

**CITY OF RITZVILLE COVID-19
UTILITY PAYMENT PLAN
RESOLUTION NUMBER NO. 2021-1**

BACKGROUND

On March 19, 2020, Governor Inslee called on public utilities in Washington state to ensure the health and safety of their employees and the public by suspending disconnection tariffs for nonpayment during the COVID-19 pandemic; waiving late fees for customers who are out of work or offering customer payment plans; and expanding bill assistance program for customers who are economically impacted by this emergency.

The Governor's Proclamation 20-23.13, currently amends and extends emergency proclamations including prohibiting all energy, telecommunications, and water providers in Washington state from conducting the following activities:

1. Disconnecting any residential customers due to nonpayment on an active account, except at the request of the customer;
2. Refusing to reconnect any residential customer who has been disconnected due to nonpayment;
3. Charging fees for late payment or reconnection of energy, telecommunications, or water services; and
4. Disconnecting service to any residential customer who has contacted the utility to request assistance from the utility's COVID-19 Customer Support Program.

These prohibitions on disconnecting, refusing to reconnect, and charging late fees in the 20-23.13 proclamation as amended and signed December 8, 2020 are extended until termination of COVID-19 State of Emergency or 11:59 p.m. on April 30, 2021, whichever comes first.

OVERVIEW

A utility payment plan will be extended to customers for the payment of delinquent accounts where the customer attests to the temporary inability to make full payment.

The utility payment plan grants the ability to make payment arrangement to spread the costs of outstanding bills for up to 30 days following the Declaration of Emergency being lifted.

Customers will be required to complete the Customer Utility Payment Plan Agreement Application (Appendix A) attached to this policy. Customers need to attest that, due to COVID-19 related issues, the customer is unable to timely pay his/her/their utility bill.

AUTHORIZATION

The utility payment plan, as approved by the Mayor and the City Council, is effective the 5th day of January 2021. The discontinuation of the utility payment plan program will be based on the City Council's direction/approval with the current payment schedule to not be extended after June 30, 2021. The City Council grants the Mayor and City Clerk-Treasurer authorization to approve each utility payment plan agreement.



UTILITY PAYMENT PLAN AGREEMENT Appendix A

This payment agreement is for utility customers who are in arrears during a Declaration of Emergency related to a pandemic illness or other public health emergency. Payment agreements must be submitted to the City within 30 days following the Declaration of Emergency being lifted.

Account Number _____

Account Name _____

Service Address _____

Phone Number _____

Email Address _____

Account Balance \$ _____

I am unable to pay the account balance in full. I agree to remit payments to the City of Ritzville according to the following schedule. The discontinuation of the utility payment plan program will be based on the City Council's discretion/approval. *The current payment schedule may not be extended after June 30, 2021.*

Payment Date	Payment Amount
	\$
	\$
	\$
	\$
	\$
	\$
	\$
	\$
	\$

I understand that if payment is not received by the City on the promised payment dates, and I have not contacted the City to discuss further options, my service may be shut off in accordance with applicable law and legal requirements. Once service is shut off, the full balance due, including both past due and current amounts, plus a \$50.00 reconnection fee must be paid in order to restore service. I agree, by signing below that I am the property owner and I am aware that this agreement is not valid until signed by an authorized staff member.

Tenant Name (if applicable) _____

Tenant Signature _____ Date _____

Property Owner Signature _____ Date _____

All payment agreements must be signed by the property owner.

Please return completed payment agreement to Ritzville City hall by email at kim.smith@ritzville-wa.us or by City Hall drop box or mail at 216 E. Main Ave, Ritzville, WA 99169.

City Clerk-Treasurer Signature _____ Date _____