

## CITY OF BLAINE

### UTILITY CUSTOMER

#### RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

**ESTABLISHING SERVICE:** All services will be billed directly to the property owner, even if tenants occupy the property. The property owner may request that the bills be sent in care of tenant. Upon request and payment of set-up fee by the property owner, duplicate bills will be mailed to both the owner and the tenant.

**PAYMENT FOR SERVICE:** Utility bills are sent out the last working day of the month and are payable upon receipt. Bills not paid by 5:00 PM on the 20<sup>th</sup> of the following month will be assessed a penalty charge of \$5.00 per utility (electric, water, and/or sewer) and \$1.00 for stormwater. **Failure to receive the utility bill through the mail shall not be a valid defense for failure to pay utility charges and/or penalties.**

#### **DISCONTINUANCE OF SERVICE:**

1. If you are a property owner, you are required to give us notice if you intend to discontinue service.
2. We will discontinue service for any of the following reasons:
  - a. If you do not pay your bill on time. Bills are due and payable when issued. They are past due after 5:00 PM on the 20<sup>th</sup> of the following month and subject to 7-day notice of suspension commencing on the date of mailing of notice.
  - b. For use of the City utilities for purposes other than authorized by the City.
  - c. If you vacate the premises or structure.
  - d. If the utility property has been tampered with. This carries a fine of \$100.00 per incident plus any costs to replace and/or repair the equipment, and must be paid prior to utilities being reconnected.
  - e. For non-payment of any charges.
  - f. For payment on an account with a delinquent check that is dishonored by a financial institution, after the City has issued appropriate notice of disconnection. A \$20.00 NSF fee will be required before reinstatement. Penalty and reinstatement fees may also be assessed based on the date the check was receipted.
  - g. For the fraudulent acquisition or use of utility service.
  - h. Any emergency or situation deemed to require interruption of service.
1. Notice of suspension of service for delinquent payment will be mailed to the last known address of the property owner and to the designated agent (tenant) of the property where service is being supplied.
  - a. Customers will have seven (7) days commencing on the date of mailing of the delinquency notice to make payment. **THERE WILL BE NO OTHER**

### ***NOTICES PRIOR TO DISCONNECT FOR NON-PAY.***

- b. All delinquency or discontinuance notices will state the reason for the notice and the telephone number to contact our business office for answers to any questions you may have. All notices will accurately state amounts owing for services subject to disconnection.
- c. Except in case of danger to life or property, the Utility Billing Division will not disconnect services on Fridays, Saturdays, Sundays, legal holidays.
- d. Blaine City employees may accept after-hour payments in the field. For cash payments, no change will be given. If you pay an amount greater than the outstanding balance, the extra payment will be credited to your account.
  1. A reinstatement charge will be assessed whether or not a physical disconnection has occurred. The reinstatement charge is a minimum of \$25.00 during regular working hours, Monday through Friday. For holidays, weekends, and all other hours, the reinstatement charge is a minimum of \$140.00.
  2. Contact for reinstatement during regular working hours must be between 8:00 AM and 3:30 PM.
  3. In the event that a physical disconnection occurs at either the supply or service point, a \$140.00 reinstatement fee will be assessed.
  4. Service will be restored when the cause of discontinuance has been removed and any amounts owing have been paid.

### ***COMPLAINTS AND DISPUTES:***

Any complaint or dispute between you and the City Utility will be treated in the following manner:

1. Any complaint of the decision of the Utility Billing Division representative with respect to suspension of service shall be submitted in writing to the Finance Director (as designated by the City Manager) within ten (10) days from the date of the Utility Billing Division representative's decision. The complaint shall set forth, with particularity, the reasons for the suspension. Notwithstanding such complaint, service will remain suspended unless the complaint is accompanied by payment of the amount in dispute. This amount will be specified in the Utility Billing Division representative's decision. The decision made by the Finance Director will be in writing and will be delivered to the customer via first class mail.
2. Each complaint or dispute the City reviews will be investigated and the result reported to you. Any corrective action that may arise will be done as quickly as possible.
3. The City Council has specifically vested with the City Manager or his/her designee (Finance Director) the final authority to decide appeals. There are no additional administrative or legislative remedies.

If you wish to obtain information on senior or disabled discounts, Direct Debit, or Direct Credit, please contact the Utility Billing Division at (360) 332-8311.