

MERIDIAN Texas

Utility Agreement information and regulations

General

The City of Meridian, Tx is the owner of the city's water and wastewater infrastructure. As such, the city offers its residents utility agreements to supply water to residences and businesses, and to process the wastewater in accordance with Texas Commission of Environmental Quality and Texas Water Development Board rules and regulations. The public water system enforces these restrictions to ensure the public health and welfare.

Purpose of the utility agreement

The City of Meridian is responsible for protecting the drinking supply water supply from contamination or pollution which could result from improper system construction or configuration on the retail connections owner's side of the meter. The purpose of this utility agreement is to notify each customer of the restrictions which are in place to provide this protection. Each customer must sign this agreement before the city of Meridian will begin service.

The City of Meridian utility agreement covers delivery of water, waste water and garbage by a third-party contractor.

Responsibility

The city provides and installs at its own expense, and shall continue to own, maintain and operate the meters necessary for the measurement of water to point of delivery to the customer. Such equipment remains the property of the city and access to the same, will always be provided by the customer. All meters shall be furnished, installed, maintained and removed by the city, and shall remain its property.

The customer or the owner of the property is responsible for all installation, maintenance and repairs on their side of the meter, at their risk and expense.

Limitation of liability of city for injuries and damages

The city will not be responsible or liable for injuries or damages caused by or resulting from failure to furnish service of the kind and amount contracted for or injuries and damages resulting from the performance or nonperformance of any acts or things by the city required of it or in anywise connected with the furnishing of service by city, unless it be shown that the negligence of the city or its agents were the sole proximate cause of the injury or damage complained of.

Restrictions

The following are prohibited by State and City Law and Regulations:

- a) Any direct connection between the public drinking water supply and a potential source of contamination. Potential sources of contamination shall be isolated from the public water system by an air-gap or an appropriate backflow prevention device
- b) Any cross-connection between the public drinking water supply and a private water system. These potential threats to the public drinking water supply shall be eliminated at the service connection by the installation of an air-gap or reduced pressure-zone backflow prevention device.
- c) Any connection which allows water to be returned to the public drinking water supply
- d) Any pipe or pipe fitting which contains more than 0.25% lead for the installation or repair of plumbing at any connection which provides water for human consumption and use.
Plumbing installed after Jan. 4, 2014 bears the required labeling indicating < 0.25% lead content. If not properly labeled, please provide written comment.
- e) Solder or flux which contains more than 0.2% lead for installation or repair of plumbing at any connection which provides water for human consumption and use.

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Access to premises supplied with city utilities

Any employee of the city required to gain access to a meter or city equipment shall have free access, at all reasonable hours of the day, to all parts of any premises to which utilities are supplied.

This will include employees from the water department, utility business office, police department and animal control. Animal control will have the authority to seize an animal that is responsible for denying access to the owner's meter for (dis)connection, or maintenance of utilities.

The customer allows the property to be inspected for possible cross-connections and other potential contamination hazards. These inspections shall be conducted by the water system inspector or its designated agent:

- prior to initiating a new utility agreement service;
- when there is reason to suspect cross-connections or other potential contamination hazards exist;
- after any major changes to the private water distribution facilities.

The water system shall notify the customer in writing of any cross-connection or potential contamination hazard which has been identified during the initial inspection or a periodic inspection.

- The customer shall immediately remove or adequately isolate any potential cross-connections or other potential contamination hazards on their property;
- The customer shall, at their expense, properly install, test and maintain any backflow prevention device required by the water system. Copies of all testing and maintenance records shall be provided to the water system.

Enforcement

If the utility customer fails to comply with the terms of the utility agreement, the city shall, at its option, either terminate service or properly install, test and maintain an appropriate back flow prevention device at the service connection. Any expenses associated with the enforcement of this agreement shall be billed to the customer.

Billing cycle

The billing cycle is the 15th of every month to the 15th of the next month.

Payment of Bills

- Bills are generally mailed out around the 25th of every month.
- Bill payment is due on the 15th of every month.
- Payment can be made:
 - o On line - at Meridiantexas.us at quicklinks – pay your bill*
 - o At the office - located at 111 N. Main
 - o By mail – P.O. Box 306, Meridian, Tx, 76665
 - o By debit or credit card over phone*
 - o Through auto draft – by bank account on the 15th of every month with no extra charge.
- * a bank's convenience fee will be added.
- A 10% penalty is added to unpaid balances after the 15th.
- Past due notices are sent out around the 18th of every month. These notices include a cutoff date. Accounts unpaid by the 30th are subject to termination of service.
- delinquent accounts will be handed over to a collection agency. If their efforts are unsuccessful, the account will be treated as theft of service, according to chapter 31.04(b)(2) of the Texas Penal Code. Charges will be filed with the Meridian Police Department, and a citation may be issued.

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Service fees

- 1) The city shall have the right to refuse to restore any service that has been discontinued. Accounts terminated for non-payment are subject to a \$50.—reconnect fee. Accounts will be reactivated when the entire past due amount is paid, or a written and signed payment promise is set up. If the payment promise is not kept, termination of service will follow, and no subsequent payment promises will be issued.
- 2) Should a check issued for payment be returned by the bank because of insufficient funds, a \$30.—return check fee will be added to the bill.
- 3) Re-read requests cost \$15.--. This amount will be refunded if a reading is found to be inaccurate.
- 4) It is recommended that each home have a cut-off valve for the owner's ability to turn the water to the residence on and off if required, without intervention of the city. A turn-off or turn-on by the customer to the city – for example during plumbing repairs, remodeling or realtor viewings – costs \$10.— per trip to the residence.

Disputes

Customers disputing the correctness of their bill have a right to a hearing. Complaints should be addressed to the City Administrator.

The city's Standard Terms for Utility Service include the following:

- The customer acknowledges that the customer is the owner or person entitled to possession of the premises, legally liable for payment for services.
- The customer shall pay for services as bills are rendered in accordance with the rates, rules and regulations.
- The entire deposit amount is required before the service initiated. No partial payments will be accepted.
- All previous accounts must be paid in full before a new account can be opened by an applicant.
- All accounts owned by any persons living at the applicant's address will be paid in full before service is turned on.
- Names and identification of all persons living at the applicant's address is required.
- For all rental accounts owner's name and phone number are required.
- The customer further agrees to release and discharge the city from any liability for damages suffered:
 - o By reason of water or gas or sewer service furnished to the premises;
 - o By reason of interruption discontinuance, or disconnection of service hereunder from any cause other than negligence by the city; or
 - o By reason of the condition, maintenance, location or systems located on or adjoining the property supplied, and by which such services are furnished or delivered.
- The customer understands that turning on the water after a discontinuation of service will be treated as a misdemeanor offense will be treated as theft of service, according to chapter 31.04(b)(2) of the Texas Penal Code. Charges will be filed with the Meridian Police Department, and a citation may be issued.
- No person shall operate, alter, damage, deface, pollute, disconnect or remove any of the city equipment, facilities, inventory or property without the prior written consent. Any damages or costs as a result of any of the foregoing shall be paid for by the person causing the same.
- Each customer shall notify the city in advance of any change or changes to the utility agreement. Should the customer relocate, the date of relocation and a forwarding address will be issued to the city.

Privacy

Account information will not be given to any person other than those authorized to receive this information by law.

Questions or requests for information regarding the utilities offered by the City of Meridian can be addressed to the City Secretary at P.O. Box 306, Meridian, Texas 76665, to email to svoss@meridiantexas.us, by phone 254-435-2381 or at City Hall at 111 N. Main in Meridian.

If there is a utility emergency outside office hours (Mon.-Fri. 8 a.m.- 5 p.m.) please call the Public Works On Call Phone at 254-978-0402.