

## TOWN OF HIGH PRAIRIE

<b>Policy Number</b> No. 06 - 2000	<b>Approval Date</b> March 22, 2000	<b>Resolution Number</b> 191/00
<b>Supersedes</b> N/A	<b>Effective Date</b> May 1, 2000	<b>Legal Authority</b> Municipal Government Act Sections 42, 201, and 553 Public Utilities Board Order E86001
<b>Amendments:</b> S. 7(a), S. 8(a), S. 10, S. 14	<b>Amendment Date</b> April 28, 2004	<b>Resolution Number</b> 265/04

<b>TITLE:</b> <b>Utility Disconnection Policy</b>
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**Policy Statement:**

The Town of High Prairie will implement a Utility Disconnection Policy with the intent of meeting the two following objectives:

- A. To ensure timely payment of utility accounts (balancing the Town's need to secure payment of outstanding utility account balances against the need to maintain customer deposits at an affordable level); and
- B. To ensure that clear and consistent guidelines are in place in the event that Town utility services need to be disconnected for customers' non-payment of utility accounts.

- 1) All utility accounts are due and payable on the due date as shown on the utility bill. If the customer's utility account is not paid by the due date, the account is deemed to be in arrears. Failure to receive a utility bill does not relieve a consumer of liability for payment.
- 2) Once a utility customer's account is in arrears, the customer shall receive official notification on their current utility bill of forthcoming utility service disconnection for non-payment of their utility account.
- 3) The Town will provide further notification of forthcoming utility service disconnection for non-payment of the customer's utility account by means of delivering a disconnection notice to the customer's place of residence (for a residential customer) or place of business (for a commercial, industrial, or institutional) customer. Such notice shall be delivered at least 48 hours prior to disconnection, pursuant to Public Utilities Board Order E86001 Section 18(b).
- 4) The Town will where possible, and purely as a courtesy to property owners, attempt to provide a landlord with 48 hours notice of forthcoming utility service disconnection to a tenant.
- 5) To avoid the disconnection of utility services, the utility customer must pay to the Town in full all outstanding utility arrears plus the most current month's utility billing. Payment

must be made by the last day of the month in which notification of forthcoming utility service disconnection was provided to the customer.

- 6) Any payment made to avoid utility service disconnection must be paid directly at the Town of High Prairie Office, and payment must be in the form of cash, money order or certified cheque.
- 7) Utility service disconnections for non-payment of accounts shall be applied uniformly to all customers, regardless of whether or not the customer is the property owner or a tenant, or whether the type of customer is a residential, commercial, industrial or institutional.
- 7a) Exception: During the months of October through April, property owners will not be disconnected, the utility arrears will be applied to their tax roll in accordance with 553(1)(b) of the Municipal Government Act.
- 8) In the event of non-payment by the final due date, Town staff will disconnect both water and natural gas utility services.
- 8a) Exception: During the months of October through April, Town staff will disconnect natural gas service to a customer who is not the property owner. Prior to disconnecting the natural gas service, 48 hours notice will be given to the customer and the property owner.
- 9) In the event of exceptional extenuating circumstances, the Treasurer may at her discretion, postpone utility service disconnection for residential customers only, provided that the customer enters into a payment plan that will bring the customer's utility account into good standing within a period of time not to exceed three months.
- 10) If a utility customer's service is disconnected for non-payment of account, the service shall be reconnected after:
  - payment of utility account is received in full,
  - reconnect fee is paid, and
  - an appointment is set up with customer for reconnection, pending the availability of staff, not to exceed 24 hours.
- 11) Utility services shall only be disconnected from Mondays through Thursdays.
- 12) The utility service shall only be re-connected when the customer has paid the account balance in full plus a reconnection fee. Payment must be made in the same manner as stated in section (5) above. Only the Town's finance staff at the Town Office can authorize utility service reconnections. The customer must confirm an appointment for utility service reconnection at time of payment.
- 13) The Town's reconnection fees shall be set annually by Council as part of the Town's Fee Bylaw, or as otherwise established by Council.



- 14) Should a landlord, or the landlord's tenant, fail to notify the Town of a change in occupancy, or if utility services are disconnected to a property of the landlord's more than two times, the Town reserves the right to supply utility services only to the property owner (landlord) in accordance with section 42 of the Municipal Government Act.
- 15) If a utility account is closed out, and if the customer is also the property owner, then the Town shall transfer any outstanding utility account balances to the customer's property tax roll as in accordance with section 553 (1) (b) of the Municipal Government Act.
- 16) Town finance staff will, on an ongoing basis, monitor utility account balances in relation to the amount of the utility deposits required by the Town, in order to ensure that objective "A" above is being met.