



Town of Sparta

Utilities Cut-Off Policy

PURPOSE

The Town of Sparta holds no responsibility for providing complimentary utility services to customers who are delinquent in their payment for the services rendered. By G.S. 160-314(b) and G.S. 153A-277(b), a local government possesses the authority to discontinue any public enterprise service, which includes water, wastewater, and solid waste utility services, to a customer whose account continues to be in delinquency.

CONDITIONS

It is the customer's responsibility to ensure that their account for utility services with the Town is maintained in good standing. Furthermore, the customer is accountable for making appropriate arrangements with the Town should they be unable to remit full payment of their bill. Although there is no obligation for the Town to establish a payment plan with the customer, the Town encourages its customers to remain current with their utility bills and is willing to consider unusual circumstances.

LATE PAYMENT FEE/NON-PAYMENT OF FIRST INVOICE

Any utility bill that remains unpaid by 4:00 PM on the 18th day of the month shall be deemed delinquent, resulting in the assessment of a late fee. The amount of the late fee imposed will be based on the rate established by the Town Council for the current fiscal year. This fee is outlined in the Town's fee schedule. It is mandatory for late fees to be settled concurrently with the payment of the utility bill.

NON-PAYMENT AFTER SECOND INVOICE

The amount indicated on the initial invoice, together with any applicable late fee, shall be incorporated into the subsequent invoice if payment is not rendered prior to the next meter reading. Should the utility bill remain unpaid by 4 PM on the 18th of the month, the customer's service will be suspended until the total outstanding balance for both months, including the late fee and reconnection fee, is remitted in full by the customer. The reconnection fee will be determined based on the fee structure established by the Town Council for the current fiscal year. This fee schedule is available on the Town's official fee schedule.

SERVICER DISRUPTION PROCESS

- The municipal staff will authorize a disruption of service due to non-payment on the first business day following the 18th, unless the 18th falls on a Friday.
- The customer's water service will be interrupted, and the meter will be secured to prevent tampering.
- The customer will be obligated to pay the bill in full for the restoration of service or to apply for a payment plan.

- Upon receipt of payment, the customer's services will be reinstated. Please note that it may take up to 24 hours to reconnect, depending on the availability of staff and resources.
- Tampering with a water meter is subject to both civil and criminal penalties.

RESPONSIBILITY OF THE CUSTOMER

If a customer encounters financial difficulties and is unable to settle their utility bill, they may submit a request for a payment plan. It is incumbent upon the customer to initiate and formally apply for such a plan. The Town will not automatically enroll any customer into a payment plan.

PAYMENT PLAN

Individuals may qualify for a payment plan designed to assist in managing monthly utility expenses. The following stipulations govern the Town's payment plan:

- A minimum payment of at least half of the delinquent balance is required prior to establishing a payment plan.
- Applicants must not have experienced a broken payment plan within the preceding 12 months.
- Payment plans are restricted to a maximum duration of three months.
- Installments may be scheduled on a weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly basis.
- Payments must be made on or before the designated due date; failure to do so will result in the cancellation of the payment plan.
- Following the establishment of a payment plan, the applicant will receive a correspondence detailing the installment amounts and due dates.
- All new bills must be paid by their respective due dates; failure to comply will lead to the cancellation of the payment plan.
- Broken payment plans will be subject to collection processes.

Payment plans are not guaranteed and will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

OTHER REMEDIES FOR NONPAYMENT

The Town reserves the right to pursue alternative remedies, including the engagement of a third-party debt collector for the collection of overdue payments. In accordance with NC G.S. 105A, Article 1, the Town may utilize the state's debt setoff program. The Town is dedicated to collaborating with its citizens and customers in order to address inquiries pertaining to their bills.