



POLICY #: FS-49 Water and Wastewater Collection Policy

Corporate Services

Approval Date: November 17, 2020
 Approval Authority: Council
 Effective Date: March 2021
 Revision Date/s: N/A

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is:

1. To ensure the municipality is in a position to manage water and wastewater accounts receivable effectively by utilizing collection activities to minimize debts owed to the municipality.
2. To provide consistent and equitable treatment to debtors.
3. To establish the protocol for collection of accounts in arrears including the schedule of certain collection activities.

Policy Statement:

Norfolk County recognizes the importance of strong fiscal management policies that incorporate consistent business practices and efficiencies that are fair to water and wastewater customers, property owners and to the municipality.

Definition:

Primary Account Holder – the person, persons or business name to which the account is registered. A primary account holder may be the property owner or a tenant/occupant.

Secondary Account Holder – a landlord/property owner registered with the billing agent for the purposes of receiving notice of a tenant's arrears only.

Property Owner – a holder or proprietor of land, landowner

Landlord – the owner of a house, apartment, condominium or real estate which is leased to a tenant or lessee.

Tenant – a lessee, a person who leases property or who occupies land or property leased from the owner of the property.

Implementation Procedure:Water and Wastewater Account Collection Process

1. Norfolk County has a service agreement with a billing agent for the provision of water and wastewater billing and account collection services. This policy is administered by the billing agent pursuant to the service agreement.
2. Invoices are issued by the billing agent and include a payment due date.
3. Six (6) days following the due date if the account remains unpaid an automated reminder via telephone will be issued to the primary account holder.
4. Thirty (30) days following the due date if the account remains unpaid a reminder notice will be issued to the primary account holder.
5. Forty-five (45) days following the due date if the account remains unpaid a notice will be issued to the primary account holder and to the secondary account holder if applicable, warning of pending transfer to the applicable property tax account for the service address.
6. Sixty (60) days following the due date if the account remains unpaid the billing agent will notify Norfolk County to add the outstanding amount to the property tax account. A notice will be issued to the primary account holder and to the secondary account holder, to confirm the account has been transferred to the applicable property tax account for the service address.
7. An administration fee related to the tax roll addition/adjustment will be added to the tax account in accordance with the current user fee By-Law.
8. Payments by mail will be processed by the billing agent as of the date the payment is received. The customer is responsible to ensure that payments are received on or before the payment deadline.
9. A service charge shall be applied by the billing agent if a payment is dishonoured by the bank for any reason.

Rental Properties

Where a landlord-tenant relationship exists the account may be registered to the landlord (property owner) or the tenant. Regardless of whether the account holder is a tenant or landlord, accounts in arrears for sixty (60) days will be transferred from the billing agent's receivable ledger to the applicable property tax account for the service address.

Where the account holder is the landlord (property owner) notices will only be sent to the landlord at the address filed with the billing agent.

Where a tenant is the account holder notices will be issued to the tenant at the address filed with the billing agent. The landlord may register with the billing agent as a secondary account holder to be notified when the account remains unpaid for forty-five (45) or more days.

Notices to the secondary account holder will include the applicable service address and the amount due. Notices to the secondary account holder will not include the tenant's name or private information.

Outstanding Debts prior to March 2021

Arrears accumulated by a tenant account holder prior to March 2021 will be transferred to the collection agency if not paid or in the event of a defaulted payment arrangement.

Arrears accumulated by a tenant account holder prior to March 2021 will not be transferred to the property owner's property tax account.

All previous debts for Norfolk County water and wastewater must be paid in full before a new account may be set up with the billing agent. Proof of payment or confirmation from the collection agency will be required.