

The adoption of Rules and Regulations is not for the purpose of imposing unnecessary or burdensome regulations upon the users of the City of Martins Ferry utilities. The purpose is to provide for the orderly conduct of the business of the City's Department of Public Service, to prevent the waste of water, and to ensure equal treatment of all customers while protecting the health and safety of the public.

We pledge to exercise reasonable care and diligence to provide a continuous and sufficient service to all customers.

Effective Date: January 1, 2016

---

Christopher P. Cleary  
Director of Public Service

## Definitions

**City** means City of Martins Ferry.

**City Water System** means the City of Martins Ferry Potable Water System which consists of the source facility (wells), water treatment plant, and distribution system. The City Water System ends at the curb box.

**Commercial Customer** means any business engaged in retail, wholesale, personal services, repair services or any other activity which does not involve the mass production or manufacture of a commodity on premises.

**Consumer** means the owner or person in control of any premises supplied by or in any manner connected to the City Water System.

**Industrial Customer** means any business engaged in manufacturing, processing, or fabrication of products to be wholesaled or retailed offsite.

**Office** means Utility Billing Office.

**Office Manager** means Utility Billing Office Manager.

**Person** means the state, any political subdivision, public or private corporation, individual, partnership, or other legal entity.

**Plant** means Water Treatment Plant.

**Plant Superintendent** means Water Superintendent.

**Residential Customer** means personal homes or buildings used for human habitat, including apartments, condominiums, town houses, dormitories, etc.

**Service Connections** means the terminal end of a service line connection.

**Service Director** means City of Martins Ferry Service Director.

**Water Provider** means City of Martins Ferry Water Department.

## **Application Required**

Application for a new utility service shall be made at the Utility Billing Office located on the 1<sup>st</sup> Floor of the City Building at 35 South 5<sup>th</sup> Street. At this time the Department will classify the service as Residential, Commercial, or Industrial.

Changes to existing services must be made in person at the office. A photo I.D. is required.

Refer to the section **Account Responsibility** for more information.

## **Deposits**

At the time of application for utility service a deposit will be required of applicants. Owner billed properties may be exempt from the deposit with a satisfactory record of payment with the Martins Ferry Department of Public Service from a previous account.

The deposit, without interest, on billed properties will be returned after a record of prompt payment of utility bills for a period of (six) 6 months.

## **Tapping Fees**

At the time of application for new water or sewer service, the applicant will be required to pay a fee and obtain a permit for the installation of the water service. The amount of the tapping fee is specified in the current rate schedule. A copy of the current rate schedule is available in the Utility Office.

All permits issued are valid for a twelve (12) month period from the date of issue. An extension of six (6) months may be granted provided the request is received within twelve (12) months of the date of issue. No refund shall be issued.

## **Water Service Installation Requirements**

All connections, taps, and service lines will be installed from the water main to the curb box by the Martins Ferry Water Department. The applicant shall install the service line from the building to the curb box. The water meter shall be installed by the Martins Ferry Water Department. All lines and connections must be inspected before back filling.

### **Sewer Line Installation Requirements**

All connections from the building to the main sewer line shall be installed by the applicant. Tracer wire or tape shall be used to mark the underground location of the lateral line from the main to the building. All lines and connections must be inspected before back filling.

### **Meter Installation Requirements**

The Martins Ferry Water Department shall install all meters. All meters shall be ordered by the Martins Ferry Water Department and invoiced by the supplier to the owner or his/her contractor. Billing will begin on the first day of service.

Where unusual demands of water will be required, the meter sizes shall be increased to provide for the expected demand. The City does not guarantee that the minimum sizes of lines and meters will be sufficient.

When a meter is being used to measure greater volumes of water than its designed operating capacity, as evidenced by high readings or frequent repairs, the owner will be required to have installed a meter service large enough as to provide the necessary capacity. This will be determined by the Martins Ferry Water Superintendent. The owner may be required to pay labor and meter costs for the upgrade.

### **Separate Meters Required**

Water service to two (2) or more separate structures is prohibited and any arrangements of this manner that exist shall be corrected within ninety (90) days of notification to do so by the Office.

Each new structure connected to the City Water System shall have a separate meter.

Exceptions to this regulation must be approved in writing by the Service Director and the Water Superintendent. Failure to comply with this regulation within ninety (90) days of notification to do so shall result in water service being terminated.

### **Unlawful Removal of Meter**

No person except an authorized City employee shall remove or bypass a water meter. Where a meter is found to have been unlawfully removed or bypassed, the water shall be shut off immediately and proper charges made for the estimated amount of water used. The water shall not be turned on again until the meter is reinstalled and all fees paid including the estimated usage.

## **Account Responsibility**

All accounts are listed in the name of the property owner. Bills may be rendered to a tenant if so ordered by the property owner except in the case of multi-family dwellings which must be billed to the property owner unless a separate service and meter is provided for each dwelling unit.

The property owner is ultimately responsible, pursuant to Ohio Revised Code 743.01 through 743.04, for all bills left unpaid by the tenants regardless of who receives the bills.

When utility charges become delinquent they are a lien against the property and remain a lien until such time as they are paid. Such charges are in the nature of an obligation of the land itself and a subsequent purchaser of the land takes the property subject to the obligation for any unpaid charges. Until such charges are paid, continued water service may be refused. Liens are sent to the County Auditor's Office on a quarterly basis. Once the County Auditor receives the lien they may only be paid through that office.

A person owning multiple pieces of property with accounts in his/her name may be denied service at one or more properties for delinquency at any location.

If the property is tenant occupied, the Office is not permitted to turn the water off to help the owner evict the tenant or help the owner collect rent. All decisions regarding the shut-off of water will follow the Rules and Regulations outlined herein.

A change in the name of the person to be billed must be ordered by the property owner or his duly authorized agent. A fee will be assessed each time a change in the billing name is ordered. The amount of the fee is given in the current rate schedule.

## **Billing Schedule**

The City of Martins Ferry bills for utility use monthly in four cycles. Utility bills are due and payable at the Utility Office on the date printed on the bill. If the bill is not paid in the office by the due date, the customer will be charged a late fee.

## **Delinquency Policy**

Bills not paid by the due date are considered delinquent. Customers are mailed a delinquent notice fifteen (15) days after the original bill was mailed notifying them of a final date for payment. If bills remain unpaid at these final dates, service will be discontinued without further notice and additional fees may be added.

If all charges are not paid within 14 days from the date the water is discontinued, the meter shall be removed and the account considered closed.

### **Adjustment for Leak**

All leaks in the Consumers Water System, whether detected by the party to whom the bill is sent or a representative of the City shall be repaired within forty-eight (48) hours of detection.

If the leak is detected by a City representative, is creating a hazard, may cause damage to other property, or in the opinion of the City representative is causing a significant loss of water, water service shall be discontinued until the leak has been repaired.

In the event of an underground leak in the Consumers Water System that is not the result of any negligence on the part of the consumer or owner of the property, the consumer's largest bill for the billing period during which the leak occurred will be adjusted upon request by the customer and submission of a copy of the plumber's bill for the repair work to the Office.

The adjustment will be calculated by the following formula:

A = Water consumption in billing period during which the leak occurred.

B = Water consumption for normal water used the previous year.

C = 0.5

D = Amount of consumption for which customer will be billed.

$$D = (A - B) \times C + B$$

Only one (1) bill adjustment will be made per consumer for any given eighteen (18) month period.

### **Meter Tests**

The Martins Ferry Water Department will test a meter upon request of the consumer. If the meter is found to over register by more than two (2) percent, the consumer's bill for that billing period will be adjusted accordingly.

If the meter is tested and found not to be over-registering by more than two (2) percent, the bill shall be paid as rendered plus a fee for testing the meter. The amount of the fee is provided in the current rate schedule.

### **Meter Change Outs**

Change outs of meters requested by the consumer will be billed on the basis of the actual cost of labor, materials, and equipment plus fifteen (15) percent.

## **Returned Check Policy**

A fee will be charged for all checks returned from the consumer's bank. The fee is shown in the current rate schedule.

Returned checks submitted for payment on delinquent accounts are subject to immediate termination of service. The total amount of the bill plus additional charges for turning the service off and back on according to the current rate schedule, will also be imposed.

Consumers who have their service discontinued due to a returned check will not be permitted to write checks to the City for a period of one (1) year following the most recent returned check.

Should the City receive two (2) returned checks in a two (2) year period, no city department will accept checks from the consumer for a period of two (2) years following the most recent returned check.

A consumer whose check writing privilege is returned, either by overdraft protection or the passage of the two (2) year period, and who is responsible for another returned check will have his or her check writing privilege revoked forever.

When check writing privileges have been revoked, payment of utility bills must be by certified check, money order, cash, or credit card if available.

The City reserves the right to refuse to accept checks from any person for reasons other than the aforementioned.

A consumer using the Auto-Pay system of the office who has inadequate funds to cover the transaction or who has the transaction stopped for any reason may have his or her Auto-Pay service terminated and will be charged the returned check fee shown in the current rate schedule.



**City of Martins Ferry Ohio**  
**Department of Public Service**  
**City Utilities**  
**Rules and Regulations**