

WATER SYSTEM POLICY AND REGULATIONS OF CHESTER, MONTANA

GENERAL PROVISIONS

Section 1. Authority - The following regulations governing the water system of the Town of Chester have been adopted by resolution by the Town Council of Chester, Montana pursuant to the authority granted by Section 69-7-201 M.C.A. and by Chapter 13.24 of the Chester Municipal Code.

Section 2. Service Connection - Any person desiring a new water service for a property within the service area of the Chester water system shall make the request at the Town office. **The connection fee schedule shall be:**

3/4" – 1" \$1250

1.5" – 2" \$2500

3" – 4" \$5000

Any larger requested service line must be approved by the Town council and an appropriate connection fee will be determined.

In addition to this assessment, a fee of \$3500 will be charged for material, labor, street repairs and equipment necessary to make up to a 1" connection to the town water main. Any service line connection greater than 1" will be charged actual costs associated with making the connection. Town employees will make all connections. This assessment must be paid in full before work begins on the service line connection. Once water service is activated the property owner will be billed for water, sewer (if applicable), garbage and mosquito charges. **The Town will assume responsibility for the water service line from the main up to and including the curb valve. The property owner assumes responsibility for the water service line after the curb valve.**

Section 3. Water Turn On/Off Procedure – Requests for water service activation or disconnection may only be made by the property owner. A reconnection fee will not be assessed for the first 2 on/off requests. After that a fee of \$150 will be assessed on the first billing after reconnection is made. If service is shut off for nonpayment a fee of \$150 will be assessed and paid before the service will be reconnected. No person other than an authorized individual from the city shall turn water valves on or off. If a reconnection is requested on a weekend or evening an additional \$50 will be assessed.

Section 4. Plumbing – Residential properties may not install a service line larger than 1" for water service. Businesses requiring a service line greater than 1" must request permission from Town authorities. All services are required to have a main shut off valve that is accessible and in good working order. Water service may be shut off at the discretion of the City in cases where the plumbing or associated improvements have become inadequate through time or neglect. Service will be restored when the problem is taken care of.

Section 5. Resale – Water from the Chester water system may not be resold by users to any organization, company or individual. Water hoses may not service another neighboring residence with water unless authorized by the Town during an emergency.

Section 6. Repairs - Owners of properties served shall keep the pipes and plumbing upon their premises in good repair and prevent the waste or leakage of water and shall be held liable for all damage to the Town of Chester for their failure to do so. All repairs for service pipes and plumbing systems of premises shall be made by and at the expense of the owners of the premises served. The Town water department will turn the water service off and on for maintenance and repairs during regular department hours. Call-outs after hours will be charged a minimum of \$50.00. No one other than Town personnel are to attempt to turn water off or on at the curb stop. A fine of \$500 may be implemented against the offender.

METERS

Section 1. Meter Required - All properties to which Town water is supplied shall be equipped with an operating water meter. The Town will furnish a 5/8 x 3/4" meter which shall remain the property of the Town

of Chester after installation. If a larger meter is required, the Town will contribute the amount equal to a 5/8 x 3/4" meter and the property owner will contribute the difference. A separate meter is required for each individual residence and each individual business but combined residences and businesses occupying the same building may be served by a single meter. The meter must be installed within 70 feet of the curb or a meter pit is required. If service extends to a second building on premises, such as a shop or garage, the line must be plumbed after the meter, or a second meter must be purchased and will incur only water use charges. **However, if said shop or garage becomes a living unit, a separate water service line must be installed to the main and will be billed as a separate dwelling.**

Section 2. Meter Installation - The Town of Chester will install the meters, or the property owner can have the meter installed. All meters shall be installed in a dry frost-free environment. If a meter pit is required, the meter will be installed at the property owner's expense. The property owner is responsible for the maintenance of the meter pit.

Section 3. Reading Meters - A Town employee will read meters. A touch pad or drive-by-reader will be installed at the time of meter installation and the employee must have access to the touch pad located on an exterior wall.

Section 4. Testing Meters - Any municipal water meter shall be taken out and tested upon complaint of the consumer, upon payment of a fee of \$25.00. If upon test the meter is not within three percent of being accurate, it shall be repaired or replaced, and the \$25.00 fee returned to the consumer.

WATER RATES

Section 1. Rate Schedule – Water base rates will be determined by the EDU System (Equivalent Dwelling Units). The EDU will be based on the size of the water service line entering the building or structure. The EDU System is based on a modified multiplier furnished by Montana Rural Water Systems as follows:

5/8" x 3/4" or full 3/4" port meters - \$32.81 = 1 EDU
1" meters - \$45.93 = 1.4 EDU
1.5" meters - \$104.99 = 3.2 EDU
2" meters - \$187.02 = 5.7 EDU
3" meters - \$419.97 = 12.8 EDU
4" meters - \$748.07 = 22.8 EDU

The following schedule of rates based on meter readings shall be charged for Town of Chester water service:

Chester Municipal Water Rates

In-Town EDU Base Rate plus \$2.50 per 1000 gallons
In-Town 2nd Meter - \$2.50 per 1000 gallons
Out-Town EDU Base Rate plus \$15 and \$2.50 per 1000 gallons
Raw Water Irrigation EDU Base Rate and \$1.60 per 1000 gallons
Rural W/Easement EDU Base Rate and \$2.50 per 1000 gallons after the first 5000 gallons
Rural-No Easement EDU Base Rate and \$2.50 per 1000 gallons
Kammerzell Easement Base Rate - \$25 Flat
Bulk Water Fee - \$8 per 1000 gallons
Reconnect Fee - \$150
Late Fee - \$5
NSF Checks - \$15

- Irrigation systems with service lines 2" or larger that are also tax receiving entities will only pay the base rate and usage charges during the months of operation with a 3 month minimum. When the water is shut off to the irrigation systems no base rate will be billed after the 3 month minimum.

Section. 2. Modification of Rate Schedule - The foregoing rate schedule may be amended from time to time by resolution of the Town Council in accordance with the municipal code of Chester and the laws of the State of Montana. Any such resolution modifying the rate schedule shall also provide for amendment of these regulations to reflect the new rate schedule.

COLLECTION OF WATER CHARGES AND ENFORCEMENT OF REGULATIONS

Section 1. Billing Cycle - Water meters shall be read monthly on or about the 25th day of each month and bills for water used shall be issued by the Town on or about the last day of each month for payment on or before the 25th day of the following month.

Section 2. Party Responsible for Payment - The owner of the property shall be responsible to pay bills for services provided to the premises. Bills may be put in the renter's name with a signed approval of the property owner, but the owner is ultimately responsible. Service that has been disconnected will not be restored until delinquent charges have been paid in full. Delinquent charges stay with the property not with the individual.

Section 3. Notice of Delinquent Water Bills – Past due notices are sent by mail on or about the middle of the month after an account is more than 30 days past due. The owner of a rental that is delinquent is notified by mail at that time as well. The notice will state a disconnection date (normally between 1½ to 2 weeks notice). If payment is not received a certified letter will be sent with a final warning of disconnect in 2-4 days depending on how the weekend falls. The cost of the certified letter (between \$5-\$6) will be added to the delinquent account. If no payment or arrangements are made the service will be disconnected and will not be reconnected until all delinquent charges and a reconnection fee of \$150 is paid in full. The owner of a rental will have the opportunity to pay the renter's delinquent charges before disconnection is made and avoiding the reconnection fee.

Section 4. Council Authority to Defer Payment - The Town Council shall have the authority to continue providing water service and to defer the payment of delinquent water bills after notice of delinquency is sent as hereinabove provided, if, in the Council's judgment, good cause exists for such deferment.

Section 5. Meter Reading Unavailable - Whenever meter readings for any billing period are unavailable, whether due to meter malfunction, weather conditions, or other cause, water bills shall be calculated on the basis of an average monthly seasonal consumption rate for the premises. If such average rate is unavailable or is not reasonably applicable, the billing shall be estimated from a comparison with similar households or businesses in the community. At such time as normal monthly readings can be obtained the actual metered rate will be reinstated.

FIRE HYDRANTS

Section 1. Hydrant Use – No one may open a fire hydrant except for town personnel and members of the Volunteer Fire Department. Anyone caught opening or tampering with a fire hydrant without permission will be fined \$500.

Section 2. Hydrant Meter – A meter for fire hydrant use is available upon request. There is a base rate for the installation of the meter of \$500 and the water used is billed at \$30 per 1000 gallons.

DISCRETIONARY ACTION BY COUNCIL

Section 1. Excessive Water Use from Mechanical Malfunction – If there was extraordinary water consumption on any premises by reason of broken pipes, faulty toilet seals, or other similar cause and that the excessive water use was unknown to the consumer and was promptly corrected upon discovery, the Town Council **may** adjust the water bill for said billing period if the property owner asks for such leniency.