



## Utility Deposits: What Residential Customers Need to Know!

The City of New Bern is distributing this information to help customers understand our business practices regarding utility deposits, delinquencies, payment arrangements and late payments. We've also listed two programs below that are designed to help customers lower their utility deposit, save money, and seek financial assistance if they qualify. If you have further questions, please visit one of our customer service representatives at the Utility Business Office, located at 606 Ft. Totten Drive, or call us at (252)639-2750. This information is also posted on our website at [www.newbern-nc.org](http://www.newbern-nc.org). Please follow us on Facebook & Twitter where this information and additional city news can be found.

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### Customer Focused Initiatives News



The City of New Bern Board of Aldermen approved utility rate reductions in electric - 3%, water – 6% and sewer – 4.5% effective July 1<sup>st</sup> 2015. Another 12% electric rate reduction became effective September 1<sup>st</sup> 2015. The Board approved a third electric rate reduction of 1.25% effective April 1, 2016. Please visit [www.newbern-nc.org](http://www.newbern-nc.org) for further information.



The City of New Bern offers New Bern CONNECTS, a series of programs designed to help customers save money and engage the community to help our neighbors in need. The Round Up program invites customers and other organizations to voluntarily 'round up' their utility bills to the next dollar, with the remainder going into a program fund to assist customers in financial need. One time donations are also accepted.



The Load Management Rewards program helps customers save money on their bills and receive load management credits by limiting peak demand for electricity. Customers who participate in Load Management Rewards can save up to \$110 or more each year and may qualify for a reduced deposit. Call a customer service representative to find out more at (252)639-2750.

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#### Are deposits required for all accounts? Can the deposit be waived?

- For new or transfer customers - deposits are required for all accounts, but are waived if one of the following criteria is met:
  - You have good credit
  - You have good payment history from another utility
  - You add a co-signer to the account who is a City customer & has good credit
- For existing customers –
  - Deposit required at any time if you meet any of the following criteria:
    - 2 or more delinquent actions in a 12 month period
    - Require payment arrangements for overdue amounts
    - Present insufficient funds for payment (bad checks)
    - Utility fraud/tampering
  - Deposits may be waived by adding a co-signer to the account who is a City customer & has good credit

#### What does the City do with my deposit?

- All deposits are held in safe keeping and are NOT spent by the City.

Is the full deposit required now?

- Existing customers have the option to pay the deposit in periodic installments over an 8 month time span. Customers must visit our Utility Business Office, 606 Ft. Totten Dr. to make this payment arrangement. Customer service representatives are available from 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. Monday through Friday to assist customers.

How do I get my deposit refunded?

- The City will refund 100% of your deposit after 18 months of excellent payment history if:
  - You have no delinquent payments
  - You have no payment arrangements
  - You have no more than 2 late payments
  - You have not presented insufficient funds for payment
  - You have not committed utility fraud/tampering

Does the “18 months of excellent payment history” begin immediately or after the deposit is paid in full?

- It begins after the deposit is paid in full.

Is my deposit refund applied to my account balance?

- Yes, or if you choose, the City can write you a check. Checks are distributed 1-2 times per month.

Am I paid interest on my deposit?

- No.

When is my payment considered late? When am I considered delinquent?

- Your payment is considered late between the due date on the bill and 10 days after. During this 10 day period you will be charged a 5% late fee. This 5% late fee is assessed on your next bill.
- Your payment is considered delinquent on the 11<sup>th</sup> calendar day after the due date on the bill. At this point, you will be charged \$30, and you will be subject to service interruption, deposit increase, and additional fees for service reconnection. All fees associated with delinquent payments will be assessed on your next bill.

When was this policy adopted?

- The City of New Bern Customer Service Guidelines were adopted in 1995. In May of 2014, the Board of Aldermen voted to begin more effectively enforcing these guidelines as a way of minimizing the write-offs for unpaid utility bills each year. The enforcement of these guidelines began on July 1, 2014, with two changes: the calculation method for deposits and the length of time deposits are held before refund. These two changes to the guidelines passed unanimously by the Board of Aldermen.

How much does the City write off in unpaid utility bills each year?

- Fiscal year 2014-2015: approximately \$556,000
- Last 8 years combined: approximately \$3.95 million dollars
- The enforcement of these guidelines is not an effort to recover these losses. It is a way to minimize future write-offs, which can ultimately affect utility rates.

	New Bern*	Duke Power	Washington	Kinston	Greenville
Residential payment arrangements per year.	<b>6</b>	2	1	3	1
Residential deposit waiver option?	<b>Yes</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

\* Effective July 1, 2016.