LAKEFIELD PUBLIC UTLITITIES (LPU)
POLICY FOR UTILITY BILLING AND COLLECTION
LAST UPDATED 1/2026

Section 1. Purpose. The purpose of this section is to establish a policy pertaining to the billing and collection of utility bills.

Section 2. Landlord/Renter Accounts. All accounts for LPU shall be in the name of the property landlord/owner **or** the renter. The renter is responsible for filling out the LPU application and paying the advance payment before LPU will put the renter's name on the account. Until then, the owner is responsible for any utility bills.

Both the owner and the renter shall notify city hall when the utilities need to be switched over into the renter's name and again when the utilities need to be put back into the owner's name after the renter has left. Renters are required to leave a forwarding address and phone number when they leave. When a renter leaves and when it is known by LPU, the utility bill will automatically go back into the landlord/owner's name at the end of the billing cycle, unless otherwise specified.

Landlords/owners will be notified monthly of any delinquent bills the renter may have. If there are any unpaid charges left by the renter and all attempts to collect have been exhausted (within 60 days after the renter's final billing), those charges will then become the landlord/owner's responsibility. If the landlord/owner does not pay those unpaid charges, as state statute allows the charges to become a lien on the property and assessed to property taxes.

In a Contract for Deed situation, the account will stay in the original owner's name until the property has been legally transferred into the new owner's name. At that time, the new owner will need to fill out the LPU application and pay the advance payment.

Section 2.A. Other Billing Account Situations.
In the event of a divorce requiring a name change on the account, a new LPU application will be required. No additional deposit will be required.

In the event of a death of the owner, the account needs to be put into the name of the estate or the spouse of the deceased if they will be remaining in the home and a new LPU application needs to be filled out to ensure all information is accurate and up to date. No additional deposit will be required.

Section 3. Billing Cycle. The LPU uses a monthly billing cycle. Meters are read by the Public Utilities Department at the end of each month, on or around the 25th, with readings transmitted electronically to a handheld reader. Bills are then calculated and mailed by the 30th of the month. If the 30th of the month falls on a Saturday, Sunday, or a Holiday, bills will be mailed on the previous or next regularly scheduled business day, whichever is closest.

Section 4. Bill Due Dates. Utility bills are due on the 15th of the month, approximately fifteen (15) days following the date of billing. For example, meters are read on March 25th -26th, bills are mailed on March 30th, and bills are due by April 15th. **IT IS THE CUSTOMER'S RESPONSIBILITY TO PAY BILLS ON TIME AND IN FULL.**

Section 5. Penalty Calculations. Any utility bill not paid by the established due date will be subject to a penalty charge of 10% of the balance due. This will be calculated no sooner than the 16th day of the month that the bill is due. If this date should fall on a weekend or a Holiday, penalties will be added on the next regularly scheduled business day. A courtesy notice of pending disconnection is mailed to the customer and provides the customer with 10 days to pay the bill or contact the LPU Customer Service Department to make payment arrangements.

Section 5.A. Other Arrangements May include establishing a budget payment plan provided by LPU Customer Service or payments by other agencies on the customer's behalf. Arrangements by LPU Customer Service Department will need a signed plan, which will state one missed payment will result in disconnection of electric and or water.

Section 6. Disconnection Notices. Any account with a delinquent balance on the 16th of the month that includes two months of services, or any portion thereof, will be sent a shut-off notice. This notice will be sent by first-class mail, or in some cases it will be hand delivered. If the 16th falls on a weekend or a Holiday, notices will be mailed on the next regularly scheduled business day. Customers who have received a shut-off notice one time will begin receiving the notice every month in which a delinquent balance of any amount is accrued. Landlords will also receive a duplicate notice for renter accounts that are delinquent.

Section 7. Hearing Before the Utility Board to Address Delinquent Utility Bill.
Customers who feel there is an error on their bill may contact the City Clerk's office to arrange a hearing before the Public Utility board. If a hearing is requested, the customer will be notified of the date and time of the hearing, which will be scheduled for the next regular LPU meeting, generally on the second Tuesday of the month. If the LPU finds that the amount claimed to be owing is actually due and unpaid and that there is no legal reason preventing disconnection, the customer's water and or electric service will be disconnected unless the entire delinquent account balance is paid in full.

Section 8. Disconnection. If all attempts made by the LPU to collect the delinquent utility account have failed after **30** days, disconnection of service will be executed. To restore service, the delinquent balance must be paid in full, along with a $100 reconnection fee during business hours and $200 after business hours.

Section 9. Service Charges. A dishonored payment will be assessed a $30 NSF fee. A dishonored payment made to avoid disconnection, to get reconnected, or for a deposit for service will be assessed a $30 NSF fee and the services disconnected. If two dishonored payments are assessed in a twelve-month period, cash, money order or credit card transactions are required for all current and future payments.