



Utilities Handbook

Adopted by the Mary Esther City Council

Resolution # 22-03

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City of Mary Esther

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Introduction

The policies and procedures contained in this document are intended to define the relationship between the account holder of utility services and the City of Mary Esther. These policies are, by notification of and availability to all customers, made part of the contract for service entered by the account holder. By contracting for service, the account holder acknowledges the applicability of these policies and procedures.

The policies and procedures included in this handbook were adopted by the Mary Esther City Council at their regular meeting held on July 5, 2022.



Section 1 – City of Mary Esther Municipal Utilities

A. Establishment

The City of Mary Esther (City) owns and operates water and wastewater utilities in accordance with applicable State and Federal regulatory requirements and under permits issued by the State of Florida. These policies, as amended periodically, are adopted by the Mary Esther City Council to govern the relationship between the City and its utility customers. Operational authority of the Utilities Department (Department) rests with the City Manager while the City Council retains governing authority of the utilities.

B. Authority

The enactment of standard utility policies requires the approval of the City Council. As fee schedules, rates and other specific policies are updated, it will be the responsibility of the City Manager or their designees to ensure this handbook is revised in accordance with City Council action.

The City Manager is authorized as the hearing or grievance officer for customers. Prior to an item appearing before the City Council, all grievances should be heard by and submitted through the standard appeal process.

C. Office and Service Hours

City Hall is located at 195 Christobal Road North and is open Monday through Friday from 8:00 - 5:00, closing for lunch from 1:00 - 2:00. Service may be arranged outside of normal operating hours upon customer request for an additional fee.

Emergency restoration work is performed twenty-four (24) hours a day, seven (7) days a week. Customers may call 850-496-1739 for emergency service. Reconnection due to termination of service for nonpayment is not considered an emergency.

D. Scope and Intent

The intent of these policies is to provide the customer and the employees of the City a helpful guide with uniform procedures for providing utility service. This policy is not meant to be all inclusive but offers direction and guidance. The City desires to treat its citizens and rate payers in a fair and nondiscriminatory manner, while recognizing that each customer has distinct needs and requirements.



Section 2 – Rights and Responsibilities

A. Right of Way and Access

As a condition of service, the account holder grants to the Utilities Department all rights and privileges necessary for rendering service. Department employees and representatives must have access to any public facilities located on the customer's premises. Access is limited to the installation, operation, maintenance, inspection, and/or removal of utility appurtenances. Failure to provide access to the Department is grounds for termination of service. Advance notice to the customer or occupant of work performed on the customer's premise will be at the City's discretion.

B. Limits of Liability and Continuity of Service

The Utilities Department will use reasonable diligence to provide dependable service but does not guarantee continuous and uninterrupted service. Although the City uses its good faith effort to see that utilities are delivered safely, the City is not responsible for any damage caused by interruption of utility services. The customer understands that instances may occur where service is interrupted beyond the control of the City and that no compensation will be rendered for such loss of service.

C. Account Holder Responsibility

The account holder shall be defined as the person contracting for service until or unless the contracted service is voluntarily discontinued or involuntarily terminated. In the absence of any active contract for service, the property owner shall be the account holder.

The City is only responsible for maintenance to the following points of service:

- Water – the water meter.
- Wastewater – the public sewer cleanout or, where none exists, the property line.

The City does not assume any responsibility for, or liability arising because of, the condition of water and/or sewer piping, plumbing or any apparatus on the premises of the account holder and/or property owner. Water pulled across any of the points of service listed above immediately becomes metered water. Metered water that is knowingly or unknowingly either used, lost, leaked, or stolen is considered consumption and is the responsibility of the account holder.

The City does not assume any responsibility for, or liability arising because of, any loss or damage to any person or property whatsoever resulting directly or indirectly from the use or misuse or presence of metered water on the account holder's premises.

The account holder is responsible for leaks on the customer side of the water meter and will be charged for water and sewer based on the consumption indicated on the meter.

The account holder is responsible for monitoring and safeguarding any intentional or unintentional consumption of water, regardless of conditions or circumstances known or unknown to the account holder and/or property owner.



The City is not responsible for investigating, informing, or prosecuting due to water leaks, loss, or thefts on the customer side of the water meter. As a courtesy the City makes a reasonable effort to inform the customer of excessive or active water usage, if noticed, during routine meter reads or maintenance. It is the customer responsibility to regularly monitor their consumption for water loss.

When a customer requests the water meter to be turned on it is the responsibility of the customer to make sure all valves, faucets, hoses, and any other appliances that demand water are turned off prior to the City representative turning the meter on. If the City representative notices the meter flow rate indicates active water use when turning on the water meter, the meter will be immediately turned back off and a reasonable attempt to leave a notice that the meter was turned off will be made. In the event the City does not detect any active water flow, the City is not responsible for any water loss or damage.



Section 3 – Requirements and Regulations

A. Potable Water Service Policy

Properties within the City are eligible for connection to the potable water system on a first-come, first-served, capacity-available basis. As deemed necessary by the Utilities Department, some projects may require off-site improvements or hydraulic studies to assess the impact of the proposed service on existing customers. All costs for studies or off-site improvements will be paid in full or shared proportionally with the customer if such improvements benefit the system.

B. Resale of Water

Water service shall be used by the customer only, for the purpose specified in the application for service, and cannot be resold. Water service is furnished directly to the customer through an individual meter. It is for the sole use of the customer and is not to be re-metered by the customer for the purpose of selling water service at a profit to lessees, tenants or others. Re-metering for the purpose of equitable distribution of water and sewer service costs is allowed so long as the charges reflect the amount charged by the City of Mary Esther.

C. Sub-serving by Customer

The customer will not build or extend water lines across or under a street, alley, lane, court, avenue, across property lines or in any other way in order to furnish service through one meter to more than one property. Serving more than one property is not allowed even though such adjacent property is owned by the customer.

D. Customer Facility Requirements

All on-site service lines and plumbing are to be installed in compliance with the latest local codes and inspection authorities. All installations must be inspected and approved by an authorized inspector as required by law. The Utilities Department may deny service to any new or altered installation or it may terminate service to any existing installation that, in the opinion of the Department, constitutes a hazard to the public, other customers, or its employees.

E. Backflow Prevention and Cross-Connection Control

Backflow prevention assemblies are to be installed on specific connections to provide protection to the water system and to comply with local and State regulatory authorities and the City's Cross-Connection Control and Backflow Prevention Program. If required, the customer is liable for the installation and maintenance of the backflow prevention assembly.

F. Curb Stops

The curb stop is a mechanism used by the Department to regulate the flow of water to the meter and is City property. The curb stop is not designed to be used as a faucet and frequent use may damage the device. A damaged curb stop will be repaired or replaced at the discretion of the City. The customer may be charged the actual cost of repair or replacement.

It is recommended that a customer have a shut-off valve installed downstream of the meter. A house valve is also recommended. A house valve is an in-line connection and handle on the water



service line from the meter to the house. It is usually located on the exterior of the house near an outside faucet or hose bib but can be located internally near a water heater or clothes washer hookup. By turning the handle, the customer can shut-off the water supply to the house in an emergency or to make repairs.

G. Individual Meters

Individual meters are required for all new service connections and must be placed with the public right-of-way or public utility easement adjacent to the property to be served. The following property types may use a master meter:

- Apartment complexes or condominiums
- Hotels, short-term rental units, and travel trailer parks
- Commercial properties
- Special cases as approved in writing by the Utilities Department

H. Sizing of Meters

Water meters will be sized according to the guidelines stated by the American Water Works Association Manual M22. The engineer shall provide the calculations to the Utilities Department for approval. If deemed necessary by the Department, the owner shall provide access to the property to evaluate the water usage requirements. The minimum size meter, as calculated, will be installed. No over-sizing of meters will be permitted.

I. Upsizing of Water Meters

If requested by a commercial or multifamily residential customer and justified by this section, the customer may replace an existing meter with a larger meter. All calculations must be completed by a licensed engineer or architect. The customer shall be required to bring the service up to current requirements at customer expense. Current requirements may include, but are not limited to, installation of a backflow preventer and conversion of a below to above-ground installation.

J. Separation of Meters

A commercial or multifamily residential customer who desires to install individual 3/4" meters in lieu of an existing master meter 1" or larger may be permitted upon approval by the Utilities Department. The customer shall pay the meter fee as listed on the current [Fee Schedule](#).

K. Fire Hydrant Meters

Fire hydrant meters are not charged for sewer service and may be utilized with the approval of the Utilities Department. A [Commercial Utility Application](#) and deposit are required. Fire hydrant meters shall be subject to the following requirements:

- Fire hydrant meters will be set and removed by the Utilities Department.
- Fire hydrant meters shall not be utilized for irrigation or domestic supply purposes.
- Repairs necessitated by abuse of a fire hydrant meter will be charged against the customer's deposit.



Section 4 – Establishing Service

A. Utility Application Processing

A new utility application must be submitted to establish an account or transfer service to a new location. The application may be submitted by the property owner, owner's agent, or a prospective tenant of the property to be served in person, by email or fax. An application fee and deposit are required in accordance with the adopted [Fee Schedule](#). Service will be connected during regular business hours when all application procedures have been completed, including payment of any deposits, fees, or other applicable charges.

All persons requesting service must provide the following information:

1. Full name
2. Mailing Address
3. Service Address
4. Phone Number
5. Email Address (if available)
6. One valid form of government issued identification with photo, such as a valid driver's license, passport, alien registration card, or state issued photo ID

Residential Property Owner as Account Holder:

- Proof of Property Ownership, such as a closing statement or deed, if different than Okaloosa County Property Appraiser's website.
- If property owner is unavailable, provide a copy of the Power of Attorney.
- If the property owner is deceased, provide a death certificate and documentation verifying survivorship such as Last Will and Testament, Trust, or Probate document.

Residential Tenant as Account Holder:

- Valid rental agreement between the prospective tenant and property owner.
- If an authorized agent is submitting the application, provide a Power of Attorney, Property Management Agreement, or similar contract.

Commercial Accounts:

Commercial accounts established for service will require a signature by a duly authorized representative of the business entity. Commercial property applicants require the same information as residential property applicants and are subject to all utility policies and procedures as described in this document.



B. Application of Deposit and Exemption Criteria

The City requires deposits for any utility applicant wishing to establish service, except as specified below:

- Applicant has been an account holder of any utility in the United States within one hundred twenty (120) days of application for service and can provide a letter of reference from the utility showing that he/she has no outstanding debt; or,
- Applicant is transferring service from an existing account with good credit to a new property within the City.

At the request of the customer, residential accounts may have their deposit applied after three (3) consecutive years of good credit. Good credit is defined as not having been disconnected for non-payment, not having any returned payments, or not having two (2) or more late payments.

A deposit may be required and billed at any time should good credit not be maintained.

Commercial and multi-unit residential dwelling accounts shall pay a deposit for each equivalent residential unit (ERU) and remain on the account until services are requested for disconnection and/or involuntarily terminated by the City.

Governmental accounts shall be exempt from deposit.

C. Prior Utility Debts

Any prior debt and outstanding account balances must be paid in full before service can be connected or reconnected:

- Any applicant or any member of the household who is indebted to the City of Mary Esther for service previously furnished at any location connected to City infrastructure where they were the contracting party; or
- An applicant the City reasonably believes directly benefited from utility service provided to a former contracting occupant who is indebted to the City of Mary Esther at the same service location applied for; or
- An applicant where the current property owner has an outstanding account balance at the same service location applied for; or,
- An applicant where the current property owner has a prior debt at any location connected to the City infrastructure that is owned by the same property owner; or
- An applicant where the service location applied for has a utility lien on the property even if the lien has not been perfected per Florida Statute 159.17.

In the instance that debt to the City is not discovered prior to approval of application, the previous balance will be transferred to the account holder's current account where it will become part of the balance due for services. Account holders will be expected to pay the previous balance in full along with their subsequent monthly bill in order to avoid having services interrupted for nonpayment. If the previous balance is of significant amount, an account holder may apply for extension or payment plan in accordance with this policy. Failure of staff to discover a previously



owed debt does not relinquish the debt owed to the City by the delinquent account holder.

D.Reasons for Denial of Service

Applications for utility service may be denied for any one of the following reasons:

- An incomplete utility application.
- Valid, legible support documentation such as a lease agreement, rental agreement, or property deed is in question or cannot be provided.
- An inability to provide legible, verifiable or valid identification.
- A prior debt for an applicant or service location exists.
- An applicant or occupant who benefitted from the utility service at any location who is indebted to the City. Refer to Florida Statute 180.135.

E.Privacy

Our application/agreement requests that the potential account holder voluntarily provide their social security number. We request this number to verify identify, protect sensitive account information, and collect delinquent balances. There is no statutory or other authority requiring any account holder to provide a social security number. However, if available, when account holder billing data is requested, the last four digits of the social security number or Tax ID Number may be used to verify identity prior to any information being given out by staff. In the absence of a social security number, staff members may request other verifying information to protect account holders against fraud.

Account holder billing data is considered public information. Florida law allows certain persons to request that eligible personal information contained in the City's utility customer information system be exempt from public records disclosure. Please refer to Florida Statute 119.071 or other applicable statute for scope of protection. Requests can be made by the account holder completing a Public Records Exemption Request and returning it to Customer Service. The City will ensure that account holder information, including billing data, is adequately safeguarded against unauthorized use.

In accordance with the Telephone Consumer Protection Act (TCPA), the account holder agrees by contracting service, that the City of Mary Esther may contact the account holder by telephone.

All incoming and outgoing calls to Customer Service may be recorded and/or monitored for quality assurance.



Section 5 – Application of Rates, Fees, and Charges

A. Establishment of Rates, Fees, and Charges

Rates, fees, and charges for all utility services are established by the Mary Esther City Council through the adoption of a [Fee Schedule](#). The City Council reviews the schedule each year to examine the current and future needs (including adequate reserves) and establish rates to support sustainable operations.

B. Discounts and Exemptions

The City of Mary Esther occasionally goes out for debt and the bond holders provide covenants that City must abide by as a condition of receiving the bond money. No free water will be provided for any reason as written in the master bond covenants. See also Florida Statute 153.83 for additional information.

C. Existing Franchise Agreements

To the extent that any water rate, fee, or charge adopted by resolution or ordinance of the Mary Esther City Council is in conflict with a rate, fee, or charge set forth in an existing water franchise agreement between the City of Mary Esther and any other government entity, the rate, fee, or charge set forth in the conflicting franchise agreement shall apply to customers which are subject to said agreement.

D. Schedule of Utility Rates, Fees, and Charges

Application Fee: An application fee will be charged for new accounts (including temporary service and fire hydrant meters) and when transferring service to a new address. This fee does not apply when an existing account is reassigned, such as with an estate account, deceased account holder, or name change.

Deposits: A utility deposit (per ERU) is required to establish service unless exempt.

Water Service Base Fee and Consumption Charges: The monthly base fee for water service is assessed by the zoning type (residential/commercial), number of units, and is also known as the readiness to serve charge. This fee is designed to collect revenues to cover the fixed operating and maintenance expenses of the system. The fee is billed to all accounts and does not include the monthly consumption charges, which are based upon metered water use.

Sewer Service Base Fee and Consumption Charges: The monthly base fee for sewer service is assessed by the zoning type (residential/commercial), number of units, and is also known as the readiness to serve charge. This fee is designed to collect revenues to cover the fixed operating and maintenance expenses of the system. The fee is billed to all accounts and does not include the monthly consumption charges, which are based upon metered water use. The sewer base fee and consumption charges may not apply during construction.

Late Fee: A late fee will be applied to any utility account whose bill is not paid in full by the due date. The fee shall be applied to the current balance only. This includes accounts where a partial payment has been received. Late fees shall accrue at 4:30 p.m. on the due date. Payments received after this time, whether in-person, by mail, or drop-box will still be deemed past due.



Water Tap Fee: The charge for the equipment, materials, and installation of a new tap to the water system.

Sewer Tap Fee: The charge for the equipment, materials, and installation of a new tap to the sewer system.

Fire Hydrant Meter Installation Charge: Any customer requiring the installation of a fire hydrant meter shall pay an application fee and refundable deposit.

Fire Hydrant Fee: The charge for the installation of a new fire hydrant on an existing service line.

Utility Plan Review Fee: The fee to review the utility plans of a new subdivision or development that requires an extension or relocation of public utilities.

Utility Inspection Fee: The charge to conduct an initial, follow-up, and final inspection of a water or sewer tap, or installation of a new water or sewer service line.

Meter Installation Fee: The charge for the installation of a new or replacement meter, upon customer request, on an existing service line.

Service Fee: A service fee shall be applied when a customer requests additional service. This general fee may include re-reading meters, turning water on/off, meter leak checks, service connection verification, and consumption tests (meter over/under registering water consumption). The fee shall be waived in the event a billing error or equipment malfunction is detected.

Backflow Inspection Fee: Water connections with a backflow device are required to be tested annually to ensure the safety of the potable water supply. This fee is charged to recoup the cost of inspections and any reinspection.

Delinquency Processing Fee: A delinquency processing fee for non-payment shall be billed to all accounts with delinquent balances as of 4:30 p.m. on the delinquency processing date, regardless if the service is physically disconnected, and the account shall be subject to interruption of services per Florida Statute 159.18. The fee covers both administrative and field service costs to prepare, process and collect the delinquent account.

Meter Tampering Fee: Any theft of service or tampering with a meter, fire hydrant, water or sewer line, or other utility appurtenance shall result in immediate termination of service and fee for tampering. Any losses or damages may be prosecuted.

Meter Lock Fee: A lock may be placed on any meter where there is evidence of theft of service. The intended use is to reduce the risk of water theft and subsequent loss of revenue from unauthorized use. In such cases, the account holder will be charged a lock fee.

Meter Removal Fee: When there is evidence of two (2) or more successive theft of service or tampering incidents causing unauthorized water usage, a meter removal fee will be billed to the property owner's account where the meter was removed.



Section 6 – Utility Billing

A. Monthly Utility Bill

Account holders will receive a monthly utility bill for services rendered. The bill can be presented on paper and mailed through the United States Post Office or, at the election of the customer, presented electronically through email (“paperless billing”).

B. Failure to Receive Utility Bill

The City is no longer responsible for the utility bill once it has been placed in the mail, dropped off at the US Post Office, or transmitted electronically. It is the responsibility of the account holder to ensure that all information on the account, including telephone numbers, mailing and email address are current. Payment is due to the City even if the account holder does not receive a physical or electronic copy of the bill. Failure to receive a utility bill does not exclude any account from a late fee or disconnection.

C. Billing Cycle

Account holders are billed monthly. The length of a billing cycle shall often vary month to month depending on factors that influence the ability to read the meter on the same day each month. The service period dates are determined by the date the meter was read the previous month to the date the meter is read the current month.

The initial and final utility bill for a new account holder will be prorated based on the number of days the account is active in the billing cycle and will include charges for all consumption billed at the applicable rate.

Bills are issued by the first day of each month and due twenty-five (25) days from the date of issuance. The bill is considered past due and will incur a late fee if payment is not received by 4:30 p.m. on the due date.

If left unpaid, the next bill will include a notice of delinquency. The notice shall inform the account holder that a delinquency processing fee will be assessed and, service may be terminated, if the past due balance is not paid within ten (10) days of the date of issuance. Additional courtesy notices may be provided by phone, email, or text.

D. Meter Reading

Every meter is read once a month unless conditions prevent an actual reading from being obtained and require the bill to be estimated. Some meters are read visually while others are read electronically. Staff conducting meter readings will note any questionable meter readings or meters that appear to have stopped working. The account holder should maintain the area of the meter box serving the property in a manner that keeps it unobstructed by shrubs, grass, weeds, mulch, dirt, or other similar materials. Similarly, vehicles may not be parked over the water meter. Each additional attempt to obtain a reading may result in the assessment of a service fee.



E. Estimated Billing

Occasionally, conditions may exist that make it difficult to read a meter such as inclement weather, meter maintenance, flooded meter box, or meter accessibility. The City will make a reasonable attempt to secure an exact reading; however, it may be necessary to estimate the water and sewer consumption using the customer's monthly average. Consumption will be corrected on the next bill to reflect actual consumption from the previous reading and include any billing adjustments, if necessary.

F. Calculating Consumption

The monthly base fees (also known as readiness to serve charges) for water and sewer are assessed by the zoning, number of units, and are designed to collect revenues to cover fixed operating and maintenance expenses. These fees are billed to all accounts and do not include the monthly water or sewer commodity charges.

The water commodity charges are based upon metered water consumption. The previous meter reading is subtracted from the current meter reading to determine the actual water consumption within the billing cycle. These charges are billed to the account holder rounding down to the hundredth position within the meter reading and are billed on a per thousand-gallon basis. Sewer commodity charges are based on the amount of metered water use.

If a meter is replaced between billing cycles, the combined consumption recorded on both the old and new meters will be billed on the next regular billing cycle.

G. Deposits

Billed Deposits: The City requires water and sewer deposits for any applicant wishing to establish service at any location, except as specified. The deposit will be collected at the time of service. A deposit may also be billed to the account if the deposit exemptions no longer applies.

Applied Deposits: Upon request, residential accounts may have their deposits applied to the account after three (3) consecutive years of good credit. When services are requested for disconnection or involuntarily terminated, any deposit on the account will be applied to the final bill. Account refund checks will be issued for refunds \$1.00 or more to the same name as the account holder and mailed to the last known address unless another address is provided. Any refunds less than \$1.00 will not be issued.

For commercial accounts and multi-unit residential dwelling accounts, utility deposits will remain on the account until services are requested for disconnection and/or involuntarily terminated by the City. In such cases, the deposit will be applied to the final bill.

Transfer of Deposits: Deposits held in the same name of the account's contracting party are transferrable from one service location to another service location if there is no outstanding debt.

H. Payment Options and Application of Payments

The City of Mary Esther accepts cash, checks, money orders, electronic bank payments, and credit card payments. Any person can voluntarily make a payment on any account for which they are not the account holder. Any payment presented to the City by any person for any outstanding receivable, service or fee on an account shall not be voluntarily returned by the City. No cash



back will be given for checks written for an amount greater than the account balance; any overpayment will be credited to the account holder's account. Payments will be processed and deposited when received. The account holder may request a refund on any credit balance if credit balance is due to scrivener error; however, if the account holder routinely and continuously overpays on the account the credit balance will not be refunded until the account is terminated.

Payment by Mail: Check and money order payments can be mailed to City of Mary Esther, 195 Christobal Road North, Mary Esther, FL 32569. Payment should be remitted with the payment stub.

Payment by Phone: Utility customers may call City Hall during regular business hours and make a payment over the phone.

Payment in Person: Utility customers may pay in person at Mary Esther City Hall located at 195 Christobal Road North and is open Monday through Friday from 8:00 - 5:00, closing for lunch from 1:00 - 2:00.

Payment Online: An online utility billing portal is available for convenient and quick access to utility billing information. Customers may make a one-time payment, setup recurring or automatic payments, view current account information, billing and payment history.

Payment through Your Online Bill-Pay: Online bill pay is available from most banking institutions; however, be advised that not all institutions send payment electronically. Certain financial institutions deduct payment from your account, print and mail a paper check. To avoid a late fee, schedule your payment in advance. Payments are applied to accounts when they are received, not when they are withdrawn from your bank account.

Payment Drop-Box: A drop-box is in the City Hall parking lot and available twenty-four (24) hours a day, seven (7) days a week for check and money order payments. Cash payments are not accepted from the drop-box. Payments placed in the drop-box after 4:30 p.m. will be posted the next business day.

Convenience Fees: Credit card companies and other billing providers may charge processing or transaction fees. For utility payments, the City has elected to absorb these fees instead of passing them on to the customer.

Automated Clearing House (ACH) Debit from Bank: Account holders can have their bill drafted directly from their bank account each billing cycle. Bank drafts for utility billing are processed within five (5) days of the due date. A completed [ACH Agreement Form](#) along with a voided check is required to sign up for this service.

Partial Payments: In the event an account holder does not pay the total amount due on an account, City staff will post the partial payment made to the appropriate account. The account balance due must be paid in full to avoid disconnection of service. **At no point will staff return or refuse a payment to an account, unless the refusal of payment method is otherwise described in this policy.** Partial payment of balances due on an account holder's account shall be applied to the oldest account receivable first.

Returned Payments: If a customer's payment is returned to the City as unpaid due to insufficient funds, closed account, incorrect account number, bank error, chargeback, or for any other



reason, the City will provide notice advising the account holder of the returned payment. All late fees and delinquency processing procedures will apply. A returned payment fee will be applied to the next bill.

Refusal to Accept Methods of Payment: All checks must be made payable to the City of Mary Esther. Third-party checks are not an acceptable form of payment to the City. A check that is incorrectly filled out does not reflect payment and may be returned to the customer. The City reserves the right to verify funds on any check presented for payment on account before or after accepting such payment. If a customer’s banking institution denies the City the ability to verify funds, checks presented for payment may be denied.

No personal checks will be accepted if two returned payments occur within twelve (12) consecutive months, any tampering/self-restoration of service after delinquency processing, or when any meter is removed. This status shall remain in effect for twelve (12) consecutive months.

Any cash payment suspected of being counterfeit and initially accepted by the City will be noted on the payee’s account as a possible counterfeit bill. If the bill is returned by the depositing bank as counterfeit, a returned payment in the amount of the counterfeit will post to the noted account.

I. Account Holder Contact Information

It is the responsibility of the property owner, account holder, or authorized designee to advise the City to whom and to what address bills are to be sent (e.g. new owner or renter). Only an account holder or authorized party can request changes to billing information or status. Changes can be requested by phone or sent electronically by email or fax. There is no charge for such changes.

J. Transfer of Existing Account Holder to New Contracted Location

Customers may request to transfer service from one location to another by completing a new utility application and paying the required fee. The deposit may also be transferred. The account holder is still responsible for any outstanding balances at the previous address. Any balance owed from the previous address will be transferred to the new account and failure to pay such balances will result in involuntary termination of service at the new address.

K. Unauthorized Consumption on Inactive Location

When utility services are provided to a property that does not have approved service contracted or established, whether voluntarily or involuntary terminated service (i.e. vacant, abandoned property, construction lots), a utility account shall be established in the name of the property owner as reflected in the records of the Okaloosa County Property Appraiser for any unauthorized consumption and utility services, per Florida Statute 180.135. The City of Mary Esther shall be responsible to look no further than the property appraiser’s office for property owner information. The account shall be billed the utility application fee to recover the administrative expense of processing the account and any work orders or communication sent to the property owner.

Rental Property: Property owners with rental property shall be responsible for paying any rates, fees, and charges accrued for any unauthorized service supplied, metered or unmetered, to the property effective the date tenant utility services are discontinued, either voluntarily or involuntarily, in the tenant’s name and/or until a prospective tenant contracts service.



Section 7 – Discontinuing Utility Service

A. Termination of Service

Requesting Discontinuance of Service: Any account holder requesting discontinuance of service will inform City staff of the location of disconnection, date service is to be disconnected, and the forwarding mailing address for the final bill. Due to privacy issues, the account holder, authorized party, or property owner must be the one to request the termination of service. Failure to request termination of service or an account at a property, regardless if an account has been established at another property, does not release the responsibility of the account holder of any balance due.

If the account holder has become incapacitated or deceased, legal documentation must be provided that the person requesting termination of service is an authorized representative of the account holder.

Disconnection Scheduling: Under normal conditions, disconnection from the City's utility system will be fulfilled the next available business day. During periods of a high volume of requests work will be scheduled at the next availability.

Closing of a Utility Account: Within thirty (30) days after termination of utility service, the account will be closed. All charges, fees and credits (including deposits, refunds, and adjustments) are then applied against the amounts owed.

Final Bill: An account holder's final bill will be mailed in a timely manner to encourage collection and customer understanding. The final bill will include all consumption used up to the time of service disconnection and any other charges or amounts due. Any balance owed to the City will remain due until paid. All legal means of collection for a delinquent account in arrears will be taken.

Credit Balance: Refunds will be processed for accounts with a credit balance after final billing. A check for the refund will be issued to the account holder and sent to the last known address on record if the balance is greater than \$1.00. If the balance is less than or equal to a \$1.00, the amount will be written off and no refund will be provided. Refund checks will only be issued in the name of the account holder.

B. Revert to Property Owner

Upon any discontinuance of service, voluntarily or involuntarily, by any tenant or occupant other than the property owner, the utility billing reverts to the property owner as the account holder.

Disputed Bills: If an account holder believes the City has made an error in calculating a utility bill, or otherwise disputes the obligation to pay the bill, the account holder or the account holder's authorized representative may discuss the matter with Customer Service. Any dispute of a utility bill must be expressed to the City prior to the due date. When disputing a bill, the customer shall:

- First contact the Customer Service office for clarification.
- If the customer, after contacting Customer Service, still disputes the bill, the customer has



the right to appeal to the Utility Billing Clerk.

- If the customer, after contacting the Utility Billing Clerk, still disputes the bill, the customer has the right to appeal to the Finance Director.
- If the customer, after contacting the Finance Director, still disputes the bill, the customer has the right to file a written appeal to the City Manager. This appeal should include the reason for the dispute and any evidence proving the inaccuracy of the bill.
- The account of any disapproved appeal shall be assessed a late fee or delinquency processing fee, if due, at the time the appeal process is closed.

Extensions and Payment Contracts: Account holders will be allowed two (2) extensions and one (1) payment plan per twelve (12) month period. An additional extension or payment plan may be granted at the discretion of the Finance Director. Late fees shall not be assessed on the balance related to an active extension or payment plan.

In order to receive an extension, the account holder must visit Customer Service in person, provide identification, and sign a [Promissory Note](#). An extension may be granted for up to a two (2) week period; however, due to unforeseen and unusual circumstances, the Finance Director may approve a longer term. In the event of default, late fees shall be applied on the past due balance.

In order to receive a payment plan, the account holder must visit Customer Service in person, provide identification, and sign a [Repayment Agreement](#). Payment plans may be granted for up to a three (3) month period; however, due to unforeseen and unusual circumstances, the Finance Director may grant a longer term. The extended amount shall be paid along with the current amount billed and due each month. If the payment plan is not adhered to, the customer will be charged late fees on the past due balance, a delinquency processing fee, and services may be disconnected immediately without notice.

Promissory Notes and Repayment Agreements are not automatic; they are a privilege and will be granted only with proof of hardship and after review of the account and payment history.

Misapplied Payments: On rare occasion, financial institutions may process a check or electronic payment incorrectly leaving a discrepancy between the customer's utility account and bank statement. If a customer believes the payment amount applied to the account balance is incorrect, the customer must provide the City with a copy of the front and back of the cancelled check, credit card statement, or a cash receipt showing the amount the customer believes to be correct. A payment extension may be granted if time is needed to produce the document and a billing adjustment will be made upon verification.

Exceptions: Under special circumstances, the City may choose not to interrupt service or reconnect service as part of the delinquency processing, if the City has prior written notice from a medical facility, when the services are provided to a critically ill person. Consideration will be provided on a case-by-case basis and only if the account holder provides written notice from a medical facility and executes and fulfills a written payment plan.



C. Involuntary Termination of Service

The City may terminate utility service for any one of the following reasons:

- Failure of the account holder to pay balances due for utility service as required.
- Upon discovery of tampering including non-authorized meter connection, by-passing the meter, or altering its function. The account holder shall be held responsible for any meter tampering. In the absence of an account holder, the owner of the property for which services are provided shall be assessed all charges and penalties.
- Failure of the account holder to permit employees and contractors access to the water meter at all reasonable hours. Locked gates, loose dogs, parking cars over meters may be constitute denial of access and grounds for termination of service.
- Use of service for unlawful reasons.
- Discovery of a condition which is determined to be hazardous or unsafe.
- Violation of any of the City’s other utility service policies and procedures, ordinances, or state or federal law.

The City may notify the Health Department, Code Enforcement, and other municipal offices of the termination of service.

D. Reconnections

When it becomes necessary for the City to discontinue services for any of the reasons listed in this policy, service will be restored after payment of:

- 1) All past due balances.
- 2) Any deposit as required.
- 3) All fees and charges required by this policy.
- 4) Any discovery of prior debt.



Section 8 – Utility Operational Policies

A. Meter Testing

Any water service customer may request a consumption test on their meter. There is no charge if the meter is found to be functioning outside the established, weighted accuracy limits – over registering or under registering consumption. A fee may be billed to the customer if the meter is functioning properly within established accuracy limits. If a meter test reveals accuracy equal to or within the defined accuracy limits, the meter shall be placed back in service on the same account and the meter testing fee shall be billed to the account holder.

A utility bill adjustment may be requested for up to two (2) billing cycles. Adjustments are calculated using the customer's six (6) month average consumption, or if no history exists, based on average consumption of three thousand (3,000) gallons.

B. Water Quality Complaints

Water quality concerns may be provided by phone or in writing to the Utility Billing Administrator at 850-243-3566 or utilbill@cityofmaryesther.com. The complaint will be forwarded to the Utilities Department for review and response.

C. Damage to Plants and Shrubs

The City is not responsible for damage to plants and shrubs which may be dug up or cut/trimmed while accessing the meter, work on the underground piping system or other apparatus located within the public right-of-way or public utility easement. A reasonable effort will be made to minimize or repair any resulting damage. The account holder is responsible for ensuring that the water meter is not obstructed by plantings, mulch, grass, or any other means. If the Department must relocate a meter due to obstruction, the owner of the property or account holder may be charged for the materials and labor to relocate the meter.

D. Damage to City Equipment

Any damage caused by the account holder, property owner, or their agent(s) to the City's equipment or property serving an account holder shall be the responsibility of the account holder. The City shall make necessary repairs and charge the account holder for materials and labor for said repairs. Such damage includes, but is not limited to, damage from mowing, vehicles, landscaping, remodeling, during any phase of construction, or excavation.

E. Account Holder Name Change

A name can be changed on an existing account in the event of divorce, marriage, or legal name change. The account holder must present supporting documentation and a valid form of government issued identification with photo. Examples include a valid driver's license, passport, alien registration card, or state issued photo ID (identification will be scanned into the City's records system for attachment to the applicant's account for identification purposes).

Existing accounts shall not be transferred into the name of another person that has not contracted service except for when current account holder is deceased.



F. Deceased Account Holder and Estate Account

Property Titled with Joint Ownership: Upon death of an account holder who is the property owner, a surviving co-owner of the property, as filed with the Okaloosa County Property Appraiser's Office, must request to transfer the service into their name.

If the City of Mary Esther receives notice or determines that an account holder is deceased, notification of account transfer to the surviving co-owner of the property will be mailed to the service address on record.

Property Titled with One Owner: Upon death of an account holder, the sole property owner, a surviving family member may request to transfer the account into the ownership of an estate for the decedent, if probate has been filed. The City may request legal documentation from the executor or the person responsible for administering an estate. The account will then be established in the estate's name. It is the responsibility of the executor or other person administering the estate to notify the City of any changes in account status.

Rental Property with Tenant: If the City of Mary Esther receives notice or determines that an account holder (tenant) of a rental property is deceased, notification of account termination will be sent to the service address. The letter will set forth a date, a minimum of two (2) weeks from the date of notification in which a utility application must be completed by and received in accordance with this policy in order to continue service at the location of the deceased tenant account holder.

G. Utility Billing Adjustments

Overcharge or Undercharge Error: If the City has overcharged or undercharged an active account holder for service, the City will correct this error subject to the following procedures:

- If the City has overcharged an active account holder for a service, the City will notify the account holder and credit the account holder's account, without interest, the excess amount on the next monthly bill. Account holders may request a refund if the account balance was previously paid in full. The City shall refund the excess amount charged not to exceed the preceding twelve (12) billing cycles.
- If the City has undercharged an account holder for service during any of the previous twelve (12) billing cycles, the City will notify the account holder and collect the additional amount due to the City by placing the charges on the next monthly bill. A payment plan or other payment options may be extended to the account holder.

Swimming Pools: Swimming pools may be filled once a year without the account holder having to pay a sewer usage charge on the water used to fill the pool. For an adjustment to be granted, the account holder (or the account holder's representative) must submit [Pool Adjustment Request Form](#) for the adjustment at least twenty-four (24) hours prior to the pool fill. Sewer consumption will then be calculated to the account holder's previous six (6) month average and an adjustment will be made to the bill which includes the dates of usage. All water used to fill a pool will be metered and billed to the account holder.



Excessive Use Adjustment: There are a variety of circumstances which may cause an account holder to have a water bill that exceeds their average water consumption. These may include a plumbing leak, faulty toilet flapper, hose bib left on, or water theft. Often circumstances are intermittent or isolated occurrences where water loss may start and stop within the billing cycle, making it difficult for the account holder to identify the source.

At the customer's request, Utilities Department staff can identify if water is actively flowing through a meter and/or if a leak at the meter connection is actively occurring; however, staff cannot identify the source or cause of the leak. It is the account holder's responsibility to regularly monitor their consumption, identify the source/cause of water loss, and correct the problem as soon as it is discovered. Any billing adjustment is a courtesy to help the account holder with a high bill.

Utility account holders may apply for an adjustment when excessive use has occurred. Adjustments are calculated using the customer's six (6) month average consumption, or if no history exists, based on average consumption of three thousand (3,000) gallons.

There are two types of adjustments that are permitted:

- One (1) full adjustment (100%) per ten (10) years of service for two (2) consecutive billing cycles up to \$1,000. A written personal statement is required.
- One (1) partial adjustment (50%) per year for two consecutive billing cycles up to \$500. Adjustments will not be provided for toilet flappers or other leaks that are preventable and easily identified. Documentation is required for partial adjustments, including plumbing invoice, material receipts, or written personal statement.

Excessive use adjustments must be requested within three (3) months of the last billing cycle to be adjusted.

H. Utility Debt Collection

Utility Collections: In the event an account holder has an outstanding balance on another account, the outstanding balance will be transferred to the current account. All delinquency procedures and service charges will apply. The City shall be entitled to recover all costs, including but not limited to, reasonable attorney's fees and/or collection service charges, incurred in collecting delinquent utility fees and charges.

Any fee or charge that is more than one hundred twenty (120) days past due may be recovered by referring the account to a third-party collection agency and/or bringing an action at law.

In accordance with the Telephone Consumer Protection Act (TCPA), the account holder provides consent to the City of Mary Esther to contact the account holder by landline telephone, cellular phone, text message, fax, or email. The account holder understands this may result in charges by their communications provider. Methods of contact may also include pre-recorded or artificial voice messages and/or the use of an automatic dialing device, as applicable.

Utility Liens: All past due and outstanding utility rates, fees, and charges assessed or incurred by the property owner shall become a lien upon the property with which such rates, fees, and charges are associated, in accordance with Florida Statute Chapter 153.67 and 159.17. The obligation may be enforced by the City by action of law or suit to enforce the lien in the same



manner as the foreclosure of mortgages. In the event of such action, the City shall be entitled to recover all court costs and reasonable attorney fees for such collection.

I. Internal Audits and Evaluations

Processes, policies, and procedures shall be reviewed internally, and this document updated to address any additional changes in current practices that may be found.



Section 9 – Appendix

[Residential Utility Application](#)

[Commercial Utility Application](#)

[Request for Public Records Exemption](#)

[Automatic Debits \(ACH\) Agreement](#)

[Promissory Note](#)

[Repayment Agreement](#)

[Pool Adjustment Request Form](#)

[Fee Schedule](#)





CITY OF MARY ESTHER

195 N. Christobal Road, Mary Esther, FL 32569
Phone: 850-243-3566 Ext.15 Fax: 850-243-0736
Email: utilbill@cityofmaryesther.com

RESIDENTIAL WATER SERVICE APPLICATION

Welcome to the City of Mary Esther Water and Sewer System. We appreciate your business and pledge to do our best to deliver exceptional customer service and satisfaction. Please be advised that the City will not be responsible for any damages occurring as a result of turning on the water at your premises. The City of Mary Esther clearly rejects any responsibility or obligation to determine the condition of the water system on the owner and or tenant's side of the meter. It is recommended that someone be at the property when the water is turned on. Open faucets and/or damaged fixtures, water pipes, drains and other factors can cause water damage to the premises once service is turned on. The undersigned expressly assumes responsibility and all liability for any damage to the premises and to any damage to the property of others. The undersigned will indemnify and hold harmless the City of Mary Esther for any resulting damage to the owner and/or tenant's premises and the real and personal property of others.

Application Date: _____ Date of Water Turn On: _____

APPLICANT INFORMATION

Resident's Name: _____

Service Address: _____
(Street) (City) (State) (Zip)

Mailing Address If Different: _____
(Street) (City) (State) (Zip)

Phone Number: _____ (Home) _____ (Cell)

Drivers License or Identification Card # _____ State: _____

Date of Birth: _____

E-mail Address: _____ Receive Bills Via E-mail: Yes ___ No ___ Both ___
(Optional)

GENERAL INFORMATION

Place of Employment: _____ Phone #: _____

Emergency Contact (Required): _____ Phone #: _____
(Name)

Do You Rent ___ Or Own ___? If Rental, Please provide Landlord information:

Name: _____ Phone Number: _____

Address: _____
(Street) (City) (State) (Zip)

Continued ->

Joint Applicant Information (Optional)

Joint Applicant: _____ Date of Birth: _____
(Name)

Phone Number: _____

Drivers License or Identification Card # _____ State: _____

Joint Applicant Signature: _____ Date: _____

OFFICE USE ONLY: RECEIVED BY: _____ **DATE:** _____



CITY OF MARY ESTHER

195 N. Christobal Road, Mary Esther, FL 32569
Phone: 850-243-3566 Ext.15 Fax: 850-243-0736
Email: utilbill@cityofmaryesther.com

COMMERCIAL WATER SERVICE APPLICATION

Welcome to the City of Mary Esther Water and Sewer System. We appreciate your business and pledge to do our best to deliver exceptional customer service and satisfaction. Please be advised that the City will not be responsible for any damages occurring as a result of turning on the water at your premises. The City of Mary Esther clearly rejects any responsibility or obligation to determine the condition of the water system on the owner and or tenant's side of the meter. It is recommended that someone be at the property when the water is turned on. Open faucets and/or damaged fixtures, water pipes, drains and other factors can cause water damage to the premises once service is turned on. The undersigned expressly assumes responsibility and all liability for any damage to the premises and to any damage to the property of others. The undersigned will indemnify and hold harmless the City of Mary Esther for any resulting damage to the owner and/or tenant's premises and the real and personal property of others.

Application Date: _____ Date of Water Turn On: _____

COMPANY INFORMATION

Business Name: _____

Physical Business Address: _____
(Street) (City) (State) (Zip)

Mailing Address If Different: _____
(Street) (City) (State) (Zip)

Phone Number: _____ Emergency Phone Number(Required): _____

E-mail Address: _____ Receive Bills Via E-mail: Yes ___ No ___

FEIN: _____

OWNER INFORMATION

Owner/Applicant Name: _____ Phone Number: _____
(Print)

Address: _____
(Street) (City) (State) (Zip)

Drivers License or Identification Card # _____ State: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

OFFICE USE ONLY: RECEIVED BY: _____ DATE: _____



REQUEST FOR PUBLIC RECORD EXEMPTION

Please complete/sign and submit this form to the City Clerk's Office

Florida law allows certain persons to request that an agency not publicly disclose specific identification and/or location information contained in any of its agency records. Please refer to sections 119.071(2)(j), (4)(d), and (5)(i), 265.605 and 267.17 F.S. or any other applicable statute for scope of protection which may include home address, phone numbers, photos, name of spouse and/or children, and their place of employment, and/or school or daycare facility, and date of birth.

To request the exemption for information contained within any of the City of Mary Esther's records, please complete this form and return it to the City Clerk, 195 Christobal Road, N., Mary Esther, FL 32569.

Each person claiming an exemption must complete a separate Public Record Exemption form. Completion of this form is for an individual and does not extend to "the family" or any singular or collective family members.

I attest that I am an individual covered under Section 119.071, F.S., as (check the appropriate item – only one):

- | | | |
|---|----------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> current
<input type="checkbox"/> spouse of a current
<input type="checkbox"/> child of a current | or
or
or | <input type="checkbox"/> former
<input type="checkbox"/> spouse of a former
<input type="checkbox"/> child of a former |
|---|----------------|--|

and I hereby request the exemption as indicated below.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Addiction treatment facility, licensed pursuant to Chapter 397, F.S., directors, managers, supervisors, nurses, and clinical employees (s. 119.071(4)(d)2.s)

<input type="checkbox"/> Child advocacy center, meeting the standards set forth in Chapter 39, F.S., directors, managers, supervisors, and clinical employees and members of a Child Protection Team as set forth in s. 39.303, F.S (s. 119.071(4)(d)2.t)

<input type="checkbox"/> Code Enforcement Officer (s. 119.071(4)(d)2.i)

<input type="checkbox"/> County Tax Collector (s. 117.071(4)(d)2.n)

<input type="checkbox"/> Dept. of Business and Professional Regulations – investigators and inspectors (s. 119.071(4)(d)2.m)

<input type="checkbox"/> Dept. of Children and Family Services personnel whose duties involve investigation of abuse, neglect, exploitation, fraud, theft, or other criminal activities (s. 119.071(4)(d)2.a)

<input type="checkbox"/> Dept. of financial Services investigative personnel whose duties include the investigation of fraud, theft, workers' compensation coverage requirements and compliance, other related criminal activities, or state regulatory requirement violations. (s. 119.071(4)(d)2.b)

<input type="checkbox"/> Dept of Health personnel whose duties support the investigations of child abuse or neglect, determination of benefits, or the investigation, inspection, or prosecution of health care practitioners (s. 119.071(4)(d)2.a)

<input type="checkbox"/> Dept of Health personnel whose duties include, or result in, the determination or adjudication of eligibility for social security disability benefits, the investigation or prosecution of complaints filed against health care practitioners, or the inspection of health care practitioners or health care facilities licensed by the Department of Health (s. 119.071(4)(d)2.o)

<input type="checkbox"/> Judicial or quasi-judicial officer (general and special magistrate, judge of compensation claims, administrative law judge of the Division of Administrative hearings, and child support enforcement hearing officer) (s. 119.071(4)(d)2.g)

<input type="checkbox"/> Juvenile Probation officer, juvenile probation supervisor, detention superintendent, assistant detention superintendent, senior juvenile detention officer, juvenile detention officer supervisor, juvenile detention officer, house parent I and II, house parent supervisor, group treatment leader, group treatment leader supervisor, rehabilitation therapist, and social services counselor of the Dept. of Juvenile Justice (s. 119.710(4)(d)2.k) | <input type="checkbox"/> Dept. of Revenue personnel or local government personnel whose duties related to revenue collection and enforcement or child support enforcement (s.119.071(4)(d)2.a)

<input type="checkbox"/> Domestic violence centers certified under Chapter 39, F.S. staff and domestic violence advocates as defined in s. 90.5036(1)(b), F.S. (s. 119.071(4)(d)2.u)

<input type="checkbox"/> Donor or prospective donor, Cultural Endowment Program Trust Fund, Citizen Support Organizations or National, Historic Landmarks (publicly owned houses) (sections 265.605 and/or 267.17)

<input type="checkbox"/> Emergency medical technicians or paramedics certified under Chapter 401, F.S. (s 119.071(4)(d)2.q)

<input type="checkbox"/> Firefighter certified in compliance with s. 633.408, F.S. (s. 119.071(4)(d)2.d)

<input type="checkbox"/> Guardian ad litem (s. 119.071(4)(d)2.j)

<input type="checkbox"/> Human resource, labor relations, or employee relations director, assistant director, manager or assistant manager of any local government agency or water management district. (s. 119.071(4)(d)2.h)

<input type="checkbox"/> Impaired practitioner consultants whose duties result in a determination of a person's skill and safety to practice a licensed profession (s. 119.071(4)(d)2.p)

<input type="checkbox"/> Inspector general employees or internal audit department employees whose duties include auditing or investigation waste, fraud, abuse, theft, exploitation, or other activities that could lead to criminal prosecution or administrative discipline (s. 119.071(4)(d)2.r)

<input type="checkbox"/> Judge – district court of appeal, circuit court and county court, or justice of the Florida Supreme Court (s. 119.071(4)(d)2.e)

<input type="checkbox"/> Prosecutor (state attorney, assistant state attorney, statewide prosecutor, assistant statewide prosecutor (s. 119.071(4)(d)2.f) |
|---|--|

- Law enforcement personnel including correctional officers and correctional probation officers (s. 119.071(4)(d)2.a)
- Office of Financial Regulation, Bureau of Financial Investigations, investigative personnel whose duties include the investigation of fraud, theft, other related criminal activities or state regulatory requirement violations (s. 119.071(4)(d)2.c.)
- Victim of sexual battery, aggravated child abuse, aggravated stalking, harassment, aggravated battery or domestic violence (must attach official verification that crime occurred. 5-year exemption. Contact Attorney General's Office -850-4143990 - about eligibility for separate Address Confidentiality Program. (s. 741.465, F.S.)

- Public defenders and criminal conflict and civil regional counsel (includes assistant public defenders, assistant criminal conflict and assistant civil regional counsel (s. 119.071(d)2.1)
- U.S. Attorney or assistant attorney, U.S. appellate judge, U.S. district court judge and U.S. magistrate (by signature below, person certifies that reasonable efforts made to protect information from being publicly accessible by other means) (s. 119.071(5)(i))
- Other (must list applicable statute):

If your circumstances change such that you no longer qualify for an exemption or may qualify for an exemption in the future, it is your responsibility to provide an updated form to the City.

SELECT ONLY ONE OF THE STATEMENTS BELOW:

- The information above is not applicable to me.
- The above information applies to me, but I elect to opt-out and therefore request that my personal information NOT be exempted from disclosure to the extent allowable under the law.

SIGNATURE: _____ PRINTED NAME: _____ DATE: _____

OR

- I am requesting the exemption indicated above.

I understand that any person who willfully and knowingly violates any of the provisions of Chapter 119 is guilty of a misdemeanor of the first degree, punishable as provided in s. 775.082 or s.775.083, Florida Statutes.

PRINTED NAME: _____ DATE OF BIRTH: _____
HOME ADDRESS: _____
PHONE NUMBER: _____

Pursuant to Section 119.071(4)(d)3, Florida Statutes, your request must be notarized. The requestor hereby swears or affirms, under penalty of perjury, that the information contained in the foregoing public records exemption form is true and correct.

SIGNATURE: _____ DATE: _____
(Do not sign until in the presence of a Notary Public)

STATE OF FLORIDA
COUNTY OF _____

The foregoing Public Records Exemption Request was sworn to (or affirmed by) and subscribed before me by means of () physical presence or () online notarization, this _____ day of _____, 20____, by _____ who is personally known to me or produced the following identification: _____

Signature of Notary Public - State of Florida (SEAL)

Paying Your Water Bill Has Just Gotten Easier!

AUTO PAY with The City of Mary Esther can save you time and money. Sign up now for free electric funds transfer. It's quick and easy to do. Complete the authorization agreement below, include a voided check or deposit slip and return it with your bill. or drop it off at City Hall. It's that simple. No more postage and no more hassles or cost associated with writing checks

With AUTO PAY, you will continue to receive a bill, which will indicate the amount your bank account is to be drafted in approximately 10 days after the bill date. Your bank statement showing the actual debit will be your proof of payment.



AUTO PAY Authorization Agreement

I (we) hereby authorize City of Mary Esther as my agent, to automatically debit the bank account listed below for payment of all bills issued by the City's Water department. I understand that it is my responsibility to notify the City in writing if change banks or account numbers by mailing a voided check or deposit slip.

Name: _____ Bank Name: _____
Phone #: _____ Type of Account: _____
Water Account #: _____ Bank Account #: _____
Address: _____ Bank Routing #: _____

This authorization will be in effect until either party gives written notice to the other of termination. I understand my notice must be received in time to give the City reasonable opportunity to act.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

*****NOTE: Please include a deposit slip or voided check from the bank listed above*****

TERMS OF AGREEMENT

I hereby authorize the City of Mary Esther, as my agent; to automatically debit my bank account for payment of all bills issued by the City's Water Department. If for some reason the City cannot automatically debit my account, I authorize the issue, signature and presentation of a paper draft on my account for payment of water bills rendered. The City will advise, by notice on the bill, the amount to be drafted in approximately 10 days after the bill date. I understand I must notify the City's Water Department upon receipt of my bill of any dispute regarding the amount of the bill.

I understand the City of Mary Esther may impose a processing fee if the draft is not paid by my bank, due to insufficient funds or my account being closed, and that I remain personally liable for the amount on my bill in such event. This authorization will be in effect until either party gives written notice to the Other of termination. I understand the City must receive my notice in time to have a reasonable opportunity to act.

In consideration of this service, to the extent permitted by applicable law; I hereby release and hold harmless the City of Mary Esther for all claims of liability, whether or not contributed to by negligence, with respect to the debit of my account. In no event will the City be liable for the acts or omissions of other, including the bank and clearing houses, which receive and transmit the debit instructions.

Return To:

The City of Mary Esther
Accounting & Finance Department
195 Christobal Rd. N.
Mary Esther, FL 32569
Fax: 850-243-0736
utilbill@cityofmaryesther.com

CITY OF MARY ESTHER
195 CHRISTOBAL ROAD - N. MARY ESTHER, FLORIDA 32569
TELEPHONE (850) 243-3566 - FAX (850) 243-0736



DATE

Customer Name
Mailing Address Line 1
Mailing Address Line 2
City, State, Zip

RE: Repayment Agreement

I, **customer name**, agree to pay my delinquent date utility account **account number** balance of **account balance**, plus any subsequent charges, in full by **date, at 4pm**. I understand that if I do not pay this account in full by **date by 4pm CDT**, late fees may be charged. I understand the service for utility account 02067-00 may be stopped if the account is not paid in full by **date at 5pm**.

I agree to pay the sum of **amount** by no later than 5pm on **date**.

I agree to pay the following charges each month by no later than the **15th** of each month, beginning on **date**:

- **Amount** (which is calculated as 1/3 of the total **past due balance**)
- All new charges each month beginning with the charges billed in early **month of next billing**

The City agrees to waive late fees and disconnect fees as long as all payments between now and **date** are made on time, by the 15th of each month, in accordance with the above payment schedule details.

I have read the letter above and agree to the terms of this agreement.

(Sign on the line above your typed name immediately below to accept this agreement.)

Customer Name, Address

Date

Approved by:

Finance Director

Date



CITY OF MARY ESTHER
195 CHRISTOBAL ROAD - N. ● MARY ESTHER, FLORIDA 32569
TELEPHONE (850) 243-3566 - FAX (850) 243-0736

POOL ADJUSTMENT REQUEST FORM

***** Request must be at least 24 hours prior to pool fill *****

1. Resident's name: _____
2. Service Address: _____
3. Utility Account Number: _____
4. Date of Request: _____
5. Date Pool is to filled: _____ (Estimate must be no more than 2 weeks in the future)
6. Approximate amount of water to be used to fill pool: _____ (Gallons)

Customer Signature

Date

For City Staff Use Only – Customer should not write within this section

7. Actual water usage amount for period in which pool fill occurred: _____
8. Is amount of water usage (item 7) greater than amount of requested adjustment (item 6)? Y / N
9. If answer to 8 is yes, proceed with adjustment, if answer is no, investigate.

Employee Initials

Date

Authority: In accordance with City Ordinance 20-106©, “Those customers who receive sewage service from the City and who own a swimming pool on their homestead may apply for a swimming pool refill waiver for the sewer cost of a specific gallon amount on one billing statement every twenty-four (24) months. The City must be notified at least twenty-four (24) hours in advance of the fill. All waiver requests must include a specific gallon amount.”

WATER AND SEWER SERVICE FEES AND CHARGES

For the purpose of determining the "Ready to Serve" water and sewer rates for commercial customers, "Commercial 1" customer accounts are identified as customer accounts with a monthly water usage of 12,000 gallons per month or less. "Commercial 2" customer accounts are identified as customer accounts with a monthly water usage of 12,001 gallons per month or more.

The following fees are the water service charges:

Monthly Water Rate Computation

Ready to serve rate – Residential	\$18.34
Ready to serve rate – Commercial 1	\$27.51
Ready to serve rate – Commercial 2	\$55.02

Amount of Water (per 1,000 gallons)	Rate
0-3,000 gallons	\$4.91
3,001-6,000 gallons	\$5.67
6,001-9,000 gallons	\$6.42
9,001 gallons and up	\$7.56

The following fees are the sewer service charges:

Monthly Sewer Rate Computation

Ready to serve rate – Residential	\$26.81
Ready to serve rate – Commercial 1	\$39.50
Ready to serve rate – Commercial 2	\$79.01

Amount of Water (per 1,000 gallons)	Rate
0-3,000 gallons	\$7.45
3,001-6,000 gallons	\$8.51
6,001-9,000 gallons	\$9.64
9,001 gallons and up	\$11.31

Water tap in fee

The following fees shall be charged whenever a new tap to the City's main water supply line is required. The City shall reserve the right to require a new tap for any property which has an existing tap that is structurally or mechanically failing regardless of the cause. The tap in fee shall be the responsibility of the property owner and does not include the cost of the water meter and installation.

Tap up to 1 inch in size, per tap	\$1,000.00
Tap up to 2 inch in size, per tap	\$1,750.00

Water taps larger than 2 inches shall be installed by a private utility contractor, inspected by the City and will charged the Utility Construction Inspection Fee in lieu of the tap fee. All fittings and installation expenses shall be the responsibility of the utility contractor at the property owner's expense.

Sewer tap in fee

The following fees shall be charged to the property owner whenever a new tap to the City's main sewer system is required. Fees include the cost to install up to a 6-inch tap, with sewer lateral and public clean out placed at the property line. Taps larger than 6-inches must be completed by a private utility contractor at the property owner's expense, inspected by the City, and will be charged the Utility Construction Inspection Fee in lieu of the sewer tap fee.

The City shall reserve the right to require a new tap for any property which has an existing tap that is structurally or mechanically failing regardless of the cause.

Residential unit tap in fee	\$2,500.00
Commercial tap in fee per establishment or unit	\$2,500.00

Water Meter Installation Charges

The following charges include the cost of the water meter, curb stop, meter box, and installation.

5/8 x 3/4 inch	\$345
1 inch.....	\$415
1 1/2 inch.....	\$1,373
2 inch.....	\$1,584

Water meters larger than 2 inches shall be installed by a private utility contractor at the property owner's expense. The City shall bill for the water meter at actual cost. All fittings and miscellaneous installation expenses shall be the responsibility of the utility contractor. Installations completed by a private contractor will be inspected by the City and charged the Utility Construction Inspection Fee.

Water and Sewer Ancillary Fees, Charges & Fines

The City Manager shall reserve the right to impose or withhold any of the following charges.

1. Application Fee.....	\$30.00
2. Utility Deposit.....	\$100.00
3. Late Fee (Current Balance).....	10%
4. Delinquency Processing Fee.....	\$50.00
5. Service Fee*	
Business Hours.....	\$30
After Hours.....	\$75
6. After Hours Service-Hourly Rate.....	\$75.00
7. Meter Lock Fee.....	\$50.00
8. Meter Removal Fee.....	\$150.00
9. Meter Tampering Fee.....	\$250.00
10. Backflow Inspection.....	\$50.00
11. Backflow Re-inspection.....	\$50.00
12. Plan Review Fee.....	\$150.00
13. Utility Construction Inspection Fee**.....	\$150.00
14. Fire Hydrant Meter Installation Charge	
Application.....	\$30
Deposit.....	\$2,500.00
15. Fire Hydrant Set Charge/Installation.....	\$150.00
16. Install Temporary Water Meter.....	\$150.00

*Amount as specified may be charged if in the opinion of the City Manager, the equipment has been maliciously or intentionally damaged by the customer or if the damage may have been avoided or has been caused by negligence of the customer. The same shall apply to meter leak checks when the meter has been found to be operational.

**Includes initial inspection, follow up inspection and final inspection.

Note: After hours service charge is in addition to any other fees and is billed at the rate of \$75.00 per hour with the minimum charge being one (1) hour.