



Wilson
County

North Carolina



Water Services

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Policies and Procedures

December 9, 2019

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**WILSON COUNTY WATER SERVICES
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES
Effective 12/9/19**

GENERAL

As approved by the Wilson County Board of Commissioners, the Wilson County Water Services Department shall implement the Policies and Procedures contained herein. These Policies and Procedures shall determine how water is provided in Wilson County and what charges shall be made to provide those services.

DEFINITIONS

1. **Fee, Capacity.** The initial charge to a customer to access capacity in Wilson County’s water or sewer system, as prescribed in the “Fee Schedule.”
2. **Fee, Connection.** The initial charge to a customer to connect or tap on to water or sewer service, as prescribed in the “Fee Schedule.”
3. **Fee, Monthly Usage.** The monthly charge to a customer for water or sewer service, as prescribed in the “Fee Schedule”.
4. **Fee, Service Availability.** The monthly charge to a customer for the availability of service that is not utilized. Said charge is equivalent to the amount of the minimum “monthly usage fee.”
5. **Fee Schedule.** Portion of the Wilson County Water Policies and Procedures that lists charges to customers for water services in Wilson County.
6. **Fee, Water Service Incentive (on Connection, Capacity and Meter Fees).** A reduced fee schedule intended to obtain customers along newly developing water service lines.
7. **Service Availability.** Location of a public water line owned by Wilson County within the required distance as stated in the Connections Policy, Section 1.1.
8. **Standard Specifications and Details.** Portion of the Wilson County Water Policies and Procedures that lists construction requirements for water and improvements intended to be connected to Wilson County’s system.

1.0 CONNECTIONS POLICY

1.1 **New Construction (Single Lot):** All new construction will be required to connect to the water system if there is "service availability". The connection of each lot to public water shall be required if the closest point of the proposed subdivision is within the distances set out for the size of the entire subdivision as provided below to the nearest adequate line of a public system, provided that no topographic factors would make such connection infeasible. Where public water is not available, lots shall meet applicable Wilson County Health Department regulations.

| Table 12.1 Connection to Public Water | | | |
|--|-----------------------------|---------------|------------------|
| Standards | Maximum Number of Dwellings | | |
| Standards | Up to 5 Units | 6 to 19 Units | 20 or more Units |
| Distance (ft) | 200 | 1,700 | 2,500 |

*Lots shall be counted as cumulatively

1.2.1 **Exiting Structures:** Water tap-on fees apply per the attached Fee Schedule.

1.2.2 **Vacant Property:** Water tap-on fees apply per the attached Fee Schedule.

1.2 **Connection Fees**

- 1.2.3 **Exceptions:** If infrastructure improvements are funded in part or in whole by Federal or State grant funds, there may be specific requirements related to the funding that allow Wilson County to pay the “connection fee.” In such a situation, Wilson County may waive the “connection fee” for the customer.
- 1.5 **Service Lateral:** Prior to connecting to the County system, the customer shall obtain the services of a licensed plumber, obtain a plumbing permit, and construct a service lateral from the structure to the point of connection (usually in the highway right-of-way) at the customer’s expense.
- 1.6 **Existing Wells:** Wells may continue to be used for irrigation and other non-potable uses as long as they are properly disconnected from the public water supply.
- 1.7 **Service Across Private Property:** Water service will not be extended across private property to serve another private property. It will be the responsibility of the property owner to provide the service lateral from the structure to the right-of-way or utility easement where the constructed water main is located. The customer requesting service will also be responsible for procuring the necessary access across the private property lying between the service provider (Wilson County) and the customer to be served.

2.0 FEES, BILLINGS AND PAYMENT

- 2.1 **Hours of Operation:** The Wilson County Water Services administrative offices will operate on the following schedule:

Office Hours: 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. - Monday through Friday
*Hours subject to change during holidays/inclement weather.

- 2.2 **Rates:** Water rates are established each year by the Wilson County Board of Commissioners during the budget process and the rates remain in effect until the ensuing year or until another adjustment is approved by the Commissioners. The current rates for water service are provided in the attached “Fee Schedule.”

2.3 Billings and Payments

- 2.3.1 **Monthly Billing:** Bills for water service will be mailed on the last day of the month unless the last day falls on a Saturday, Sunday or a holiday, in which case the bills will be mailed on the next business day.
- 2.3.2 **Payment of Bills:** Wilson County will mail bills out every month. Payment of bills is due by the fifteenth (15th) of the month.

Payments are accepted by cash, check, money order, or credit card. There is a twenty-five-dollar (\$25) charge for checks returned for insufficient funds.

Wilson County will not accept postdated, counter or two-party checks.

Payment options are as follows:

Pay in Person at: Wilson County Administration Building
2201 Miller Road South
Wilson, NC 27893

Pay by Mail to: Wilson County Water Services Department
PO Box 1728
Wilson, NC 27894

- 2.3.3 **Late Notices:** If payment has not been received by 5:00 p.m. on the fifteenth (15th) of the month, a late fee will be added to the account. However, water services shall remove the late fee for bills received by Wilson County that are postmarked by the fifteenth (15th) of the month. A second (2nd) notice phone call will go to the phone number on record if payment is not received. If the 15th falls on a weekend or holiday, a late fee will not be charged until the day after the next working day.
- 2.3.4 **Delinquencies:** If payment has not been received by 5:00 p.m. on the due date stated on the late notice, water service will be discontinued, and a “Non-payment fee” will be charged as prescribed in the Fee Schedule. All past due fees plus late fees will be required before the service is restored. Failure to receive notices does not prevent such bills from becoming delinquent.
- 2.3.5 **Commencement of Charge:** Charge for service commences when a meter is installed whether it is used or not.
- 2.3.6 **Combination of Meter Readings:** Readings from different meters will not be combined for billing purposes, regardless of whether the meters serve the same or different premises or users.
- 2.3.7 **Master Meters:** Master meters will not be allowed for the Wilson County Water System. Individual meters will be required for each residential, commercial, or industrial use.
- 2.4 **Minimum Charges:** Charges are based on usage, as listed in the Fee Schedule. The minimum charge shall be as listed for the lowest tier of usage and shall apply to each meter installed.
- 2.5 **Illegal Tampering:** Illegal tampering, in any way, with a service that has been disconnected (whether for nonpayment or otherwise) is subject to a civil fine of up to five hundred dollars (\$500) and court processing costs. Tampering fines must be paid along with other fees before service is restored.
- 2.6 **Complaints and Adjustments:**

- 2.6.1 **Bill in Error:** If a customer believes a bill to be in error, the customer shall present the claim in person or in writing to the Wilson County Water Services Department before the bill becomes delinquent.
- 2.6.2 **Special Meter Reading:** If a customer requests that Wilson County conduct a special meter reading, the customer must pay twenty-five dollars (\$25.00) unless the reading reveals that the meter was overread.
- 2.6.3 **Meter Testing:** If a customer requests that Wilson County test his/her meter, the customer must pay for the cost of the test unless the test reveals that the meter is over register beyond ten percent (10%) of the correct volume.
- 2.6.4 **Meter Broken:** If a meter fails to register correctly, or if the meter is stopped for any cause, or if the meter seal is broken, the customer shall pay an amount estimated from the record of previous bills and/or from other reliable data.

3.0 APPLICATION FOR SERVICE

3.1 Applying for Service

- 3.1.1 **Application and Fees:** The customer shall complete an “Application for Service” and submit it in person or in writing, along with the “Application Service Fee,” as prescribed in the Fee Schedule, to the Wilson County Water Services Department.
- 3.1.2 **Rejection of Application – Service Reason:** Wilson County can reject an application for service that would not be available under a standard rate, or that would involve excessive service cost, or that would likely negatively affect the supply of service to other customers, or for other good and sufficient reasons. In such a case, the “Service Deposit Fee” would be refunded.
- 3.1.3 **Rejection of Application – Customer Reason:** Wilson County can reject an application for service if the applicant is delinquent in payment of water bills at any location. In addition, if a property owner has received water which he/she has not paid, Wilson County may reject an application for service by anyone at that location until the bill has been paid.

3.2 Deposits

- 3.2.1 **Application and Fees:** The customer shall submit a “Meter Deposit Fee”, as prescribed in the Fee Schedule, and submit it with the “Application for Service” and the “Application Service Fee” in person or in writing at the Wilson County Water Services Department. The customer shall pay a “Meter Deposit Fee” for each meter installed.
- 3.2.2 **Responsible Party:** The customer who submits the “Meter Deposit Fee” shall be responsible for payment of all bills incurred in connection with the service furnished. Deposits are refundable upon termination of service and

settlement of all accounts. A separate deposit is required for each meter installed.

- 3.2.3 **Use of Deposit:** If a customer terminates service without payment of the final bill, Wilson County may use the deposit to offset the final payment. Any balance could be refunded to the customer, but if the deposit is not sufficient to cover the final bill, then Wilson County may proceed to collect the balance in the usual ways provided by law for the collection of debts.

3.3 Change of Occupancy

- 3.3.1 **Notice:** In order for the Wilson County Water Services Department to discontinue service due to a change in occupancy, the customer must give at least three (3) days-notice in person or in writing.
- 3.3.2 **Departure:** The outgoing customer shall be responsible for all water service costs up to the time of departure or the time specified for departure, whichever period is longer.

4.0 SUSPENSION OF SERVICE

- 4.1 **For Non-Payment of Bills:** As discussed above in Section 2.3.4.
- 4.2 **For Other Reasons:** Wilson County reserves the right to discontinue its service without notice for the following additional reasons:
- A. To prevent fraud or abuse.
 - B. Due to the customer's willful disregard of Wilson County's policies.
 - C. For emergency repairs.
 - D. Due to insufficient or inadequate water supply due to circumstances beyond Wilson County's control.
 - E. As a result of legal procedures.
 - F. At the direction of public authorities.
 - G. In the event of a strike, riot, fire, flood, accident or any other unavoidable cause.
- 4.3 **For Chronic Abusers:** Wilson County may, in addition to prosecution by law, permanently refuse service to any customer who tampers with a meter or other measuring device.

5.0 RESPONSIBILITIES AND LIABILITY

5.1 County's Responsibilities:

- 5.1.1 **Service Line:** Wilson County will run a service line from its distribution line to the customer property line in places where the distribution line runs immediately adjacent and parallel to the property to be served and for which a "Service Connection Fee" in accordance with the Fee Schedule has been paid. Water services will provide an angle stop, meter, dual check valve assembly, and a meter box.

- 5.1.2 **Meter Location:** The County may install its meter at the property line or, at the County's option, on the customer's property, or in a location mutually agreed upon.
- 5.1.3 **Meter Clustering:** When two (2) or more meters are to be installed on the same premises for different customers, the meters shall be closely grouped with each clearly designated regarding the customer to whom it applies.
- 5.1.4 **Customer's Plumbing:** Wilson County Water Services does not assume the responsibility of inspecting the user's piping or apparatuses.
- 5.1.5 **Denial of Service:** Wilson County reserves the right to refuse service unless the customer's piping is installed so that it prevents cross-connections and backflow.
- 5.1.6 **Water Damage:** Wilson County shall not be liable for damage of any kind resulting from water or the use of water on the customer's premises, unless such damage results directly from negligence on the part of Wilson County. Wilson County shall not be responsible for any damage resulting from any defect in the piping, fixtures, or appliances on the customer's premises. Wilson County shall not be responsible for negligence of third parties or forces beyond the control of Wilson County that may result in any interruption of service.

5.2 Customer's Responsibilities:

- 5.2.1 **Location of Piping:** Piping on the customer's premises must be arranged so that the connections are conveniently located with respect to the County's distribution and service lines.
- 5.2.2 **Difficult Location of Piping:** If the customer's piping is arranged so that Wilson County or its agent must provide additional meters, each meter will be considered a separate and individual account and will be billed as such.
- 5.2.3 **Accessibility of Meter:** If a meter is placed on the premises of the customer, he/she must ensure the meter remains unobstructed and accessible at all times to the meter reader.
- 5.2.4 **Cut-Off Valves:** The customer shall furnish and maintain a private cut-off valve on the user's side of the meter. Wilson County shall furnish and maintain a similar cut-off valve on the County's side of the meter.
- 5.2.5 **User-Side Maintenance:** The customer's piping and apparatuses shall be installed and maintained at the customer's expense in a safe and efficient manner in accordance with local and/or state policies and procedures.
- 5.2.6 **Protection of County Property:** The customer shall guarantee proper protection of the County's property placed on the customer's premises and shall only permit authorized representatives of Wilson County or its representatives to have access to that property.

- 5.2.7 **Cost of Repairs to County Property by the Customer:** If a customer's negligence or wrongful act results in any loss or damage to Wilson County property, or it's agent's property, or if an accident or injury to persons or property is caused by or results from the negligence or wrongful act, then the cost of the necessary repairs or replacement shall be paid by the customer to Wilson County and any liability otherwise resulting shall be assumed by the customer. The amount of such loss or damage or the cost of repairs shall be added to the customer's bill and, if not paid, service may be discontinued by the County.

6.0 SYSTEM OPERATION AND ADMINISTRATION

6.1 Access to Premises:

6.1.1 Authorized agents of Wilson County shall have access at all reasonable hours to the premises of the customer for the purpose of installing or removing County property, inspecting piping, reading or testing meters, or for any other purpose in connection with the County's service and facilities.

6.1.2 Each customer shall grant or convey, or shall cause to be granted or conveyed, to the County a perpetual easement and/or right-of-way across any property owned or controlled by the customer wherever said perpetual easement and/or right-of-way is necessary for the County water lines to be able to serve to the customer.

6.2 **Voluntary Testing of Wells:** In anticipation of Wilson County extending water service to a particular area, the County may voluntarily test water quality in private wells at the County's expense in an effort to educate and encourage the customer on the benefits of connecting to the County water system.

6.3 **Cross-Connection Control:** The Wilson County Water Services Director will interpret the County's policies regarding cross connection and administer the program. All connections shall follow the requirements in 15A NCAC 18C.0406 (b) and Figure 2 in Appendix B of the Rules Governing Public Water Systems. Further, Wilson County will enforce all provisions of the Federal Safe Drinking Water Act, the North Carolina Drinking Water Act, and the North Carolina State Building Code, as each pertains to establishing an effective ongoing program to control potential sources of contamination of the public water supply.

6.4 Customer Information, Complaints, and Public Education:

6.4.1 Customer information is provided by mass mailings and phone calls, notes on monthly utility bills, the Wilson County web site, and notification in local newspapers as needed.

6.4.2 A complaint regarding water service shall be directed to the Water Services Director. The customer may then appeal the complaint to the County Manager, and finally the Wilson County Board of Commissioners.

6.5 **Response and Notification of Water Quality Violations:** If a water quality violation occurs, the Water Services Director will contact the NC Division of Water

Quality/Public Water Supply Section, as appropriate, for assistance in finding a solution to the problem. Notice will be provided in accordance with prevailing state statutes or regulations.

6.6 System Monitoring, Reporting and Records Maintenance Procedures

6.6.1 **Monitoring and Reporting:** Wilson County collects samples of the water in its distribution system monthly and sends the sample to a State approved laboratory for testing for bacteria and other contaminants. The County reports the results to the State. In accordance with Rule .1525 (Reporting Requirements), Wilson County reports monthly to the State the results of its monitoring program in a "Water Operating" report.

6.6.2 **Retention of Records:** The Public Utilities Coordinator shall maintain water testing data and usage reports for a period of three (3) years.

6.6.3 **Water Supply Plan:** Every five (5) years, or more often if directed by the NC Division of Water Quality, Wilson County will prepare a Water Supply Plan that records water usage, system capacity, and other important data to substantiate that Wilson County has adequate water supply resources to meet current and future system demands.

6.7 **Licensed Operator:** The Water Services Director or other designated employee charged with operation of the water system will obtain and maintain proper licensing required by the State of North Carolina.

6.8 Abridgement or Modification of Policies and Procedures

6.8.1 No promise, agreement, or representation of any employee or agent of Wilson County shall bind the County except as agreed upon in writing by acknowledged officers of the system.

6.8.2 No modification of any of the Policies and Procedures, including the Fee Schedule and the Standard Specifications, shall be made by any employee or agent of Wilson County except as agreed upon in writing by the Wilson County Board of Commissioners.

6.8.3 **Amendments:** From time to time, the Wilson County Board of Commissioners, Manager, and/or the Director of Water Services shall review these Policies and Procedures, including the Fee Schedule and the Standard Specifications and Details for Water and Sewer, to determine the adequacy of each. The Board of Commissioners may amend each as needed at any time.

7.0 WATER LINE EXTENSIONS

7.1 **Development Standards:** *Standard Specifications and Details for Water Distribution Systems* and *Standard Specifications* are available at the Water Services Department. These documents shall be used by developers to plan water line extensions. Water lines can only be extended to developments that are

designed in accordance with the Wilson County Unified Development Ordinance, which is administered and enforced by the Wilson County Development Services.

7.2 **Extensions:** Extension of water to major developments within Wilson County's service areas will be handled as follows:

7.2.1 A developer shall submit plans for proposed water line extensions for review and approval by the Wilson County Water Services Department, Wilson County's engineer, and the North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

7.2.2 The developer shall be responsible for installing water lines in accordance with the plans approved by Wilson County and the State. The developer shall pay for the water lines and then dedicate them to the County for ownership, operation and maintenance.