

Nash County

Water and Sewer

Policies and Procedures



Adopted: September 8, 2003

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PREFACE

Nash County has initiated development of a public rural water and sewer system. Some previous improvements are currently in service. Additional improvements are under construction and more improvements are being planned.

From time to time, Nash County will provide utility service to selected areas where there is either sufficient density to support water and/or sewer service, there is sufficient public health concern to warrant the extension of service, or there is some other prevailing public policy issue that commands the availability of public infrastructure improvements. Nash County's intention is to establish a rational approach regarding connecting existing and future water and sewer improvements to the Nash County Public Utility System.

Nash County is growing in population and it is only logical to acknowledge that utility service will be provided in areas where existing structures may already have water and/or sewer systems in perfectly good working order. Nash County will "grandfather" existing onsite systems that are in functional compliance.

Nevertheless, construction of public utility systems is too costly to allow connections to be made entirely on a voluntary basis. Therefore, Nash County will provide an incentive to encourage existing development to connect to the system. It will require connections by new development where public utilities are available. Nash County shall require connections where there are failing systems. It will even require connections when a federal, state or other grant used to fund a portion of the system has connection policies that supercede those of Nash County.

Connections to a water or sewer system must be compatible with the existing system. Therefore, Nash County is establishing minimum specifications for future improvements that will be connected to a Nash County public utility system. New developments, including subdivisions, will be reviewed by Nash County or its designated engineer for compliance with these specifications.

Construction of public utility systems is costly and primarily benefits the users. So, Nash County will attempt to recover the cost of providing water and sewer service by adopting a Fee Schedule.

Because Nash County has decided to provide public water and sewer service in some areas, it hereby establishes policies and procedures, minimum specifications, and a Fee Schedule related to its public utilities.

ADOPTION OF POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Until further order of the Nash County Board of Commissioners, the Policies and Procedures as set forth herein are hereby adopted and are effective on and after the 8th day of September, 2003.

This the 8th day of September, 2003.

J. Claude Mayo, Jr., Chairman

ATTEST:

Wayne Moore, Clerk to the Board

GENERAL

As approved by the Nash County Board of Commissioners, the Nash County Public Utilities Department shall implement the Policies and Procedures contained herein. These Policies and Procedures shall determine how water and sewer service is to be provided in Nash County and what charges shall be made to provide those services.

DEFINITIONS

1. ***Development, Major.*** A subdivision consisting of more than two (2) lots, as defined by the Nash County Unified Development Ordinance.
2. ***Development, Minor.*** A subdivision consisting of no more than two (2) lots, as defined by the Nash County Unified Development Ordinance.
3. ***Fee, Capacity.*** The initial charge to a customer to access capacity in Nash County's water or sewer system, as prescribed in the "Fee Schedule."
4. ***Fee, Connection.*** The initial charge to a customer to connect or tap on to water or sewer service, as prescribed in the "Fee Schedule."
5. ***Fee, Monthly Usage.*** The monthly charge to a customer for water or sewer service, as prescribed in the "Fee Schedule".
6. ***Fee, Pool/Sprinkler/Farming.*** The charge to a customer for water service on an as-needed basis to fill a pool, use on a sprinkler system, or irrigate for farming purposes, as prescribed in the "Fee Schedule."
7. ***Fee, Service Availability.*** The monthly charge to a customer for the availability of service that is not utilized. Said charge is equivalent to the amount of the minimum "monthly usage fee."
8. ***Fee Schedule.*** Portion of the Nash County Water and Sewer Policies and Procedures that lists charges to customers for water and sewer services in Nash County.
9. ***Fee, Water Service Incentive (on Connection, Capacity and Meter Fees).*** A reduced fee schedule intended to obtain customers along newly developing water service lines.
10. ***Mandatory Hookup.*** Requirement that an existing structure shall either:
 - A. Connect to the Nash County Public Utility System within six (6) months of adoption of these policies, or within six (6) months of

service being available, whichever is later, and begin paying a “monthly usage fee”; or,

B. Be assessed a "service availability fee".

10. ***Service Availability.*** Location of a public water or gravity sewer line owned by Nash County within 300 feet of a building setback line.

11. ***Sewer System Failure.*** When an on-site septic tank-leachate field has failed, meaning one or both of the following events has occurred:

A. The septic tank has to be pumped two (2) times within any consecutive twelve (12) month period.

B. The leachate field requires repair or replacement as determined by the Nash County Health Department.

12. ***Standard Specifications and Details.*** Portion of the Nash County Water and Sewer Policies and Procedures that lists construction requirements for water and sewer improvements intended to be connected to Nash County’s system.

1.0 CONNECTIONS POLICY

1.1 *New Construction (Single Lot):* All new construction will be required to connect to the water and/or sewer system if there is “service availability.”

1.2 *Major Development and Minor Development:* All new development will be required to connect to the water and/or sewer system if a County-owned service line is located within the distances listed in Table 1 below.

Table 1 Required Connections to the Nash County Public Utility System For Major Development and Minor Development Occurring within A Minimum Distance of a County-Owned Water or Sewer Line	
Number of Proposed Lots Subdivided Within a 2-Year Period	Distance from Closest Property Line to County Service
1 or 2	Abutting the property (usually in a right-of-way or easement)
3-9	400 feet
10-49	800 feet
50-99	1,500 feet
≥ 100	2,000 feet

(Note: One meter will be required for each customer.)
 (Note: Also see Section 3.4 regarding sewer hook-up only.)

1.3 *Mandatory Connection Exemption*

1.3.1 *Mandatory Connection Exemption (NC Clean Water Bond Funded Projects)*

All water and sewer system extension projects initiated by Nash County and funded with NC Clean Water Bond Grant Funds are presumed to serve a public need and all residents/customers located within three hundred (300) feet of a water and/or gravity sewer line will be subject to "mandatory hook-up".

1.3.2 *Mandatory Connection Exemption (Other Than NC Clean Water Bond Funded Projects)*

Structures outside of areas with water and sewer system extension projects initiated by Nash County are not required to connect to the water and/or sewer systems unless one of the following occurs:

- A. A new well permit is requested; or,
- B. A septic system failure occurs.

1.3.3 *Mandatory Connection Exemption (Existing Development – Water)*

Nothing in these *Policies and Procedures* shall prohibit a property owner from replacing an existing well with another well.

1.4 *Connection Fees*

1.4.1 *Existing Structures:* Water and sewer tap-on fees apply per the attached Fee Schedule.

1.4.2 *Vacant Property:* Water and sewer tap-on fees apply per the attached Fee Schedule.

1.4.3 *Exceptions:* If infrastructure improvements are funded in part or in whole by Federal or State grant funds, there may be specific requirements related to the funding that allow Nash County to pay the “connection fee.” In such a situation, Nash County may waive the “connection fee” for the customer.

1.5 *Service Lateral:* Prior to connecting to the County system, the customer shall obtain the services of a licensed plumber, obtain a building permit, and construct a service lateral from the structure to the point of connection (usually in the highway right-of-way) at the customer’s expense.

1.6 *Existing Wells:* Except for those wells located within one hundred (100) feet of an existing sewer line, wells may continue to be used for irrigation and other non-potable uses as long as they are properly disconnected from the structure.

1.7 *Service Across Private Property:* Water and sewer service will not be extended across private property to serve another private property. It will be the responsibility of the property owner to provide the service lateral from the structure to the right-of-way or utility easement where the constructed water or sewer main is located. The customer requesting service will also be responsible for procuring the necessary access across the private property lying between the service provider (Nash County) and the customer to be served.

2.0 FEES, BILLINGS AND PAYMENT

2.1 *Hours of Operation:* The Nash County Public Utilities Department administrative offices will operate on the following schedule:

Office Hours: 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. - Monday through Friday

2.2 *Rates:* Water and sewer rates are established each year by the Nash County Board of Commissioners during the budget process and the rates remain in effect until the ensuing year or until another adjustment is approved by the Commissioners. The current rates for water and sewer service are provided in the attached “Fee Schedule.”

2.3 *Billings and Payments*

2.3.1 *Monthly Billing:* Bills for water and sewer service will be mailed on the first (1st) day of the month unless the first (1st) day falls on a Saturday, Sunday or a holiday, in which case the bills will be mailed on the next business day.

6.5.1 *Payment of Bills:* Nash County will mail bills out every month. Payment of bills is due by the fifteenth (15th) of the month.

Payments are accepted by cash, check or money order. There is a twenty-five dollar (\$25) charge for checks returned for insufficient funds.

Nash County will not accept postdated, counter or two-party checks.

Payment options are as follows:

Pay in Person at: Nash County Administration Building
120 West Washington Street
Tax Collection Dept. - 2nd Floor
Nashville, NC

Pay By Mail to: Nash County Public Utilities Department
120 West Washington Street, Suite 3040
Nashville, NC 27856

2.3.3 *Late Notices:* If payment has not been received by 5:00 p.m. on the fifteenth (15th) of the month, a late fee will be added to the account and a second (2nd) notice will be sent on the seventeenth (17th) of the month. However, the Public Utilities Specialist shall remove the late fee for bills received by Nash County that are postmarked by the fifteenth (15th) of the month.

2.3.4 *Delinquencies:* If payment has not been received by 5:00 p.m. on the due date stated on the late notice, water service will be discontinued and a “Reconnection Fee” will be charged as prescribed in the Fee

Schedule. All past due fees plus late fees will be required before the service is restored.

2.3.5 Commencement of Charge: Charge for service commences when a meter is installed and a connection is made, whether it is used or not.

2.3.6 Combination of Meter Readings: Readings from different meters will not be combined for billing purposes, regardless of whether the meters serve the same or different premises or users.

2.3.7 Master Meters: Master meters will not be allowed for the Nash County water system. Individual meters will be required for each residential, commercial, or industrial use.

2.4 Minimum Charges: Charges are based on usage, as listed in the Fee Schedule. The minimum charge shall be as listed for the lowest tier of usage and shall apply to each meter installed.

2.5 Illegal Tampering: Illegal tampering, in any way, with a service that has been disconnected (whether for nonpayment or otherwise) is subject to a civil fine of five hundred dollars (\$500) and court processing costs. Tampering fines must be paid along with other fees before service is restored.

2.6 Complaints and Adjustments:

2.6.1 Bill In Error: If a customer believes a bill to be in error, the customer shall present the claim in person or in writing to the Nash County Public Utilities Department before the bill becomes delinquent.

2.6.2 Special Meter Reading: If a customer requests that Nash County conduct a special meter reading, the customer must pay ten dollars (\$10.00) unless the reading reveals that the meter was overread.

2.6.3 Meter Testing: If a customer requests that Nash County test his/her meter, the customer must pay for the cost of the test unless the test reveals that the meter is over register beyond ten percent (10%) of the correct volume.

2.6.4 Meter Broken: If a meter fails to register correctly, or if the meter is stopped for any cause, or if the meter seal is broken, the customer shall pay an amount estimated from the record of previous bills and/or from other reliable data.

2.6.5 Leak - User Side: A customer may request an adjustment to his/her sewer bill if there has been a water leak on his/her side of the meter and the water was not discharged into the sanitary sewer system. The customer must present evidence of the leak. Nash County may then reduce the

sewer bill to the average of the sewer bills for the preceding three (3) months. Nash County may only issue one (1) adjustment per customer or per service meter in a twelve (12) month period.

3.0 APPLICATION FOR SERVICE

3.1 APPLYING FOR SERVICE

- 3.1.1 Application and Fees: The customer shall complete an “Application for Service” and submit it in person or in writing, along with the “Application Service Fee,” as prescribed in the Fee Schedule, to the Nash County Public Utilities Department.
- 3.1.2 Rejection of Application – Service Reason: Nash County can reject an application for service that would not be available under a standard rate, or that would involve excessive service cost, or that would likely negatively affect the supply of service to other customers, or for other good and sufficient reasons. In such a case, the “Service Deposit Fee” would be refunded.
- 3.1.3 Rejection of Application – Customer Reason: Nash County can reject an application for service if the applicant is delinquent in payment of water and/or sewer bills at any location. In addition, if a property owner has received water and/or sewer service for which he/she has not paid, Nash County may reject an application for service by anyone at that location until the bill has been paid.

3.2 DEPOSITS

- 3.2.1 Application and Fees: The customer shall submit a “Service Deposit Fee”, as prescribed in the Fee Schedule, and submit it with the “Application for Service” and the “Application Service Fee” in person or in writing at the Nash county Public Utilities Department. The customer shall pay a “Service Deposit Fee” for each meter installed.
- 3.2.2 Responsible Party: The customer who submits the “Service Deposit Fee” shall be responsible for payment of all bills incurred in connection with the service furnished.
- 3.2.3 Use of Deposit: If a customer terminates service without payment of the final bill, Nash County may use the deposit to offset the final payment. Any balance could be refunded to the customer, but if the deposit is not sufficient to cover the final bill, then Nash County may proceed to collect the balance in the usual ways provided by law for the collection of debts.

3.3 CHANGE OF OCCUPANCY

- 3.3.1 Notice: In order for the Nash County Public Utilities Department to discontinue service due to a change in occupancy, the customer must give at least three (3) days notice in person or in writing.
- 3.3.2 Departure: The outgoing customer shall be responsible for all water and sewer service costs up to the time of departure or the time specified for departure, whichever period is longer.

3.4 SEWER SERVICE

- 3.4.1 Sewer Service Only: If water service is available, any application for sewer service only will be rejected. In those rare instances where sewer service is available but Nash County water service is not available, the County may allow sewer service only provided the user allows a water meter to be installed on the private well serving the user.
- 3.4.2 Failed Systems: If Nash County sewer service is available and a property has experienced two (2) system failures within a twelve (12) month period, the owner will be required to connect to the Nash County sewer system. A system failure is defined as having the septic tank pumped twice within a year, sewage coming to the surface of the ground, and/or the leachate field requiring repair or relocation.

4.0 SUSPENSION OF SERVICE

4.1 For Non-Payment of Bills: As discussed above in Section 2.3.4.

4.2 For Other Reasons: Nash County reserves the right to discontinue its service without notice for the following additional reasons:

- A. To prevent fraud or abuse.
- B. Due to the customer's willful disregard of Nash County's policies.
- C. For emergency repairs.
- D. Due to insufficient or inadequate water supply due to circumstances beyond Nash County's control.
- E. As a result of legal procedures.
- F. At the direction of public authorities.
- G. In the event of a strike, riot, fire, flood, accident or any other unavoidable cause.

4.3 For Chronic Abusers: Nash County may, in addition to prosecution by law, permanently refuse service to any customer who tampers with a meter or other measuring device.

5.0 RESPONSIBILITIES AND LIABILITY

5.1 County's Responsibilities:

- 5.1.1 **Service Line:** Nash County will run a service line from its distribution line to the customer property line in places where the distribution line runs immediately adjacent and parallel to the property to be served and for which a “Service Connection Fee” in accordance with the Fee Schedule has been paid.
- 5.1.2 **Meter Location:** The County may install its meter at the property line or, at the County's option, on the customer's property, or in a location mutually agreed upon.
- 5.1.3 **Meter Clustering:** When two (2) or more meters are to be installed on the same premises for different customers, the meters shall be closely grouped with each clearly designated regarding the customer to whom it applies.
- 5.1.4 **Customer’s Plumbing:** Nash County does not assume the responsibility of inspecting the user's piping or apparatuses.
- 5.1.5 **Denial of Service:** Nash County reserves the right to refuse service unless the customer's piping is installed so that it prevents cross-connections and backflow.
- 5.1.6 **Water Damage:** Nash County shall not be liable for damage of any kind resulting from water or the use of water on the customer's premises, unless such damage results directly from negligence on the part of Nash County. Nash County shall not be responsible for any damage resulting from any defect in the piping, fixtures, or appliances on the customer's premises. Nash County shall not be responsible for negligence of third parties or forces beyond the control of Nash County that may result in any interruption of service.

5.2 Customer’s Responsibilities:

- 5.2.1 **Location of Piping:** Piping on the customer's premises must be arranged so that the connections are conveniently located with respect to the County's distribution and service lines.
- 5.2.2 **Difficult Location of Piping:** If the customer's piping is arranged so that Nash County or its agent must provide additional meters, each meter will be considered a separate and individual account and will be billed as such.

- 5.2.3 Accessibility of Meter: If a meter is placed on the premises of the customer, he/she must ensure the meter remains unobstructed and accessible at all times to the meter reader.
- 5.2.4 Cut-Off Valves: The customer shall furnish and maintain a private cut-off valve on the user's side of the meter. Nash County shall furnish and maintain a similar cut-off valve on the County's side of the meter.
- 5.2.5 User-Side Maintenance: The customer's piping and apparatuses shall be installed and maintained at the customer's expense in a safe and efficient manner in accordance with Nash County's policies and procedures and in full compliance with the sanitary regulations of the North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources.
- 5.2.6 Protection of County Property: The customer shall guarantee proper protection of the County's property placed on the customer's premises and shall only permit authorized representatives of Nash County or its representatives to have access to that property.
- 5.2.7 Cost of Repairs to County Property by the Customer: If a customer's negligence or wrongful act results in any loss or damage to Nash County property, or it's agent's property, or if an accident or injury to persons or property is caused by or results from the negligence or wrongful act, then the cost of the necessary repairs or replacement shall be paid by the customer to Nash County and any liability otherwise resulting shall be assumed by the customer. The amount of such loss or damage or the cost of repairs shall be added to the customer's bill and, if not paid, service may be discontinued by the County.

6.0 SYSTEM OPERATION AND ADMINISTRATION

6.1 Access to Premises:

6.1.1 Authorized agents of Nash County shall have access at all reasonable hours to the premises of the customer for the purpose of installing or removing County property, inspecting piping, reading or testing meters, or for any other purpose in connection with the County's service and facilities.

6.1.2 Each customer shall grant or convey, or shall cause to be granted or conveyed, to the County a perpetual easement and/or right-of-way across any property owned or controlled by the customer wherever said perpetual easement and/or right-of-way is necessary for the County water and/or sewer facilities and lines to be able to serve to the customer.

6.2 Voluntary Testing of Wells: In anticipation of Nash County extending water service to a particular area, the County may voluntarily test water quality in private wells at the County's expense in an effort to educate and encourage the customer on the benefits of connecting to the County water system.

6.3 Cross-Connection Control: The Nash County Public Utilities Coordinator will interpret the County's policies regarding cross connection, will administer the program and will be a certified tester. The county will publish a Standard Specifications and Details Manual for all new construction. In this manual, all new water services as a minimum must be equipped with a dual check valve, which shall be located immediately downstream of the meter. All connections shall follow the requirements in 15A NCAC 18C.0406 (b) and Figure 2 in Appendix B of the Rules Governing Public Water Systems. Further, Nash County will enforce all provisions of the Federal Safe Drinking Water Act, the North Carolina Drinking Water Act, and the North Carolina State Building Code, as each pertains to establishing an effective ongoing program to control potential sources of contamination of the public water supply.

6.4 Customer Information, Complaints, and Public Education:

6.4.1 Customer information is provided by mass mailings, notes on monthly utility bills, the Nash County web site, and notification in local newspapers as needed.

6.4.2 A complaint regarding water service shall be directed to the Public Utilities Coordinator. The customer may then appeal the complaint to the following, in order: the Director of Development in the Public Utilities Department, the County Manager, and finally the Nash County Board of Commissioners.

6.5 Response and Notification of Water Quality Violations: If a water quality violation occurs, the Public Utilities Coordinator will contact the NC Division of Water Quality or Public Water Supply, as appropriate, for assistance in finding a solution to the problem. Notice will be provided in accordance with prevailing state statutes or regulations.

6.6 Safety Procedures: All public utility employees whose job description requires field work are required to have safety toe shoes, hearing protection, safety glasses and any other safety device that is needed for specific jobs. Nash County adheres to OSHA standards for workplace safety procedures.

6.7 System Monitoring, Reporting and Records Maintenance Procedures

6.7.1 Monitoring and Reporting: Nash County collects samples of the water in its distribution system monthly and sends the sample to a State approved laboratory for testing for bacteria and other contaminants. The County reports the results to the State. In accordance with Rule .1525 (Reporting Requirements), Nash County reports monthly to the State the results of its monitoring program in a "Water Usage" report.

6.7.2 Retention of Records: The Public Utilities Coordinator shall maintain water testing data and usage reports for a period of three (3) years.

6.7.3 Water Supply Plan: Every five (5) years, or more often if directed by the NC Division of Water Quality, Nash County will prepare a Water Supply Plan that records water usage, system capacity, and other important data to substantiate that Nash County has adequate water supply resources to meet current and future system demands.

6.8 Licensed Operator: The Utilities Coordinator or other designated employee charged with operation of the water and sewer systems will obtain and maintain proper licensing required by the State of North Carolina.

6.9 Abridgement or Modification of Policies and Procedures

6.9.1 No promise, agreement, or representation of any employee or agent of Nash County shall bind the County except as agreed upon in writing by the Nash County Board of Commissioners.

6.9.2 No modification of any of the Policies and Procedures, including the Fee Schedule and the Standard Specifications, shall be made by any employee or agent of Nash County except as agreed upon in writing by the Nash County Board of Commissioners.

6.9.3 Amendments: From time to time, the Nash County Board of Commissioners, Manager, and/or the Director of Development in the

Public Utilities Department shall review these Policies and Procedures, including the Fee Schedule and the Standard Specifications and Details for Water and Sewer, to determine the adequacy of each. The Board of Commissioners may amend each as needed at any time.

7.0 WATER AND SEWER LINE EXTENSIONS

7.1 Development Standards: *Standard Specifications and Details for Water Distribution Systems* and *Standard Specifications and Details for Sanitary Sewers* are available at the Public Utilities Department. These documents shall be used by developers to plan water and sewer line extensions. Water and sewer lines can only be extended to developments that are designed in accordance with the Nash County Unified Development Plan, which is administered and enforced by the Nash County Planning Department.

7.2 Extensions: Extension of water and sewer lines to major developments within Nash County's service areas will be handled as follows:

7.2.1 A developer shall submit plans for proposed water and sewer line extensions for review and approval by the Nash County Public Utilities Department, Nash County's engineer, and the North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

7.2.2 The developer shall be responsible for installing water and sewer lines in accordance with the plans approved by Nash County and the State. The developer shall pay for the water and sewer lines and then dedicate them to the County for ownership, operation and maintenance.

7.3 Master Water and Sewer Plan: Nash County is developing a Master Water and Sewer Plan. Extensions of water and sewer by developers or otherwise in Nash County shall comply with this Master Plan regarding location and size. If the County requests oversizing the lines to meet long-range planning needs, the County may participate in the additional cost.