



ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES DEPARTMENT		
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I. PURPOSE

This policy establishes clear standards for the services provided by the Administrative Services Department, including customer service, energy conservation, billing, revenue collection, and 311 services. It aims to enhance customer satisfaction and trust through transparency, accountability, and responsive service delivery. Utility services are provided to residential, commercial, and industrial customers. This policy is intended to support and operate in accordance with all applicable City of Albany ordinances, resolutions, rules, regulations, and established utility practices governing utility services. In the event of a conflict, applicable ordinances and governing regulations shall prevail.

II. DEFINITIONS

Administrative Services Department (hereinafter referred to as ASD) – Provides customer service/energy conservation, billing, and revenue collection for electric, water, natural gas, solid waste, sewer, telecommunications, and stormwater. The ASD also manages the 311 Call Center.

Back Billing – The process of reconciling prior estimated charges to reflect actual usage.

Certified Backflow Tester – A technician holding a valid Backflow Assembly Prevention Tester certification recognized by the state/EPD.

Code of Ordinances – The City of Albany’s codified collection of laws, rules, and regulations formally adopted by a governing body to regulate operations, services, conduct, and procedures within its jurisdiction.

Customer Response Management System (CRM) – A software platform used to manage resident interactions and data efficiently, particularly for 311 non-emergency reporting.

Degree of Hazard – The classification of a risk (low or high) posed by the customer’s internal plumbing system to the public water supply.

Electrical Facilities – All equipment used to deliver electric service, including meters, lines, and poles.

Estimated Read - When an actual meter reading cannot be obtained due to the installation of new service or a blocked, damaged, or stolen meter, the bill will be estimated using up to six (6) months of prior usage history.

Estimated Utility Costs – Twelve (12) months of charges are totaled, divided by two (2), and doubled to estimate utility costs. If no historical data is available, a comparable property of similar size and services will be used.

Hydrant Meter – A water meter installed on a fire hydrant to provide short-term service to support activities such as construction, equipment testing, or permitted special events at a specific location.

Know B4 U Move – Know before you move is an online form available to review historical utility costs of a residential address prior to establishing service.

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration – Also known as NOAA, is a US Scientific Agency within the Department of Commerce that monitors Earth's oceans, atmosphere, and climate, providing crucial forecasts, warnings, and environmental stewardship for weather, climate, fisheries, and coastal management to support national, economic, and ecological needs.

Permanent Resident Card – Also known as a green card, it grants permanent resident status and the right to live and work in the country.

Satisfactory Payment History – Timely payments within a twelve (12)-month period (calendar year), with no more than one (1) late payment fee.

Service Level Agreement (SLA) – The expected timeframe for resolving a reported issue, particularly for 311 non-emergency reporting.

Temporary Power – Provided for short-term use only to support activities such as construction, equipment testing, or permitted special events at a specific location. Temporary Power is not for occupancy.

Timely Response – A response provided within ten (10) business days.

Under Billing – Occurs when estimated charges are less than actual usage, resulting in a balance due upon reconciliation.

Utility Appeals Committee – A panel that reviews customer disputes, made up of the City Manager, Assistant City Manager of Administration, and the Assistant City Manager of Operations.

Visa – Grants permission to travel to a country to live or work.

III. SCOPE

This policy applies to full and part-time employees, volunteers, interns, and affiliates within the ASD and the community it serves.

IV. POLICY STATEMENT

It is the policy of the ASD that employees must provide excellent customer service and project a positive and professional image in the community. Employees are expected to protect the organization's assets with integrity, trust, great care, and a sense of accountability by strict adherence to the guidelines outlined in this policy.

This policy is not all-inclusive and may not cover every possible situation. Specific circumstances may require additional consideration or amendments beyond the stated guidelines.

V. GUIDELINES

1. Standard Hours of Operation

- a. Lobby Hours are from 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m., Monday – Friday.
- b. Drive-Thru Hours are from 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., Monday – Friday.
- c. After-Hours Emergency

Customers experiencing emergencies outside regular business hours may call 229-883-8330 and follow the automated prompts to report issues.

2. Applying for New Service

All applicants requesting services (Residential and Commercial), whether for new service or transfer of services, must comply with all provisions contained within this manual. Each person, firm, or corporation desiring utility service can apply in person, email, or online. No application for service will be accepted unless and until all

conditions and provisions of the regulations contained herein have been complied with.

If circumstances exist at the service location due to past or current billing discrepancies, property issues, meter tampering notifications, or inactive electric service for more than six (6) months, a law enforcement investigator or an inspector may be involved before the service address is released to be turned on. Application for service will not be accepted unless and until all conditions and provisions of the regulations contained herein have been complied with. The applicant is responsible for payment of all fees, charges, deposits, monthly bills, etc.

a. New Account Utility Customer – Residential

All Residential applicants must meet the following guidelines:

1. Applicants must be 18 years of age or older.
2. All requests for utility services must be on the approved application form.
3. Picture identification is required (driver's license or valid government-issued ID, Passport, Permanent Resident Card, or Visa). A Social Security number is required.
4. Proof of ownership is required in the form of a sales contract, settlement, or mortgage statement; a lease agreement is required for renters.
5. The name on the utility bill shall be the same name as the applicant.
6. A verification check may be done on the information provided.
7. Customer must pay any utility debt that is owed to the City before new services can be established.

8. A deposit is required based on the services provided. The deposit may be paid at the time of application or added to the first bill. Deposit may be waived for one (1) additional account for an existing account holder with two (2) years of active service and no more than two (2) late penalties.
 9. A one-time service charge will be included in your first month's bill upon the activation of a new utility account.
- b. New Account Utility Customer – Commercial

All Commercial applicants must meet the following guidelines:

1. Applicants must be 18 years of age or older.
2. All requests for utility services must be on the approved commercial application form.
3. Valid picture identification is required from the duly authorized agent of said business, such as a driver's license, a valid government-issued ID, a Passport, a Permanent Resident Card, or a Visa.
4. Proof of ownership is required in the form of a sales contract, settlement, or mortgage statement; a lease agreement is required for renters.
5. Business Tax ID number or Social Security Number is required.
6. A completed application for the Occupational Tax Certificate is required.
7. Business name on all proof of occupancy documents shall be the same.
8. A verification check may be done on the information provided.
9. Customer must pay any utility debt that is owed to the City before new service is established.

10. A deposit or a corporate surety bond in an amount to cover two (2) months of estimated utility cost is required.
 11. A one-time service charge will be included in your first month's bill upon the activation of a new utility account.
- c. Compliance Requirements for Service Activation for Commercial Customers:

To ensure the integrity of the public water system and comply with the Environmental Protection Division (EPD) Rules for Safe Drinking Water, all commercial accounts must meet backflow prevention requirements before water service is activated. (Code of Ordinances of the City of Albany, Georgia, Chapter 60, Article IV, Division 2, §§ 60-486–60-491)

1. Water service will not be turned on for any commercial property until the backflow prevention assembly has been inspected and tested by a certified technician, with a passing test report submitted to the Albany Utilities Backflow Prevention Team.
2. If a property lacks a backflow prevention device, the customer is required to install an approved assembly at their own expense before service can be established.
3. To prevent potential contamination, all commercial backflow prevention assemblies must be tested annually.
4. The customer of record is responsible for hiring a certified backflow prevention assembly tester to perform the required annual inspection.
5. Completed test reports must be submitted to the Albany Utilities Backflow Prevention Team by the anniversary of the initial installation or the previous test date. Failure to provide proof of annual testing may result in fines or the termination of water service.
6. All backflow prevention devices must be appropriate for the degree of hazard present at the facility.

7. If an existing backflow device is determined to be insufficient or does not meet current EPD rules and local regulations, the customer must upgrade the device to a compliant model.
 8. Albany Utilities reserves the right to inspect commercial properties to determine the adequacy of backflow protection.
 9. All costs associated with the installation, maintenance, testing, and upgrading of backflow prevention assemblies are the sole responsibility of the customer.
 10. To obtain more information or a list of certified backflow testers, contact representatives at aubackflow@albanyga.gov or 229-302-1631.
- d. Security lights may be available upon customer request, subject to approval by Utility Engineering, and require submission of a completed request form.
- e. Distributed Generation
1. Distributed generation systems, such as solar photovoltaic installations, allow customers to generate a portion of their own electricity.
 2. To help ensure safety and reliable service for all customers, distributed generation systems must be reviewed and approved by Utility Engineering and Planning and Development before installation and interconnection to the electric distribution system.
 3. All systems must comply with applicable federal and state of Georgia requirements, National Electrical Code standards, the City's interconnection guidelines, and include appropriate safety equipment to prevent back feed during outages.
 4. The City may require specific metering or other safeguards and reserves the right to disconnect a system if it creates a safety or reliability concern.

5. Distributed generation applies to customers in all areas served by the Albany Utility Board and is subject to its service rules. The customer's account must be in good standing.

A distributed generation facility shall meet all of the following guidelines:

- a. Be owned (or leased) and operated by an existing customer for the production of electric energy.
 - b. Be connected to and/or operate in parallel with the Board's distribution facilities.
 - c. Be intended primarily to offset part or all of the customer's generator's requirement for electricity.
 - d. Have a peak generating capacity of not more than 10 kW for residential applications and not more than 125% of the actual or expected maximum annual peak demand of the premise for commercial applications.
 - e. Be installed on the customer side of the meter.
- f. Deposits
1. Residential Customers
 - a. All residential customers applying for services are required to pay a deposit to cover the utility services that are provided at the service address.
 - b. The deposit amount will be based on the services provided at the service address. Exceptions may be granted based on the customer's verified satisfactory payment history within the last two (2) years.
 - c. A current customer with a deposit can transfer such a deposit if moving to a new address. If the current deposit is less than the deposit required for services at the new address, an additional deposit may be required.
 - d. Upon customer request, residential deposits are eligible to be applied to the account after one (1) year if the account has not been delinquent more than one (1) time during that period.
 - e. When the customer no longer requires utility services, a final bill will be issued, and the deposit will be applied to any balance due. Any credit balance will be returned to

the customer. Any past-due balances not paid within 120 days will be referred to a collection agency.

2. Commercial Customers

- a. Commercial customers applying for services are required to pay a deposit or furnish a corporate surety bond in an amount sufficient to cover two (2) months of estimated utility costs.
 - 1. For new businesses, the estimated utility costs will be calculated using the average monthly utility charges of similar size, industry, and operations.
 - 2. For existing businesses, the estimated utility costs will be calculated using the average monthly utility charges over the most recent twelve (12) months of service.
- b. If a commercial account is transferred to a different address, the deposit will be transferred accordingly. If the current deposit is less than the deposit required for services at the new address, an additional deposit may be required.
- c. Upon customer request, commercial deposits are eligible to be applied to the account or refunded after two (2) years, provided that the account has not been delinquent more than two (2) times during that period.
- d. When the customer no longer requires utility services, a final bill will be issued, and the deposit will be applied to any balance due. Any credit balance will be returned to the customer. Any past-due balances not paid within 120 days will be referred to a collection agency.
- e. Effective August 1, 2022, no deposits receive interest.

3. Property Owner, Landlord, Leased-Properties, or Agent Turn-On: Residential and Commercial

- a. The City will provide services to a location for up to 60 days to clean up, repair, renovate, or show to prospective renters/buyers.
- b. It is the applicant's responsibility to terminate services or to request additional time.
- c. A deposit will be required after 60 days. The deposit will be returned, less any associated costs, after the account is closed.

4. Temporary Utility Services

a. Electric Service

1. Temporary power is provided for short-term only to support activities such as construction, equipment testing, or permitted special events at a specific location. Temporary power is not for occupancy.
2. The City's responsibility is to furnish the meter and meter base and install the meter.
3. The Contractor/Owner's responsibility is to furnish the pedestal or pole, install the pedestal or pole, and install the meter base. A permit is required to pick up the meter base from the City's Storeroom, 1726 Lily Pond Road.
4. An installation fee is charged and must be paid in advance of the meter installation.

b. Hydrant Meter

1. A hydrant meter may be issued for temporary water service to support activities such as construction, equipment testing, or permitted special events at a specific location.
2. The City is responsible for furnishing the hydrant meter and required backflow prevention device. All piping, hoses, fittings, and equipment downstream of the backflow prevention device are the responsibility of the customer or contractor.
3. A valid hydrant meter permit is required before issuance. Upon approval, the Water Department will deliver and install the hydrant meter at the approved service location within three (3) business days.
4. An installation fee, along with all applicable charges, must be paid in full before the issuance or installation of the hydrant meter.

5. The customer or contractor to whom the hydrant meter is issued shall be fully responsible for the meter and all associated equipment while in their possession and shall be liable for all costs associated with damage, loss, theft, or tampering, including repair or full replacement, as determined by the City of Albany's Risk Department.

5. Conditions For Denial or Disconnection of Service

a. Fraudulent Use of Service

If evidence indicates theft of utility service, attempted fraudulent use, or tampering (City Ordinance Section 60-3 – Tampering prohibited) with City meters or equipment/infrastructure at the service location, the City may discontinue service immediately without prior notice. The customer is liable for restitution to the City, including: (a) unpaid billed amounts; (b) estimated unmetered usage if the account was unmetered or bypassed; (c) costs to repair or replace City equipment and any property damage; (d) a Tampering Fee as set in the rate schedule; (e) investigation, field, and collection costs; and (f) any additional amounts or penalties ordered by a court. The City is not obligated to provide refunds, credits, or payment arrangements related to theft, tampering, or fraudulent use. Service will be restored only after the fraudulent condition is corrected, required inspections are passed, the release is obtained from investigations, and all amounts due are paid.

b. Condition of Premises

The City may discontinue utility services where, in its judgment, the wiring, piping, or structure is unsafe, interferes with the service of other customers, damages the City's property, or violates any requirements in any section of these rules and regulations. Any inspection and approval by the City shall be made solely for the purpose of ensuring proper protection for the City's property and continuity of service; and shall not be construed to impose any duty or liability on the City by reason thereof. In cases where any duly constituted governmental authority requires inspection and approval of the customer's wiring or piping, the City will not make a connection and render

services until such inspection has been made, and the duly designated inspector has given approval.

6. Billing Information

a. Rate Assignment

1. Deposits, charges, rates, and discounts for all utility services are on file and available for inspection in the ASD or the City's website, listed below.

a. Current Residential Rates

<https://www.albanyga.gov/City-Services/Utilities/Pay-Your-Utility-Bill/Residential-Rates-and-Fees>

b. Current Commercial Rates

<https://www.albanyga.gov/City-Services/Utilities/Pay-Your-Utility-Bill/Commercial-Rates-and-Fees>

c. Renewable Energy -Distributed Generation

<https://www.albanyga.gov/City-Services/Utilities/Pay-Your-Utility-Bill/Commercial-Rates-and-Fees>

2. Applicants for utility services shall be assigned an approved rate that complies with the type of service requested. The Albany Utility Board approves all rates.

b. Bill Creation

1. A monthly bill will be generated for all services provided according to the applicable schedule for each separate billable metered or flat rate service at the service address.
 - a. Meters shall be read at intervals of approximately one (1) month.
 - b. Bills will be sent out according to the applicable schedule.
 - c. Readings are automated and continuous, providing near real-time data.
 - d. If a meter cannot be read on the scheduled date, usage may be estimated based on the customer's historical

data. Estimates will be corrected with actual data as soon as it is available, or in the subsequent billing period, whichever comes first.

- e. In the event of underbilling or failure to bill a customer's account for utility service, the unbilled amount shall be recovered by back billing the account. The customer will be allowed to pay the charges for the unbilled amounts over the same number of months in which the error occurred. The months specified for repayment should not exceed forty-eight (48) months.
- f. In the event the customer wants to negotiate a settlement on the under-billing or unbilled amounts, the Utility Appeals Committee is authorized to reach a settlement agreement for all terms of the repayment plan. Should service become disconnected while payments are still outstanding from the payback agreement, the balance would be due in full.

2. Due Dates

- a. Bills are due on or before the due date printed on the bill.
- b. Bills unpaid will receive a late fee penalty on the 5th day after the due date.
- c. Accounts that remain unpaid at 5:00 p.m. 10 days past the due date will be considered disconnected, and the service fee will be applied.
- d. Due dates that fall on City of Albany observed holidays or weekends are due on the next business day.
- e. Failure to receive the bill shall not entitle the customer to a waiver of any penalties or prevent the disconnection of services.
- f. Customers who do not receive a bill for services may contact the ASD at 229-883-8330 or visit the online portal to obtain a copy of their bill.
- g. All non-pay accounts must pay in full or make payment arrangements by 4:00 p.m. before the service disconnection date.

3. Extensions

- a. The extension must be requested before the services are disconnected.

- b. Customers may request a 7-day extension from the bill cutoff date. For total bills exceeding \$600, customers may be eligible for an extension up to fourteen (14) days.
- c. Customers are allowed to request one (1) extension per bill up to four (4) bills per calendar year.
- d. For non-payments, the customer will be disconnected on the 8th day. For total bills exceeding \$600, services will be disconnected on the 15th day.
- e. Customers will incur applicable service fee when account becomes subject to disconnection.

7. Payments

a. Payment Submission

- 1. Customers may choose from various payment locations, including online (portal or mobile app), phone, mail, drive-thru teller, drop-box, and in-person. There are two (2) drop-boxes: (a) one (1) on the east side of the building at 401 Pine Avenue, (b) at the first teller drive-thru window.
- 2. Payments may also be made at designated off-site locations before the due date. A complete list of off-site locations can be obtained from ASD.
- 3. Vouchers
 - a. The ASD will accept vouchers from approved agencies.
 - b. The list of agencies can be obtained from the ASD.
 - c. Vouchers must have the required information:
 - 1. Customer name.
 - 3. Address.
 - 4. Account number.
 - 5. Voucher amount.
 - d. The customer is responsible for any balance not covered by the voucher.
- 4. Customers are requested to bring the utility bill for proper validation when paying in person.

5. All drop-box payments must include the utility bill and a check or money order; cash payments are not accepted for security reasons. All dropped payments between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. will be considered paid on that date. Any payments dropped after 5:00 p.m. will be processed on the next business day.
6. Acceptable forms of payment are credit and debit cards, money orders, checks, bank drafts, and cash. No two-party checks are accepted.
7. Return Fees are charged for all payments returned by a financial institution.
8. Returned checks for insufficient funds will be automatically redeposited once by the financial institution before they are returned to ASD. The redeposit service is not provided for online payments.
9. If a person has two (2) returned items within twelve (12) months, payments must be made by cash, money order, certified funds, or debit/credit card for a period of two (2) years. A return fee will be added to the utility account and must be paid immediately, along with the return payment amount. If deemed necessary, the City of Albany may pursue criminal proceedings against person(s) responsible for multiple returned payments.

b. Refunds for Overpayments

1. Customers who have made an overpayment may request a refund after the overpayment has been confirmed.
2. Refunds will be processed within ten (10) business days and issued using the original method of payment.
3. Confirmed overpayments may be applied as a credit toward the next month's utility bill instead of being refunded.

c. Payment Plans

1. Customers may request a payment plan for utility issues on the customer's side of the meter, such as water leaks or appliance/equipment malfunctions.

2. Administrative Services personnel can grant requests for payment plans as long as the customer is not currently on a payment plan or has failed to pay the previous payment plan in full.
3. The payment plan agreement is set up in the billing software, printed and signed by the customer, and monitored monthly for compliance.
4. If a payment plan is not followed, the payment plan agreement will be considered null and void, a service fee will be added to the account, utilities will be disconnected, and the total past-due account balance must be paid prior to reconnection.
5. The customer must request a payment plan prior to the services being disconnected.
6. Payment plan agreements may not exceed twelve (12) months.

8. Electric Priority Designation for Medical Priority Customers

The electrical priority designation serves only as a mechanism, when possible, to notify customers before service interruptions and to prioritize restoration in the event of uncontrollable outages.

- a. Customers with life-threatening medical conditions requiring electrically operated medical equipment must request an electrical priority form to be completed by a medical provider.
- b. The electric priority form includes a Customer's Statement section that must be signed by the utility account holder, acknowledging the following:
 1. The account must be kept current.
 2. Continuous utility services are not guaranteed if the account becomes past due.
 3. The account holder is responsible for having their own generator or battery backup for their equipment.

- 4. Weather and emergency conditions may result in uncontrollable outages, and uninterrupted or immediate restoration of services cannot be guaranteed.
- c. The completed form must be submitted by the physician's office to the ASD.
- d. The form will be retained in the customer's account and must be recertified every 12 months, or the customer will be removed from the list.

9. Requests for Change in Account Information

- a. No change in the status of a customer account shall be permitted to avoid payment of delinquent bills, deposits, fees, or other outstanding amounts. The ASD reserves the right to refuse service if it has reason to believe the applicant is attempting to avoid payment of amounts due.
- b. A customer wishing to transfer the utility account from one (1) location to another must have an active account without a past due balance. Service may remain active at the old location for up to 30 days. A new account service fee is required at the new address. Only the person named on the utility account is authorized to transfer the account, unless the account holder provides consent or an official court document is provided.
- c. A customer wishing to change the name on the account due to the death of the account holder must first settle any past due bills at the location, complete a name change application accepting responsibility of paying monthly bills, and comply with all requirements listed in the new account utility customer section. Proof of death must be provided with a Certified Death Certificate.
- d. A customer wishing to change the name on the account due to marriage, divorce, or any other circumstances must furnish proper legal documents (marriage license/certificate/divorce decree, etc.), complete the application accepting responsibility of paying monthly bills, and pay any applicable deposit, if required.
- e. An outstanding utility balance may not be avoided by transferring service to another occupant residing at the same service address. Any delinquent balance must be paid in full before service can be established in the name of a spouse, co-lessee, roommate, or

other household member. A signed acknowledgement by all tenants on the lease will be required, which states that they are aware that they will not be allowed to transfer service to another tenant on the same lease, if there is an outstanding balance that has not been paid. A deposit, if applicable, will also be required in accordance with the City's deposit policy before service is established.

10. Disconnection and Reconnection of Service

a. Voluntary Service Disconnection

A customer wishing to disconnect service must do so in writing, in person or by phone, with the following information: account name, account location, date of birth, social security number, date to be discontinued, forwarding address, proper signature, government-issued picture ID, Passport, Green Card, or Visa.

b. Involuntary Service Disconnection

Service will be disconnected without prior notice in the event of:

1. A condition on the customer's premises is determined to be hazardous to life or property.
2. Meters automatically disconnect the service for a high-temperature alarm due to unsafe conditions. Customers will have 15 business days to rectify the situation or risk continued service interruption. A door card shall be left with the customer or at the customer's address if the customer is unavailable.
3. The customer is using or tampering with utility meter/equipment and infrastructure in such a manner as to adversely affect the equipment or service to other consumers.
4. Resale or fraudulent use of utilities.
5. Customers whose payments are returned by the bank for "bank account closed" or "no account".
6. Customers who falsify documents.

c. Service Disconnection with Notice

Notice will be given to customers not less than 14 days, excluding weekends and City-observed holidays, before service disconnection for the following causes:

1. Failure of the customer to permit the City reasonable access to its equipment.
2. Failure of the customer to provide the City with a deposit/surety bond when required.
3. Returned payments from the bank for a reason other than "bank account closed" or "no account".

d. Disconnection of Service Due to Non-Payment

1. Accounts that remain unpaid at 5:00 p.m. 10 days past the due date will be considered disconnected, and the service fee will be applied.
2. A disconnect notice for electric service is generated 10 days past the due date.
3. Following the disconnect of electric service, if payment is not received 17 days past the due date, all other utility services will be disconnected, and the account will be closed.
4. After 120 days, all unresolved balances will be transferred to the collection agency by the Administrative Services Department.
5. Exceptions

The City of Albany will not disconnect utility services if the local weather service predicts the following temperatures within a 24-hour period:

- e. 32 degrees or colder.
- f. 100 degrees or hotter.

This temporary delay in disconnection shall expire once hazardous weather conditions are no longer expected.

e. Reconnection after Disconnection

After service has been disconnected either at the request of the customer, for nonpayment of a bill, violation of the contract for service, or violation of any of the City's rules and regulations herein, such service will not be reconnected until satisfactory arrangements have been made to correct the reason for the disconnection, including payment of all delinquent amounts plus any other applicable fees.

1. Electric Services

For electric service only, once a customer has paid their obligated amount to have service restored, the system will automatically generate a restore order, and the customer will be automatically restored via the Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) system.

2. Water & Gas Services

- a. Restorations require dispatching a technician.
- b. If payment is made prior to the close of business, 5 p.m., a service request will be generated to restore the customer. Restorations will be performed up to 8 p.m.
- c. If payment is made after 5 p.m. but prior to 7 p.m., a service request will be generated to restore the customer. Restorations will be performed up to 8 p.m.
- d. If payment is made after 7 p.m., service will be restored with high priority at the start of the next business day.

11. Meter Location and Access

- a. The location of the metering equipment and space required for said metering equipment shall be established by the City's service regulation.
- b. As a condition of taking service, authorized employees and agents of the City shall have access to the customer's premises at all reasonable hours to install, turn on, disconnect, inspect, read, repair, or remove its meters.

- c. Meters should be free from shrubs, trees, debris, automobiles, animals, or anything that obstructs access. (City Ordinance Section 60-5 – Investigation, entry, access, and inspection)

12. Meter Violations

- a. It shall be unlawful for any unauthorized person, firm, or corporation to tamper with or open any meter cabinet, enclosure, equipment, or other device owned by Albany Utilities that is secured by a seal, lock, and/or inter-lock valve thereon.
- b. It is unlawful for any unauthorized person, firm, or corporation to reconnect a service that has been disconnected.
- c. Broken meter seals will constitute grounds to question the accuracy of the metered consumption. Should the meter fail to register properly, monthly billings will be estimated based on either a meter reading taken during the next billing period after the meter has been repaired or replaced, or the amount charged during a previous corresponding period, at the discretion of ASD. A police report will be filed for each incident of a broken seal, and a tampering fee will be assessed to the account, plus any criminal charges that may be incurred. All charges associated with the cost structure related to such actions will be provided. (City Ordinance Section 60-3 Tampering prohibited)

13. Meter Testing

- a. Customers may request a test for any meter capable of being tested.
- b. If any meter is found to be inaccurate, the customer will not be charged the meter testing fee, and the customer's bill will be adjusted accordingly.
- c. If the meter is found to be accurate, the customer will be charged a meter testing fee, which will be added to the customer's account.

14. Credits, Adjustments, and Disputes

- a. Late Fee Adjustment

The ASD will grant a late fee adjustment upon customer request (Residential and Commercial) once every 12 months, provided the customer is not currently disconnected for non-payment, finalized, or inactive. If a penalty is incurred due to an error on the part of the City of Albany and is waived, this penalty will not be counted as a penalty in the prior 12-month period.

- b. The ASD will not issue a credit or adjustment to a customer account unless there is a verified billing error on the side of the Utility, such as an incorrect meter reading.

- 1. Adjustment for Water Services

For continuous water flow issues on the customer's side of the meter, a one-time discount of 10% on water usage may be applied, limited only to usage prior to the initial notification from Albany Utilities. Customers are responsible for promptly repairing any issues after notification to prevent further excessive water consumption. All costs related to water usage following the initial notification are the customer's responsibility.

- 2. Adjustment for Sewer Services

For higher-than-normal sewer usage due to continuous water flow issues, a representative from the Sanitary Sewer Division will meet with the customer to locate the sewer leak. If it is determined that excess water flowed through the sewer system, no credit will be issued. If it is determined that the excess water did not flow through the sewer system, a credit may be issued. The credit amount will be determined by the sewer usage over the last 12 months.

- c. Customer Disputes

- 1. The Director of Administrative Services will handle disputes related to late fees, service charges, deposits, or errors made by ASD staff on a case-by-case basis.

2. Disputes regarding water, gas, electric, sanitary sewer, solid waste, stormwater, and telecom services that are not addressed in this credits/adjustments section will be escalated by the ASD to the respective department head for resolution. Each department head is responsible for ensuring that disputes are handled promptly and fairly, in accordance with applicable regulations and policies.
3. If a customer remains dissatisfied with the department head's resolution, they must submit to the Utility Management Department a written letter of appeal addressed to the Utility Appeals Committee within ten (10) business days.
4. The Utility Appeals Committee will evaluate and provide a response within ten (10) business days. There may be instances in which the decision of the Utility Appeals Committee is delayed due to special circumstances.

15. Energy Conservation

An energy audit is a systematic approach to a home or business's energy use to identify opportunities for saving energy, reducing costs, and verifying meter readings and consumption. Requested energy audits are scheduled and performed at no cost to the customer.

16. 311 Call Center

- a. The 311 Call Center enhances efficiency and responsiveness for the City of Albany by providing centralized support and facilitating community engagement.
- b. Residents can report non-emergency issues, including potholes, sanitation concerns, utility problems, and graffiti, by dialing 311 or using the Access Albany App.
- c. Customer service representatives are available Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
- d. Voicemails left after hours are retrieved and entered into the CRM on the next business day.

- e. Each service request in the CRM has an assigned SLA, which is the expected timeframe for resolving the issue, visible to residents through the app or website.

17. Data Safety, Security, and Sharing

a. Data Safety and Security

1. Albany Utilities is committed to safeguarding the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of customer information.
2. All customer data is securely stored and managed in accordance with applicable privacy laws and regulations.
3. Comprehensive administrative, technical, and physical security controls are in place to protect information from unauthorized access, disclosure, alteration, or destruction.
4. In the event of a suspected or confirmed data security incident, Albany Utilities will respond promptly in accordance with established incident response procedures to mitigate risk, protect affected systems, and notify impacted parties as required by law.

b. Use and Sharing of Customer Information

1. Albany Utilities collects and uses customer information and usage data to provide utility services, manage accounts, process billing and payments, improve operational efficiency, authenticate customer access, respond to inquiries, and communicate service-related notices, updates, and information about relevant programs and services.
2. Usage data is used to generate billing statements, track account history, provide secure online access to usage information, and analyze consumption patterns to enhance service delivery, support rate planning, and improve system reliability.

3. Albany Utilities may share customer-specific usage data with authorized third-party service providers and partners as necessary to support utility operations. All third parties are contractually required to protect the confidentiality of customer information and are prohibited from disclosing it without authorization.

VI. REGULATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

It is unlawful to tamper with or alter any utility or any line, wire, pipe or other devices or other instrumentality used in connection with the operation of the utility system, tampering with, resetting or otherwise interfering with any metering device owned by the City, the customer or otherwise, so as to cause it run backwards or to fail to operate or to register incorrectly, etc. (City Ordinance Section 60-3 Tampering prohibited).

Protection of Facilities on Customer's Property – All property of the City placed in or upon the customer's premises to supply service is placed there under the customer's protection. The cost for any loss or damage to such property, normal wear and tear excepted, shall be the responsibility of the customer. It shall be unlawful for any person other than employees of the City to handle in any manner the meters or equipment owned by the City. The City through its employees may enter at reasonable times on any property, public or private, for the purpose of investigating the condition, construction, maintenance, or operation of any utility service. Failure to provide access will result in termination of service. Should the customer, through renovation or addition, impede ready access to a meter, then the customer shall bear the cost of relocating the meter. (City Ordinance Section 60-5 Investigation, entry, access, and inspection)

1. Electric

- a. Damage to City or Customer Property – Neither the customer nor the City shall be responsible for damage to the machinery, apparatus, appliances, or any other property of the other caused by lightning or by defects in or failure of the machinery, apparatus, or appliances of the one suffering such damage from such causes; the City shall not be responsible in any way for the distribution or control of said electrical energy beyond the point of connection of the customer's premises, and shall not be liable for damages on account of injuries to person or property resulting in any manner from the receiving, use, or application by the

customer of such electrical energy. The customer must agree to keep his machinery, lines, apparatus, and appliances in a safe condition and shall indemnify and save harmless the City from the payment of any sum or sums of money to any person whomsoever, including attorney's fees and court costs, on account of damage to property or fatal or personal injuries to individuals resulting from or which may be in any way caused by their operation and maintenance. The customer agrees to this application for the installation of electrical service, whether new or existing.

- b. Restrictions on Energy Use – Energy supplied is for the customer's use within or upon their premises. The customer shall not extend service from one location to another by crossing right-of-ways or public streets, roads, alleys, or property owned by others. The customer shall not supply electrical energy to others or allow others to take same, nor shall they use, permit to be used, or resale electrical energy at any other premises or for any other purpose. If the customer's service requirements indicate that modification of the above rule is necessary, then a request for the modification may be made to the ASD.
- c. Resale of Energy – In case electric energy supplied by the City to the customer is resold without the written consent of the City, service shall be discontinued to the customer.
- d. Distributed Generation – Under no circumstances shall any person, firm, or corporation connect to any electrical device receiving electrical current from the City, any form of solar energy, without first receiving approval from the Utility Engineering Department.
- e. Relocation of City's Electrical Facilities – Should a customer request that the City relocate electrical facilities for the customer's convenience, the Customer shall pay the labor and material costs for the change prior to the work being performed.

2. Water

- a. It is prohibited for anyone who is not an authorized user of the city's water system or acting with the consent of an authorized user or the overseeing board to access or utilize water from the faucets, pipes, or fixtures installed for an authorized user's use, except in the event of a fire emergency. (City Ordinance Sec. 60-464 – Illegal use of water)

- b. All water services shall be metered. (City Ordinance Section 60-466 – Meter required)

3. Gas

- a. Any action taken by a customer to tamper with, bypass, or manipulate gas service infrastructure, such as breaking seals, locks, or illegally reconnecting services, is unauthorized access.
- b. Initial incidents will be reported to Risk Management for investigation and action.
- c. Anti-tampering devices will be installed on affected valves.
- d. Repeat offenses will lead to the removal of the gas meter, suspension of services, and involvement of legal authorities.
- e. The customer will be responsible for any fines and penalties, including cost recovery for repairs and enhanced security measures. (City Charter Section 26 – Albany Utility Board)

4. Solid Waste

- a. The City provides a wheeled garbage barrel as an authorized means for refuse collection, which is subject to inspection by the Solid Waste Division. Additional barrels are available for a fee through the Public Works Department. Residents or businesses must place the barrel at the curb or designated location between 5:00 p.m. the day prior and 7:00 a.m. on the collection day. After collection, the barrel should be returned to the side or rear of the building by 7:00 p.m. If the barrel is lost, damaged, stolen, or destroyed due to vandalism or negligence, the assigned individual must reimburse the city for a replacement. (City Ordinance Section 52-73 – Wheeled garbage containers)
- b. All single-family residential units in the city are required to utilize the solid waste collection service of the city for the disposition of refuse. Garbage shall be collected once-a-week and yard, shrubbery and tree trimmings shall be collected twice per month. (City Ordinance Section 52-3(b)(1) – Administration)
- c. All commercial units are required to utilize the solid waste collection service provided by the city or a service provided by an approved state certified hauler operating under permit from the

city manager. (City Ordinance Section 52-3(b)(1) – Administration)

5. Sewer

No work shall be performed on any sewer or in any existing or future city street, alley, or right-of-way unless and until plans have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Director of Engineering or the Director of Engineering's designee. Upon approval of the plans, the Director of Engineering shall then issue a written permit authorizing construction of the sewers and transmit a set of the approved plans to the Director of Public Works or Sewer Superintendent. (City Ordinance Section 60-131 Sewer Construction-Generally)

6. Telecommunications/Fiber

The City is responsible for installing and maintaining the circuit, whether provided as dark fiber, lit fiber, or a dedicated service, up to the customer's demarcation point, which is defined as the termination point of the City's service at the customer's location. The customer, acknowledging the City of Albany's provision of telecom services, releases the City, its employees, and contractors from liability for damages to undetected utilities, including, but not limited to, electric lines, water lines, sprinkler lines, septic lines, or septic tanks, unless the customer has identified them prior to work. Damage to landscaping, such as grass and shrubbery, is also included. The customer grants access to the City and its designated agents for installation purposes, which may involve trenching, vibrating, and directional drilling. The City relies on Georgia's 811 service for safe installation coordination.

7. Stormwater

All property owners of improved property within the incorporated areas of the city shall provide, manage, maintain, and operate on-site stormwater management systems sufficient to collect, convey, detain, and discharge stormwater runoff in a safe manner consistent with applicable city development regulations, ordinances, as well as state and federal laws. Any failure to meet this obligation shall constitute a violation of this article and be subject to citation and prosecution in the City of Albany Municipal Court. Each day such violation exists shall constitute a separate offense. (City Ordinance Section 54-11 (a) – Enforcement methods and inspections)

VII. NONCOMPLIANCE WITH RULES AND REGULATIONS

All utilities furnished to a customer shall be in accordance with these rules and regulations. In the event a customer fails to comply with such rules and regulations, the City may discontinue service until a proper remedy has been established.

VIII. REVISION OF RULES AND REGULATIONS

This policy will be reviewed regularly and modified as needed to comply with local, state, and federal laws, guidelines, and regulations.

No elected official, appointed official, or hired official/employee of the City of Albany has the authority to deviate from this policy.

ATTEST: **CITY OF ALBANY, GEORGIA**

BY: _____

EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT **MAYOR**

DATE **DATE**

Revision History

Version Number	Revision Date	Changes	Approval Date	Approved By:
1		New		
