

**WATER POLICY**  
**Russell Water & Sewer System**

New Construction

When a property requires the installation of a new water meter (where no meter has been previously installed) due to new construction or installation of a mobile home, a deposit is required to cover the cost of the meter and its installation. The amount of the deposit is dependent on current market prices for the equipment plus labor. Contact the water department for an estimate of total installation costs.

New Water Meter Accounts

A deposit of \$100 will be charged to open each new water meter account (for a property where a water meter is already installed).

*Meter deposits*

The deposit will be kept by the water department until the account becomes permanently inactive.

The deposit will be returned when the customer closes the account and pays any outstanding balance in full. The customer may elect to have the deposit applied toward the final bill with the remaining balance returned to the customer.

When the customer closes the account without paying the final water bill in full, the deposit will be applied to the final balance. The customer will owe any balance remaining after the deposit is applied. If the deposit is more than the final balance, the remaining deposit will be returned to the customer.

When the customer abandons the account with an outstanding balance, the customer forfeits the full deposit.

Any unclaimed deposits on closed accounts will be turned over to the Arkansas Secretary of State Unclaimed Property Division annually.

Water Bills and Payments:

*First notice*

Each customer will receive a water bill at the beginning of each month. The bill is due on the 10th of each month.

If the bill is not paid in full on or before the 10th, the bill becomes late and a late fee of 10% is applied to the outstanding balance.

If a partial payment is made on or before the 10th, a 10% late fee will be applied to the remaining balance. **Important!** A partial payment will not keep the account from being shut off.

**WATER POLICY**  
**Russell Water & Sewer System**

Water Bills and Payments: (continued)

*Final notice*

Each customer that does not pay the monthly bill in full on or before the 10th will receive a Final Notice. The Final Notice will state the total amount due and a shut-off date.

The Final Notice balance must be paid in full before the shut-off date printed on the Final Notice bill. A partial payment will not keep the account from being disconnected if the full amount is not paid before the shut-off date. **Important!** *Payments received on the shut-off date are considered partial payments and will not keep the meter from being disconnected.* To avoid being shut off, full payment must be made by 5:00 pm on the day before the shut-off date printed on the Final Notice. To make sure the payment is received and the meter is not shut off, in person payment is recommended.

*Shut-off*

Every account that has an outstanding balance as of the shut-off date printed on the Final Notice will be disconnected.

A disconnected meter will be locked by the Water Department on the shut-off date. A locked meter cannot be used by the customer until it is reconnected by the Water Department. A damage fee of \$50 will be charged for damage to Water Department locks.

*Reconnect*

A fee of \$75 will be added to each account that is not paid in full before the disconnect date. To get the meter reconnected, the customer must pay the outstanding balance in full, including the reconnect fee. **Important!** *Due to circumstances beyond the water department's control, the customer may have to wait until the following day after the account is paid for the meter to be reconnected.*

*Method of payment*

Payments will be accepted in cash, check, or money order. Make checks and money orders payable to Russell Water Department. A fee of \$35 will be charged for checks returned for insufficient funds. Write the name and number of the account being paid on the check or money order so that it can be applied to the proper account.

Payments will be accepted by mail, drop box, or in person.

*Mail* – send check or money order with water bill stub to Russell Water & Sewer Department, P.O. Box 156, Russell, AR 72139.

*Drop box* – leave check or money order attached to the water bill stub in the drop box located outside the Fire Department on South East Elm Street. **Important!** *Do not leave cash in the drop box.* The water department makes every effort to secure the drop box and to remove drop box payments promptly but cannot be responsible for payments removed from the drop box by non-employees.

*In person* – present cash, check, or money order to the water clerk at City Hall on Tuesdays from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and on Thursdays from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

**WATER POLICY**  
**Russell Water & Sewer System**

Inactive Water Meters:

*Available for customer use*

An inactive meter that is available for customer use will be read monthly and billed the flat rate.

A meter locked with a customer's personal lock is considered available for customer use and will be billed accordingly. If, for any reason, the Water Department requires access to a meter that is locked with a customer's personal lock, the lock may be cut and the customer will not be reimbursed for the damaged lock.

*Unavailable for customer use*

An inactive meter that is unavailable for customer use will not be billed.

The inactive meter is considered unavailable for customer use once it is locked by the Water Department. A fee of \$50 will be charged for damage to Water Department locks. An inactive, locked meter cannot be used by the customer until it is reconnected by the Water Department. A \$25 reconnection fee will be charged. Upon reconnection, the meter becomes available for customer use and will be billed accordingly.

*Pulled meter*

A customer may request that an inactive meter be pulled by the Water Department. The meter will be permanently removed and the deposit will be returned to the customer.

Access to Water Meters:

Each water meter is property of the Russell Water Department. The Water Department requires access to each meter so that it may be read monthly, properly maintained, and shut off, locked, or pulled, if necessary.

By opening a water meter account in the customer's name, the customer agrees to grant Water Department personnel access to the meter. The customer may not unreasonably block or deny Water Department personnel access to the meter.

Customers may personally lock their meters but must remove personal locks upon request. If a customer's personal lock is blocking access to a meter and the customer cannot be reached within a reasonable time depending on the situation, the customer's personal lock may be cut and the customer will not be reimbursed for the damage to the personal lock.

If a meter cannot be read due to circumstances controlled by the customer (including but not limited to locked gates, dogs, debris, etc.), the meter will be billed by estimating the gallons used. This estimate will be based on the customer's historical average gallons used.

**WATER POLICY**  
**Russell Water & Sewer System**

Definitions:

**Abandoned account** – the status of the account when the customer does not notify the Water Department that the account is no longer used and the customer has not paid an outstanding balance due (i.e. the customer moves without notifying the Water Department and does not pay the final bill). The customer forfeits the full deposit.

**Available for customer use** – an inactive meter that the customer can access. The meter will be read and billed the flat rate.

**Closed account** – the status of the account when the customer notifies the Water Department that the account is no longer used and the customer has paid any outstanding balance due (i.e. the customer moves to a new residence, no longer requires water at the old residence, pays the final bill, and notifies the water department of the move). The meter will be disconnected and the customer's deposit will be returned.

**Damage fee** – a fee for damage to Water Department locks placed on water meters. This is what it costs the Water Department to purchase a new lock and to pay an employee to go out to the meter and replace the damaged lock.

**Deposit** – a payment that will be held until the account becomes permanently inactive. The payment will be returned to the customer, applied to the outstanding balance, or forfeited based on how the customer terminates the account.

**Final Notice** – a second water bill that will be received if the first bill is unpaid as of the 11th.

**First Notice** – The water bill received at the beginning of each month.

**Inactive meter** – the status of a meter that is not being used. It may be "available for customer use" or "unavailable for customer use" depending on if the customer can access the meter.

**Partial payment** – any payment less than the total amount owed. Customers are encouraged to pay any amount they can to reduce an outstanding balance because a partial payment will reduce late fees. But a partial payment will NOT keep an account from being shut off if a balance is still due on the disconnect date.

**Pulled meter** – a permanently removed meter.

**Permanently inactive account** – an account that is no longer in use because it was closed or abandoned by the customer.

**Reconnect fee** – a fee to turn on a water meter. This is what it costs the Water Department to pay an employee to go out to the meter and turn it back on.

**Shut off** – when a water meter is turned off because the bill was not paid in full before the shut-off date.

**Shut-off date** – the day the meter will be disconnected. NO exceptions! Because the Water Department must have time to process the water bill payments and prepare a shut-off list, payments made on the shut-off date will not keep the meter from being shut off and the reconnect fee from being charged. Payments received on the shut-off date are considered partial payments.

**Unavailable for customer use** – an inactive meter that the customer cannot access because it is locked by the Water Department. The meter will not be billed but can be reconnected for a fee.