



# Medina County Sanitary Engineers

## Billing Policies and Procedures

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## **SECTION 1. UTILITY BILLING POLICY**

The following policy shall govern the provision of sanitary sewer and water utilities for the Medina County Sanitary Engineer's (MCSE) office located in Medina, Ohio. The purpose of this policy is to provide consistent customer rules and guidelines. Individuals who have questions regarding these services are encouraged to contact the MCSE office.

## **SECTION 2. UTILITY BILLING INFORMATION**

Utility services being provided and billed for by the MCSE consist of sanitary sewer and potable water services. Utility services being billed for are included on one (1) billing for each account. Utility services and this policy include residential, commercial, and industrial users.

MCSE shall maintain account records for each customer that includes the customer's legal name, billing address, account number, service address, current charges, and account history including consumption, past due charges, penalties, and fees.

### **Utility Billing Hours**

Office hours: Monday through Friday  
8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

### **Utility Billing Contact Information**

Mailing address: 791 W Smith Rd, Medina, Ohio 44256  
Phone number: (330)-723-9592  
Website address: <https://www.medinaco.org/sanitary/>  
Email address: mcsebilling@ohmedinaco.org

## **SECTION 3. UTILITY SERVICE ACCOUNTS**

Effective January 1, 2020, all billing accounts must be placed in the name of the property owner. The property owner shall be liable for all utility services supplied to the property, whether the property is owner occupied or not, and any unpaid charges will be applied as a lien against the property.

The MCSE considers each service connection to the sanitary sewer and/or water main one (1) billable account. In the event that one (1) service connection services more than one (1) building or structure, those additional buildings or structures, will be billed under one (1) account.

## **SECTION 4. RATE CALCULATION**

All utility charges shall be calculated in accordance with the specific rates established by resolution or policy as adopted by the Medina County Board of Commissioners and applicable to each utility or service provided to a customer.

## **SECTION 5. ADDITIONAL CHARGES**

Additional charges such as but not limited to: delinquent account fee, seasonal meter installations/removals, etc. shall be billed in accordance with the applicable utility or service rate resolution and shall be included on the appropriate monthly billing statement or as a separate invoice depending on the service.

## **SECTION 6. UTILITY SERVICE APPLICATION**

1. Effective **January 1, 2020**, all new utility service accounts may only be placed in the property owner's name. The owner shall be responsible for the utility service billings on said property.
2. Each service location shall be considered a separate account.

## **SECTION 7. BILLING CYCLE**

MCSE utilizes three (3) separate billing cycles: Odd, Even, and Monthly. Residential accounts are billed bi-monthly on either an Odd or Even month cycle. Commercial accounts are billed on a bi-monthly cycle unless they are considered high water consumption users, in which case they are billed monthly.

### **Meter Read Date**

1. Meters are generally read at the beginning of each month by utility staff.
2. In the event that a meter reading cannot be obtained, the consumption will be estimated by the Customer Service Representative.

### **Billing Period**

#### **Commercial**

1. Utility bills are mailed to each account on the last day of their billing cycle.
2. The date the bill is created shall be known as the billing date.
3. Utility bill payments must be received on or before the fifteenth (15<sup>th</sup>) day of the month following the billing date.

#### **Residential**

1. Utility bills are mailed to each account on the last day of their billing cycle.
2. The date the bill is created shall be known as the billing date.
3. Utility bill payments must be received on or before the fifteenth (15<sup>th</sup>) day of the month following the billing date.

## **Delinquent Date**

After the fifteenth (15<sup>th</sup>) day of each month following the billing date, unpaid utility bills become delinquent and a ten percent (10%) penalty will be added to the bill.

## **SECTION 8. MINIMUM BILL(S)**

Sanitary sewer and water customers are charged a minimum bill, regardless if there is no usage and/or the water meter has been removed, until such time the service connection(s) have been properly abandoned per MCSE Rules and Regulations.

## **SECTION 9. RENTAL UNIT POLICY**

1. Effective January 1, 2020, MCSE will no longer allow billing accounts to be placed in the renter's name.
2. All utility bills will be billed to the property owner.
3. If one of the following events occurs after January 1, 2020, the utility bill for the property will be billed directly to the owner:
  - a. Current renter moves.
  - b. The utility billing payments have been delinquent three (3) or more times during the past twelve (12) months.
  - c. Service has been disconnected for non-payment during the past twelve (12) months.

## **SECTION 10. DELINQUENT ACCOUNTS AND STOPPING SERVICE**

1. Notice of utility service billing delinquency will be mailed to each and every delinquent utility service account holder by the last day of the month following the delinquency.
2. The notified delinquent account holder will be given until the fifteenth (15<sup>th</sup>) of the following month to pay the delinquent bill, including any and all penalties.
3. If a delinquent water bill remains unpaid, the MCSE water department shall be directed to cease water service to the property until the delinquent bill is paid in full.

## **SECTION 11. CERTIFICATION OF AN UNPAID ACCOUNT BALANCE**

The Medina County Sanitary Engineers will assess delinquent account balances twice a year. Delinquent balances as of January 16<sup>th</sup> and July 16<sup>th</sup> will be certified to the property tax for collection. A ten percent (10 %) certification penalty will be added to the delinquent balance prior to the certification.

## SECTION 12. RE-ESTABLISHING SERVICE

1. Once water service to the property has ceased, it shall not be reinstated until the delinquent balance, including all additional fees and penalties, have been paid in full.
2. The MCSE will only accept the following types of payment to reinstate water service: Cash, Money Order, or Debit/Credit Card.
3. Following payment of the applicable delinquent bill and the reconnection fee, the MCSE water department will be directed to reinstate the water service with the following parameters:
  - a. If payment is made in full prior to 3:00 PM, then the water service will be reinstated that day.
  - b. If payment is made in full after 3:00 PM, then the water service will be scheduled to be reinstated the next business day. The property owner, or his representative, must be present at the property for the scheduled reinstatement of service to occur.
4. Medical Exemptions: Customers that are scheduled to have their water service turned off for non-payment that still require water for medical reasons may submit a signed doctors note stating a medical necessity for water. This document will need to be renewed annually.

## SECTION 13. PAYMENTS

MCSE Utilities provides several options to make payment on their utility bill:

1. **Mail** – Check or money orders mailed to PO Box 542, Medina, Ohio 44258.
2. **Drop box** – A drop box is located in front of:
  - a. **MCSE office** located at 791 W Smith Rd, Medina, Ohio 44256.
  - b. **Medina Municipal Court** located at 135 N Elmwood Ave, Medina, Ohio 44256.
3. **In person** – Payments can be made at the MCSE office located at 791 W Smith Rd, Medina, Ohio 44256.
4. **Pay by Phone** – Credit/Debit card and E-check payments are accepted over the phone via an automated pay-by-phone service.
5. **Electronic Payments**- One-time payments can be made online through MCSE’s website using a credit/debit card or checking account.
6. **Automatic Payments** - Customers can sign up for automatic bill pay using a credit/debit card or checking/savings account in which the utility bill will be automatically deducted on the bill due date. If the bill due date falls on a non-business day, payment will be automatically deducted on the following business day.
7. **Your Bank** – You may also make a payment directly through your banks bill pay service, if offered by that institution.

## SECTION 14. PAYMENT ARRANGEMENTS

Customers that are unable to pay their utility bill by the due date are encouraged to contact MCSE to see if they qualify for a payment arrangement.

1. Customers cannot make payment arrangements over the phone. The customer must come into the office to sign a payment arrangement form.
2. No arrangements will be made after the delinquent bill due date or once service has been shut off due to non-payment.
3. If the account balance is between \$100 – \$500, a payment arrangement can be spread over two (2) billing cycles.
4. If the account balance is between \$500.01 – \$1,000, a payment arrangement can be spread over four (4) billing cycles.
5. If the account balance is larger than \$1,000.01, a payment arrangement can be spread over six (6) billing cycles.
6. The first payment installment is due at the time of signing the arrangement.
7. The payment arrangement will be expected to be paid along with the current month's bill.
8. For water customers that fail to make payment by due date, the MCSE will stop water service to the property. If service is stopped, the property owner will be required to pay their current balance in full before service is restored.
9. If a customer breaks a payment arrangement, no further arrangements will be offered to that customer.
10. Customers are allotted one (1) payment arrangement every five (5) years unless approved by a supervisor.

## **SECTION 15. APPEALS OF HIGH USAGE WATER BILLS DUE TO LEAKS**

All customers with 5/8 x 3/4 inch meters and all residential customers regardless of meter size who experience unusually high water usage with a corresponding spike in their water bill may be considered for a billing adjustment after completing the leak adjustment form within sixty (60) days of the date of the unusually high consumption and investigation and verification by Medina County Sanitary Engineers (MCSE) personnel that a leak was discovered and repaired.

1. The MCSE will process no more than one (1) adjustment for water leaks every five (5) years.
2. The customer's prior twelve (12) month average usage will be compared to the customer's usage during the leak period to determine excessive water usage to be adjusted.
3. Water portion of the bill will be adjusted by charging for only fifty percent (50%) of the excess water used that exceeds the twelve (12) month average.
4. Consumption must be at least two (2) times the average consumption.
5. Customers must submit a copy of their repair invoice/payment receipt from the company performing the work. The repair invoice/payment receipt should include the address, date, and nature of work. If self-repaired, the customer must provide a brief written explanation of the repairs performed and provide copies of invoice/receipt for repair parts.
6. All customers requesting a billing adjustment in accordance with these guidelines are required to pay their bill in full or make payment arrangements while this form is being processed.
7. For customers with less than twelve (12) months water usage, the MCSE Billing Department will estimate the usage.

8. It will take 1-2 billing cycles for any adjustments to post to your account.
9. Customers that have a current Homestead Exemption are not eligible for a leak adjustment.

## **SECTION 16. ADDRESS CHANGES**

Customers must advise MCSE of any changes that need to be made to the billing address. There is no charge for such changes. **Failure to receive a bill will not excuse late payment or nonpayment of bills.**

## **SECTION 17. FAILURE TO RECEIVE UTILITY BILL**

Once a utility bill has been emailed or placed in the mail, the MCSE is no longer responsible for that utility bill. Payment for that utility bill is due to MCSE even if the customer does not receive it. Presumption of delivery of mailed, or emailed, bills are presumed to be delivered, and a claim of failure to receive a utility bill does not exclude any account from penalty or disconnection.

## **SECTION 18. DISPUTED BILLS AND REQUESTS FOR ADJUSTMENTS**

If a customer believes MCSE has made an error in calculating a utility bill, otherwise disputes the obligation to pay the bill, or requesting an adjustment, the customer, or the customer's authorized representative, may arrange a meeting to discuss the matter, but customer will still be required to pay the bill by the due date if the dispute is not resolved. When disputing a bill, the customer shall:

1. First contact MCSE billing office for clarification.
2. If the customer, after this conversation, still disputes the bill, the customer has the right to file a written appeal to the MCSE Billing Supervisor. This appeal should include the reason for the dispute and any evidence proving the inaccuracy of the bill. Written appeals must be made by the tenth (10<sup>th</sup>) day of the month following the bill date.
3. The MCSE Billing Supervisor will review the appeal and send a written reply within a reasonable amount of time to the address shown in the billing system, noting the decision regarding the appeal and any substantiation for the decision and direction on any further course of action that the customer may take.
4. Billing Clerks are permitted to remove one (1) late fee, per account, within a two (2) year period and will be reviewed by the Billing Supervisor.

## **SECTION 19. OPERATIONAL POLICIES**

### **Overcharge or Undercharge Error**

If MCSE has overcharged or undercharged a customer for service, MCSE will correct this error subject to the following procedures:

1. If MCSE has overcharged a customer for service, MCSE will credit the customer's account, the excess amount and notify the customer by letter. Customers may request a refund of such



excess charges if they were previously paid in full. Credit to a customer's account is subject to the following limitations;

- a. If the time period over which the mistake occurred can be determined, MCSE should credit or refund the excess amount charged to the account for that entire interval, provided that such time period shall not exceed the statute of limitations as set forth in Ohio.
  - b. If the time frame of the problem cannot be determined, MCSE should refund the excess amount charged during the previous 12 months.
  - c. If the exact amount of excess charge cannot be determined, MCSE should take into consideration all information and account history in order to determine the amount due as accurately as possible.
  - d. If an overcharged customer owes a past due balance to MCSE, MCSE may deduct that past due amount from any refund or credit due the customer.
2. If MCSE has undercharged a customer for service, MCSE will collect the additional amount due to MCSE by billing the account. The customer will be notified by letter of any undercharged amount and how the amount was determined. A payment plan or other payment options may be extended to a customer. If a customer receives notice of undercharging and does not contact MCSE in order to make payment arrangements for such amount by the subsequent due date, the account may be shut off for nonpayment in accordance with this policy.
  3. If an undercharge has occurred because of tampering or bypassing a meter or because of other fraudulent or willfully misleading action of the customer, MCSE shall collect the entire undercharged amount in a lump sum and seek such other rights and remedies as permitted by law.

### **Bad Checks/NSF Checks**

1. Upon notification by the Medina County Treasurer of a returned check to MCSE, or in the event an ACH is returned, the payment will be reversed and the charges reapplied to the account. In addition, a NSF fee of \$30 will be applied to the account for each returned check. MCSE will attempt to send notification of returned payment to the customer; however, it is the customer's responsibility to ensure that valid payments are received and that their account remains in good standing. **In the event of a returned payment, a delinquent account will still be subject to disconnection as outlined in Section 10.** After two returned checks, the customer will no longer be able to pay by check, electronic check, or automatic draft from a checking account, and therefore must select an alternate payment method as shown in Section 12.