

Utility Customer Policy Manual



Town of Astatula

Effective October 1, 2023

Utility Administration

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**(352) 742-1100 ext. 1
(Mon – Thurs: 9am-5pm)**

**For Emergencies:
(Outside of Normal Hours)**

(352) 742-1100 ext. 9

www.townofastatula.com



Welcome, you are in an area that is being served potable water by the Town of Astatula. Our water utility is constantly striving to serve you better. As a result, we have printed this booklet to help you understand your water utility.

Administrative Procedures

1. **Ask for Identification:** Utility employees who deal with the public are required to carry identification cards with their photograph on it. Our vehicles can be identified with the Town of Astatula logo.
2. **Billing Dates:** Billing is done on or around the last working day of the month. A base charge is made monthly which includes 3,000 gallons. Additional usage is billed per 1,000 gallons at the adopted fee scheduled rate. Bills are sent out by postcard and by email where an email address is provided.

Payment is due on receipt of the bill and is delinquent if it is not received by the 20th of the following month. A late fee of 10% of the bill (shown on the bill) is added, and a late notice will be sent out. If the bill is still not paid by the end of the current month, a letter will be sent noticing the disconnection of the service.

3. **Payment and Location:** Payments can be made by cash or check at town hall and checks (no cash) can be placed in the drop box at the front of town hall. Payment by credit card can be made online at www.ubpay.com. The code is shown on the top of your bill. Credit card payments cannot be made at town hall.
4. **Deposits:** As a new customer opening an account, a deposit based on the size of your meter is required before service can be initiated. For residents, it is \$150.00. This deposit will be returned to you, if requested after twelve, on-time payments or after you have paid your final bill. For a tenant the deposit is \$300.00 and is not returnable until the final bill is paid.
5. **Water Meters:** Meters are generally located in the right-of-way in the front of the property. The meters are ultrasonic and record the number of gallons used. They are read multiple times a day and the data is transmitted using the meter software through the cell towers to town hall computers.
6. **Leak Detector and Detection:** Abnormal usage can be detected by the endpoint software. Customers can register to use the software to allow monitoring of their water usage. It is unlawful for anyone other than a utility employee to work on a meter installation. Should our serviceperson notice that someone has tampered with a meter, the installation or turn-off valve, a meter tampering fee of \$75.00 will be billed to the customer plus any labor and materials for the damage caused.

7. Making a Payment:

- a. May be mailed to P.O. Box 609, Astatula, FL 34705.
- b. May be dropped off at 25009 CR561, Astatula, FL 34705.
- c. www.ub-pay.com (code is on the top right of the bill).

8. **High Bills:** If your bill seems to be higher than usual, compare the actual consumption, not the dollar amount. While the rates may have changed, your consumption should not fluctuate greatly. Almost all homes develop plumbing leaks over time. These leaks can add up to a significant amount of wasted water and a dent in your household expenses. Leaks always get larger and cost you more, in the volume of water and repair bills, the longer you wait to repair them.

Toilet tanks are often the largest source of water losses in your home. They are notorious for their hidden, silent loss of water. Just a small, invisible toilet leak of only two tablespoons per minute, comes to 15 gallons per day, 105 gallons per week, and 5,460 gallons per year! Many toilets quietly run, leaking many unnecessary gallons each day. Please look for leaks prior to requesting a service call. If you still cannot find the cause of your high consumption, then call our office at (352) 742-1100 x 1.

9. Shut-Offs

- a. Transferring service: moving to a new location. Because the meters are electronically read multiple times a day, the town can give you a final bill on any specific day. Just let us know the date that you are moving out. We will not physically turn the water off unless specifically requested to do so. If we do, a \$35.00 charge will apply.
- b. Going away such as very long vacations: Town staff can turn the water off at the property however a \$35.00 charge will apply, and a \$9.42 water availability fee will be billed monthly. A further \$35.00 will be charged to turn the water back on when you return.
- c. Non-payment of bill: If the water is turned off at the property for non-payment, a \$35.00 fee (\$50.00 outside of regular hours) will be charged. Water will only be turned back on after the complete outstanding amount has been paid, including the disconnection fee and \$50.00 fee (\$75.00 outside of regular hours) for the re-connection. If the deposit has been returned, it will have to be repaid before the service is re-connected.

10. **Service Fees:** There are times when you will be billed a service charge to defray costs that are attributable directly to your needs. You are required to pay a service charge when, for example:

- a. Your meter is turned off for non-payment.
- b. Your service is turned off for your convenience (vacations, summer home, etc.)
- c. Your service is reinstated after it has been turned off for any of the above.
- d. Non-Sufficient Funds – Returned Checks.

11. Check writing procedures: Willfully writing a check without sufficient funds in your account to honor it, is a crime in the State of Florida. It is our practice to give you an opportunity to make the check good at our office before we contact the county prosecutor for legal action. A \$35.00 fee will be charged for a returned check to cover the cost from the bank. Service may be disconnected immediately upon notification from the bank and will be regarded as non-payment as in Section 9(c).

12. Service Line Responsibility: Each customer has a separate service line. The shut-off valve is located before the meter in the meter box. The utility is responsible for the cost and maintenance of the line from the water main to the RPZ/check valve. The customer is responsible for the cost of installation and maintenance of the line from the meter to the house.

If your service line develops a leak between the water main and the check valve, the utility will repair at no cost to you. However, you must pay for all repairs if the leak is between the check valve and your home.

13. Rates:

Connection/disconnection fee	\$35.00
Connection/disconnection fee (outside of normal hours)	\$50.00
Delinquent re-connection fee	\$50.00
Delinquent re-connection fee (outside of normal hours)	\$75.00
Penalty for late payment of bills	10% of bill
Meter or Installation Tampering fee (plus labor and materials for damage caused)	\$75.00

UTILITY DEPOSITS:

Resident: Refundable after one year, with conditions	\$150.00
Tenant: Only refundable after final bill is paid	\$300.00
Building Contractor: Refundable on sale of home	\$150.00

UTILITY FEE SCHEDULE – RESIDENTIAL (Based on Monthly Usage)

Residential - 3/4" Meter

Base Charge with 3,000 Gallons	\$22.67
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Rate per 1,000 gallons 3,001-9,000	\$4.12
Rate per 1,000 gallons 9,001-14,000	\$4.86
Rate per 1,000 gallons 14,001 to 20,000	\$5.44
Rate per 1,000 gallons 20,001 to 30,000	\$6.78
Rate per 1,000 gallons 30,001 to 60,000	\$7.80
Rate per 1,000 gallons over 60,001	\$8.96
Water Availability fee - Monthly Fee (No water Usage)	\$10.83

14. Water Conservation Tips:



1. Be mindful of running water.

Don't keep the faucet running the entire time you're brushing your teeth or washing your hands. You may have heard this one before, but it's easy to lazily run the faucet instead of turning it off while scrubbing and then turning the tap back on when you're ready to rinse. Similarly, avoid luxuriously long showers. Try to limit shower time to 10 to 15 minutes maximum to prevent wasting excess gallons of water.

2. Fix leaks as soon as possible.

Look out for leaky faucets, dripping water from shower heads, rusting pipes and signs of water damage. Locate the source of the leak and fix it immediately to avoid wasting more water.

3. Don't let the toilet run.

If you notice that your toilet is constantly running, try replacing the flapper. Simply shut off the water to the toilet, and flush to drain the tank. Unhook the old flapper from the base of the tank and chain, and then replace it with the new one. Turn the water back on, and you're all set. If that doesn't work, it may be time to buy a new toilet. Look for an energy-efficient model.

4. Wash full loads only.

Make sure the dishwasher and washing machine are full before you run them. If you have a unit with energy-saving settings for light washes and smaller loads, take advantage of them. When it's time to invest in a new machine, look for water-saving models with the settings that allow you to adjust to load size.

5. Use a compost bin.

An in-sink garbage disposal needs a lot of water to work efficiently, so opt for a compost bin instead. It's healthier for the environment while reducing water waste and increasing the energy efficiency of your home.

6. Insulate pipes.

Be sure to insulate exposed pipes around the house, especially in the attic and basement. When they're not insulated, it takes longer for water to heat up, meaning it's running for longer periods of time. You can also cover the water heater with insulating blanket to further speed up the process.

7. Run the sprinklers in the morning.

The optimal time to water your lawn is early morning. This strategy prevents rapid evaporation from midday heat, which means less water is required to sufficiently cover the grass. Avoid rogue sprinklers wasting water by spraying the sidewalk or side of the house, instead positioning them to face the grass and landscaping appropriately.

8. Perform routine appliance maintenance.

Proper appliance care and upkeep can prevent potential leaks and wasted energy. This preventative maintenance includes regular cleaning and seeking professional advice when necessary. Plus, if it's time for an upgrade, buy energy-saving products and appliances. According to the EPA, the average household can use about 20 percent less water with water-efficient fixtures and appliances.

Complement your water conservation at home with these ways to increase energy efficiency. With mindful changes, you can reduce your carbon footprint and save money each month.

If you notice spikes in your water bill, serious leaks or other maintenance issues during your water conservation efforts, don't hesitate to call a professional.