

Policy and Procedures for the use of Fire Hydrant Meters

February 2011



**City of Wichita Falls
Public Utilities**

STEPS REQUIRED TO OBTAIN FIRE HYDRANT METERS

A customer desiring to obtain a fire hydrant meter, under the listed terms, should follow these steps;

Step 1: Go to Room 402, Public Works Department, 1300 7th Street.

- Make initial application.
- Read and agree to (by signing) the **“Terms and Conditions for Use of Fire Hydrant Meters”**.
- Present a Deposit Check made out to the City of Wichita Falls, in the amount of \$2000.00

Step2: The Public Works Secretary after noting the Deposit Check Number on the Application (Official Use Only Box) takes the Customer, Application and Deposit Check to Utility Collections to create the account.

- Utility Collections will accept the Deposit Check and present the customer with a receipt and the Public Works Secretary with a copy of the receipt. The Public Works Secretary is to attach the copy of the receipt to the Application.

Step 3: The Public Works Secretary provides the customer with the following documents:

- A copy of the signed Terms and Conditions for Use of Fire Hydrant Meters, pointing out the specific areas for How to Request an Extension and How to Close an Account.
- A copy of the “Fire Hydrant Meter 90-Day Extensions Request” form
- A copy of the “Fire Hydrant Meter Move/Close Account Request” form

At this point, the customer has completed their portion of application process.

Step 4: Utility Collections will create the account in the Billing System and e-mail the Public Works Secretary the account number, later that day. The Public Works Secretary will note the account number on the application (Official Use Only Box) and send a copy of the application to the Utilities Operations Manager.

Step 5: The Utilities Operations Manager coordinates with Water Distribution for the setting of the Fire Hydrant Meter and the filling in of the remaining “Official Use Only” portion of the Application.

Step 6: Water Distribution notifies Utility Collections of the Fire Hydrant Meters “Beginning Reading”.

Step 7: If the Meter has to be moved at any time during the 90 day duration, the Operations Manager will notify Water Distribution of the new location. Water Distribution will notify Utility Collections after the meter has been moved so they may note the account and bill the customer the \$50 service charge on the next bill.

Step 8: Eighty calendar days into the meter usage, the Public Utilities Operations Manager will send a letter to the customer informing them that a 90-day Extension Request has not been received and that Water Distribution will be removing the meter on a certain date.

Step 9: Water Distribution will remove the meter and inspect it, the RPZ and the hydrant for damage. After the inspection is complete, Water Distribution will e-mail the Utilities Operations Manger, as well as Utility Collections, the final meter reading and a list of any damages along with costs to repair. The Utilities Operations Manager will notify the customer in writing of any damages to the meter, RPZ or hydrant and their associated costs.

Step 10: Utility Collections will close the account, send the customer a final bill based on the final reading, as well as return the customers Deposit minus any damage costs.

Terms and Conditions for Use of Fire Hydrant Meters

The City of Wichita Falls recognizes the short-term need of contractors and selected other persons to take water from a City owned/operated fire hydrant, therefore a Fire Hydrant Meter may be provided by the City of Wichita Falls, under the following conditions.

Failure to comply with the requirements outlined below may result in removal of the Fire Hydrant Meter and cancellation of the account.

1. Application Process

At the time of making Initial Application (See Form A: Fire Hydrant Meter Use Application) with Public Works, the permittee is required to provide the following information :

a) Name, address, telephone number(s) and a copy of a photo I.D. of the firm representative that will be responsible for the meter, the reduced pressure zone (RPZ) backflow prevention device, the fire hydrant and the surrounding area.

b) Billing information, to include the name and address of person or firm to be billed for monthly charges.

c) Name and phone number of local contact for the Company that is making application for the Fire Hydrant Meter.

c) Address where meter is desired to be set.

NOTE: *The City of Wichita Falls Water Distribution Division will evaluate the requested fire hydrant and determine if it is feasible to place a Fire Hydrant Meter at that location. If not, then Water Distribution will coordinate with the permittee for an alternate fire hydrant location.*

NOTE: *The City of Wichita Falls will only allow one Fire Hydrant Meter to be installed on a Fire Hydrant. If the desired location already has a Fire Hydrant Meter installed, either by the requesting customer or another customer of the City of Wichita Falls, then the requesting customer will need to select an alternate fire hydrant location.*

2. Duration

Fire Hydrant Meters are issued for periods not to exceed 90 calendar days. At the end of 90 calendar days, the City of Wichita Falls will remove the Fire Hydrant Meter.

Use of a Fire Hydrant Meter for more than 90 calendar days must be pre-approved by the Utilities Operations Manager, or converted to a permanent tap. The permittee must request a 90 calendar day extension from the Utilities Operations Manager, in writing, at least 10 calendar days before the expiration of the initial 90 calendar day period. The permittee must use the City's Extension Form when making their requests. (See Form B: Fire Hydrant Meter 90-day Extension Request)

Any Fire Hydrant Meter with no usage for a period of (2) months will be investigated by the Water Distribution Division.

- If the meter is found to be inoperable, then Water Distribution shall determine if the meter was tampered with or operated incorrectly. If so, then Section 8 (below) will apply.
- If the meter failed due to fault of the permittee, then a new meter will be set at no charge.
- If the meter is found to be in good operating condition, then it will be removed for zero usage by the City of Wichita Falls and the deposit refunded to the permittee.

3. Use

All water withdrawn from the City of Wichita Falls Public Water System is required to be metered.

Texas Administrative Code § 290.44 Water Distribution (d)(4) Each community public water system shall provide accurate metering devices as each residential, commercial, or industrial service connection for the accumulation of water usage data.

Therefore, any water drawn from a fire hydrant can only be done so through a Fire Hydrant Meter. Straight hook-ups to a fire hydrant are not allowed. Any hose and/or other straight connections found on City owned/operated fire hydrants will be removed and retained by the City of Wichita Falls. An unmetered straight connection to a City owned/operated fire hydrant may be grounds for filing of a complaint in the Municipal Court and/or loss of service.

The Fire Hydrant Meter and RPZ shall be furnished by, and will remain the property of the City of Wichita Falls and may not be assigned or subleased by the permittee, nor shall the permittee allow the use of the Fire Hydrant Meter by any other party.

City Ordinance Section 106-96 (Control of meters and equipment, tampering with prohibited)

The Fire Hydrant Meter is issued only for the use described within the application, and shall not be used to create a permanent water source or attached in any manner to private plumbing.

4. Deposits and Fees

A \$1900.00 equipment deposit and a \$100.00 billing deposit are required to be paid to Utility Collections at the time of establishing the account.

City Ordinance Section 106-129 (Fees for Services Provided by the Public Utilities Division), paragraph (c)

The permittee will be charged for damages caused by improper use or neglect of the Fire Hydrant Meter, the Reduced Pressure Zone backflow prevention device or the associated fire hydrant.

The following charges will be assessed monthly against each installed meter and should be paid by the due date shown on the bill.

- a) Standard rate for amount of water used.
- b) A standard readiness-to-serve charge, based on the meter size (3").
- c) A service charge of \$50.00 for each time a meter is moved or temporarily removed (for any reason, except drought recall).

Note: *This service charge will not apply to the initial setting or the final removal of the Fire Hydrant Meter.)*

5. Cross Connection Control

The potential for cross-connection is of particular concern to the City of Wichita Falls. Therefore, the City of Wichita Falls provides a Certified Reduced Pressure Zone (RPZ) backflow prevention device with all of its Fire Hydrant Meters.

The City will properly install the Fire Hydrant Meter and associated RPZ, making sure it is properly braced and continuously supported in accordance with Figure 1 (*Detail for Support of Fire Hydrant Meter RPZ Assembly*) immediately downstream of the Fire Hydrant Meter so as to prevent damage to the hydrant and meter.

City personnel will remove any Fire Hydrant Meter found attached to a hydrant without an approved RPZ. Additionally, if City personnel find that the City provided RPZ has been tampered with in any way, the Fire Hydrant Meter will be removed immediately. Such actions by the permittee are a violation of the City of Wichita Falls City Code and will result in enforcement actions taken against the permittee, including forfeiture of the permittee's deposit.

City Ordinance Section 106-96 (Control of meters and equipment, tampering with prohibited)

6. Setting/Moving/Removing

The permittee is not allowed to remove or move a Fire Hydrant Meter or its associated RPZ, at any time.

The City of Wichita Falls Water Distribution Division will secure the Fire Hydrant Meter to the fire hydrant, using a chain/cable and a lock. Only those City employees that are authorized by Public Utilities will set, move and remove Fire Hydrant Meters.

If the City of Wichita Falls Public Works Department or Utility Collections Division finds that the permittee has cut the City's securing devices and the Fire Hydrant Meter has been moved to another location, then the City of Wichita Falls will confiscate the Fire Hydrant Meter and the permittees deposit forfeited along with the privilege of using another Fire Hydrant Meter for 12 months.

Requests to move a Fire Hydrant Meter or to close an account are to be in writing (no telephone calls) from the person or firm responsible for the meter. The permittee must use the City's Form (See Form C: Fire Hydrant Meter

Move/Close Account Request) when making their written requests to move or close the account. The written request are to be submitted to Public Utilities Manager either by mail (Room 402, Public Works Department, Memorial Auditorium, 1300 7th Street, Wichita Falls, Texas 76307) or by fax (940-691-4121).

The Fire Hydrant Meter will be removed upon non-payment of the monthly bill. If the bill is not paid by the close of the last business day of the month following the billing date, Utility Collections will notify Water Distribution to remove the Fire Hydrant Meter. The permittee will be required to pay the balance due, and submit another deposit.

7. Reading

Fire Hydrant Meters will be read by the Utility Collections Division between the 20th and 25th of every month.

If the Fire Hydrant Meter registers a negative reading (meter register has moved backwards), then the permittee will be charged for the negative reading.

8. Damage/Tampering/Theft

The permittee is solely responsible for the care of the Fire Hydrant Meter, the Reduced Pressure Zone backflow prevention device and the associated fire hydrant, as well as their proper operation, until the meter is removed by the Water Distribution Division. For proper operation of the fire hydrant, see Attachment A (Fire Hydrant Operating Procedures).

The permittee is responsible for the proper winterization of the Fire Hydrant Meter, the Reduced Pressure Zone backflow prevention device and the associated fire hydrant during periods of freezing weather.

The permittee shall not attempt to repair or adjust the Fire Hydrant Meter, the Reduced Pressure Zone backflow prevention device or the associated fire hydrant in any manner. The permittee shall notify the Water Distribution Division (940-761-7680) immediately upon the discovery of any damage to any of the City's equipment.

Any damage to the Fire Hydrant Meter, the Reduced Pressure Zone backflow prevention device or the associated fire hydrant, as well as any missing parts, that will result in any repair costs to the Fire Hydrant Meter/RPZ/Hydrant, including a restocking or ordering charge and labor charge shall be deducted from the Fire Hydrant Meter damage deposit.

If the Fire Hydrant Meter and/or RPZ is stolen while in the possession of the permittee, the permittee will bear the full responsibility for the cost of the Fire Hydrant Meter and/or RPZ.

a) The theft should be reported immediately to the Wichita Falls Police Department and to the Utility Collections Division (940-761-7414).

b) The account will be closed and the deposit will be applied for failure of the permittee to return the meter.

c) A Police Report must be submitted to Public Works in order to receive a replacement meter.

If the Fire Hydrant Meter has been stolen before the time of the monthly reading, an estimate of water usage will be determined by the City, based on the history of usage, size of project and other factors. The City's estimate of the amount of estimation and the cost of such water service shall be final and unappealable.

9. Water Conservation

All hoses and devices used on the outlet side of the Meter/RPZ assembly must be in good working order as to prevent leakage and water waste from the Fire Hydrant Meter. Failure to keep hoses and devices in good working order will result in the permittee being given 5 days' written notice of the City's intention to shutoff water service. If after the 5 day period the deficiencies have not been corrected, then the Water Distribution Division will pull the Fire Hydrant Meter from the job site (and a \$50 service charge applied, see Section 4c) until such time as the permittee can correct the deficiencies.

City Ordinance Section 106-188 (Approved fixtures required to prevent water waste; notice to discontinue service)

It will be at the discretion of the City of Wichita Falls to restrict the amount of water withdrawn from all Fire Hydrant Meters or recall/remove Fire Hydrant Meters due to the declaration of an appropriate Drought Stage detailed within the City's Drought Contingency Plan.

City Ordinance Section 106-186 (Water shortage/authority of department)

10. Acknowledgment

Permittee acknowledges the terms and conditions set forth in this document regarding the use of Fire Hydrant Meters, Reduced Pressure Zone backflow prevention devices and City owned Fire Hydrants.

Permittee further agrees to the terms and conditions.

Signature

Date

Printed Name

Attachment A:

**Fire Hydrant Operating Procedures
For
Fire Hydrant Meters**

- 1) The Permittee is responsible for following these procedures and is responsible for teaching the proper operating procedure to his hydrant users. The Permittee may be held liable for the repairs, and have other enforcement actions taken against them for not adhering to these procedures.
- 2) Prior to operation of the fire hydrant, the permittee shall verify that the hydrant, meter and RPZ are secure and not movable. In the event that they are unstable, damaged, leaking or unsafe, the permittee should immediately stop using them and report it to the Water Distribution Division (940-761-7680).
- 3) The Permittee shall use a fire hydrant wrench specifically designed and manufactured to open and close fire hydrants. The permittee is not allowed to use any additional torquing device (cheater bars, etc.) to open or close a fire hydrant.
- 4) The Permittee shall operate the fire hydrant properly by slowly opening the hydrant (counter-clockwise) to a fully open position when in use, and slowly closing the hydrant (clockwise) to a completely closed position when not in use.
NOTE: When a fire hydrant is first opened, the barrel or housing of the hydrant fills with water. Fire hydrants are designed with a drain (weep hole) at the base of the hydrant, which allows any water contained in the hydrant to drain, which keeps, a) the water from stagnating in the barrel of the hydrant, b) the internal parts of the hydrant from rusting or seizing, and c) the hydrant from freezing during cold temperatures. A hydrant operated in a partially opened or closed position will cause water to constantly blow out from the hydrants drain into the bedding material that supports the hydrant, thus possibly causing damage to the hydrant and creating a safety hazard.
- 5) To minimize wear and tear, and minimize damage of hydrants, the permittee may not use the hydrant valve to regulate the volume or flow of water withdrawn from the fire hydrant. The fire hydrant may only be utilized to turn water on/off. The permittee shall control the volume of water withdrawn from the hydrant using a permittee provided gate valve, installed downstream of the City's RPZ.
- 6) Fire Hydrant use is a privilege for your needs and this Utility will not tolerate abuse of this privilege. This includes water theft, vandalism, tampering, leaving caps off, or damage caused by neglect.

Figure 1 Detail for Support of Fire Hydrant Meter RPZ Assembly

