburgaw.com), by mail to Town Hall at 109 N. Walker St., Burgaw, NC 28425, or bring the hydrant meter to Public Works at 207-B S. McRae Street to be read.
- d. Customers will be charged additional fees, as described below, if the returned equipment is damaged or equipment is missing.
- e. Customers will be allowed to rent the hydrant metering devices by the day or month.
- f. Non-refundable rental rates for the hydrant meter and backflow preventer assembly are listed in the table below, no pro-rating will be allowed on monthly accounts.
- g. In addition to the rental charge, the customer is responsible for paying for the actual amount of water used (consumed) and will be billed by the Town based on the meter readings for the rental period.
- h. Absolutely no discharge into the sewer collections or storm water systems is allowed.
- i. Rental and consumption charges shall be billed monthly or at the end of the applicable rental period, whichever comes first.

- j. Rental rates are for the actual time customer has the meter, regardless of usage, and will be billed monthly.
- k. No meter shall be used unless temperature is 35 degrees Fahrenheit or above and rising. When temperature falls to 35 degrees Fahrenheit, hydrant shall be closed and the hydrant meter shall be disconnected from the hydrant. Failure to comply may be subject to a fine.
- l. Customers shall be trained in proper usage prior to issuance of a hydrant meter assembly. At no time shall the customer tamper with the meter. Use of water withdrawn from fire hydrants will be used only for the specific purposes stated on this application and only at the locations described on this application.
- m. At no time shall any hydrant meter/backflow assembly be disassembled, repaired or altered by anyone other than Town of Burgaw staff.
- n. At no time shall any hose be left connected to a fire hydrant that is not connected to a hydrant meter assembly.
- o. Only use an approved hydrant wrench. Do NOT use a pipe wrench, crescent wrench, etc.
- p. Before installing the hydrant meter, open the hydrant slowly and let the water flow for approximately 30 seconds to clear the line of debris.
- q. When opening a hydrant, turn the wrench slowly counterclockwise until the wrench stops turning, then back off  $\frac{1}{4}$  turn.
- r. Make sure you regulate the water flow by turning your hydrant meter's gate valve,
- s. NOT by partially opening the hydrant or adjusting the ball valves on either side of the backflow. No pipe wrench is to be used.
- t. A hydrant must be turned completely on or it will drain. The draining is through a valve under ground level and will damage the area surrounding the hydrant and/or the hydrant itself.
- u. Large 3" hydrant meters shall NOT be connected directly to the hydrant. You must use the "S" tube or a fire hose to attach the hydrant meter to the hydrant. However, 5/8" hydrant meters can be directly connected to the hydrant.
- v. Do not leave your hydrant meter on the ground. The hydrant meter should be supported and no less than 12" off the ground at its lowest point to allow for proper backflow prevention and drainage. The customer is responsible for providing the materials to support the hydrant meter.
- w. The fire hydrant or hydrant meter should NOT be left on overnight or unattended. Customer is responsible for ensuring the meter and hydrant are secured when not in use. Customer shall be responsible for all water registered through meter in the event that meter is cut on by someone other than customer.
- x. When closing a hydrant, turn the wrench slowly clockwise until the wrench stops turning, then back off a quarter turn.
- y. Be sure to replace and tighten all hydrant caps hand tight after use.
- z. Do NOT let anyone drive over or place materials on the fire hose connecting the hydrant meter to the hydrant. It may cause severe damage to the hydrant meter, hydrant, and water lines in the area.
- aa. Report all broken fire hydrants IMMEDIATELY; call Public Works at (910) 259-2901 or Town Hall at (910) 663-3445.



- bb. Customer shall ensure that the meter is registering and that no leaks are present. Any broken or leaking meters/backflow shall be returned immediately to the Town of Burgaw for repair.
- cc. Any damage to the Town’s fire hydrants and/or potable water system caused by negligent use of a fire hydrant may result in a fine as described below. Lessee will also be held liable for all Town costs for the repair and/or replacement of all related water mains and devices.

Administrative Fee	\$50.00
Daily Hydrant Meter Rental Rate	\$10.00 / Day
Monthly Hydrant Meter Rental Rate	\$300.00 / Month
Bulk Rate	\$0.0104 / Gallon    \$10.40/per 1000 gal

Penalties

Only Town of Burgaw hydrant meters with approved backflow assembly provided by the town may be used to obtain water from a fire hydrant in the Town service area. The use of any hydrant meter assembly other than those provided by the Town of Burgaw will be subject to a fine. Continued use of a hydrant meter, when usage readings are not being registered will be considered a violation and will be subject to a fine in the amount of \$250.00 per day, per violation. It is the responsibility of the customer to notify Public Works at 910-259-2901 or Town Hall at 910-663-3445 when the meter is not registering or recording water usage. All hydrant meter assemblies are the property of the Town of Burgaw Public Works Department. Failure to return the hydrant meter assembly at the end of the rental period will be considered theft of Town property and will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law (see following page for current replacement rates).

Hydrant Meter	\$1,000.00
RPZ Backflow	\$900.00
“S” Tube	\$300.00
Gate Valve	\$100.00
Hydrant Wrench	\$50.00
<b>Total Replacement</b>	<b>\$2,350.00</b>

Water Restrictions

All hydrant meter usage may be subject to immediate recall or return in the event of the implementation of water restrictions.

**BULK WATER PURCHASE: TANK FILLING**

In order to provide for the bulk water purchase from the Town, the following procedures shall apply for person(s), firms, or corporations that request under 10,000 gallons of water. All customers will be required to contact Town Hall to prepay and/or provide credit card information

and complete a hydrant meter service application for the use of fire hydrant metering devices. Filling station is located at Burgaw Fire Department.

- a) Filling station and hydrant meter assemblies are subject to availability. The party wishing fill a tank pursuant to this policy will be required to supply all necessary fittings to accommodate a 3” hose.
- b) Filling of a tank must be coordinated with the fire department and is subject to their availability.
- c) An RPZ and/or air gap must be present while filling. Tanks without an air gap will not be filled.
- d) All tank fillings will be conducted by town staff.

Administrative Fee	\$10.00/per tank filling*
Filling Station Rate	\$25.00/1,000 gal.**

\*Administrative fee must be paid prior to each tank filling. Fee will not be prorated based on amount of water purchased.

\*\*Town will not pro-rate the rate if less than 1,000 gallons are purchased.

**Water Restrictions**

All tank filling services are subject to immediate discontinuance in the event of the implementation of water restrictions.

**UNAUTHORIZED WATER AND SANITARY SEWER SYSTEM USAGE**

Any person(s), firms, or corporations using unmetered water, illegally discharging into the Town’s sanitary sewer system, or the Town’s stormwater collections system may be subject to a penalty of up to \$1,000.00 per day, \$75.00 administrative fee and applicable water consumption charges.

**COLLECTION REMEDIES**

Once it is determined that a person(s), firms, or corporation is responsible for a delinquent billing amount related to the authorized or unauthorized receipt of water and/or sewer services from the Town of Burgaw, the following statute of limitations shall be adhered to:

- a. Pursuant to North Carolina General Statute 25-2-725, the Town may demand payment(s) for water service for four (4) years retroactively from the date that the delinquency occurred or was discovered.
- b. Pursuant to North Carolina General Statute 1-52, the Town may demand payment(s) for sewer service for three (3) years retroactively from the date that the delinquency occurred or was discovered.
- c. Pursuant to North Carolina General Statute 105A, the Town may submit a claim in the name of the responsible party of the delinquent account to the state’s debt setoff program.

**RETURNED CHECK OR BANK DRAFT**

The Town charges a fee of \$25.00 for returned check or bank drafts. After one returned check or bank draft, the Town may accept only certified checks, money orders or cash for payment of the account.

### **TRANSFER OF SERVICE**

Customers may transfer service from one location to another as long as current bills are not past due. Deposits will be transferred to the new account if the present account is paid in full.

### **DEPOSIT REFUNDS**

After an account has been closed by customer request or terminated by Town policy, the deposit is applied to any outstanding bills or fees. Remaining funds are refunded to the customer after the current billing period is complete. No interest will be paid upon deposited amounts.

### **CLEANING AND REPAIR**

The Town will turn service on for three days, for the purpose of cleaning and repairs to an unoccupied dwelling. The current charge is \$30.00. If service will be required for a longer time, the Town will require that the service be placed in the name of the owner. A credit check will be required of individuals and a \$125.00 deposit for rental properties.

Appendix A

**Town of Burgaw**  
**Public Works Department**  
(910) 259-2901 [public.works@townofburgaw.com](mailto:public.works@townofburgaw.com)

**Hydrant Meter Check Out Application**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ DL# \_\_\_\_\_ Company \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Credit Card # \_\_\_\_\_

Hydrant Meter: \_\_\_\_\_ Serial #: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ End Reading: \_\_\_\_\_

Return Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Begin Reading: \_\_\_\_\_

Total Used: \_\_\_\_\_ gallons

Backflow included: Yes No Type: \_\_\_\_\_  
Serial #: \_\_\_\_\_

“S” tube: Yes No Gate Valve: Yes No

Cost:	Hydrant Meter	\$ 1,000.00
	RPZ Backflow	\$ 900.00
	“S” tube	\$ 300.00
	Gate Valve	\$ 100.00
	Hydrant Wrench	\$ 50.00

A replacement fee of \$2,350 will be charged if above equipment is not returned. In order to insure that the equipment is returned a credit card number will be collected at the time of application. A hydrant wrench must be utilized to open the hydrant. Any other device used on the hydrant will cause damage to the hydrant and could result in a violation. The valve must be opened fully in order to ensure proper use of the hydrant.

Check out  
Customer Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Town Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Check in  
Customer Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Town Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_