CITY OF WELLS
Rules and Regulations
All Departments

Payment types accepted: Cash, Credit/Debit Card, Check, and Money Order. Make checks/money orders payable to: The City of Wells. The following requirements must be followed when paying a water bill with the City of Wells.

1. Personal checks (No two-party checks) ($30.00 return check fee applied to all returned checks. Services will be disconnected after a 10-day limit to pick up a return check.)
2. Credit Card payments are processed through our website, www.cityofwells.us; there is a 3% charge for this service. (Stopped credit card payments will be treated as a returned check.) **(REVISED 4/1/2024)**
3. Money Orders
4. Limited payments in the form of loose change:
   a. All change must be rolled into a money roller; No plain paper allowed.
   b. Lose change over $10.00 will not be accepted.
   c. Only the exact amount of the roll will go towards the bill.
   d. Each money roller must have the customer's name and account number legibly written on it.

Warning: DO NOT USE doxo.com to pay a City of Wells utility bill.
If doxo.com is used and payment is received late, late fees will be applied. Also, if the bill is not paid by the 25th of the month, the account will be disconnected!

Water payments are due on the 1st day of every month. On the 17th of every month, a 10% late fee will be added to all unpaid bills. The final day to pay is the 25th of every month. On the next business day following the 25th of the month, a $100.00 non-payment fee will be added to all unpaid bills, and customer services will be disconnected from the next business
day. If the next business day falls on a Friday, the disconnect will be moved to Monday. (NO EXCEPTIONS).
Failure to receive a bill does not waive any due dates or late fees.

Please pay bills at Wells City Hall during regular business hours. Mailed payments will be posted by the United States Postal Service, not the date written on the check.

When mailing payments from the Wells Post Office, please use the inside top mail slot marked local mail. The outside blue box will be sent out of town to be processed and delay payments from being received.

The city drop box is located on the front south end of the city hall building.

All rules and regulations are set by the city council. Discussion of these rules & regulations can be done with the Council at the regular meetings held on the 2nd Monday of every month promptly at 7:00 p.m.
(Neither the city employees nor the mayor can make changes to the rules and regulations).

City Of Wells Ordinances

The City of Wells has established ordinances to protect the citizens of Wells, Texas. It is the responsibility of the citizens to follow these ordinances. The ordinances are available at the city hall or on the city website. Each resident living in the City limits of Wells is required to follow the city ordinances established by the city council. The Wells Police Department will enforce the city ordinances.

Visit https://cityofwells.us/ordinances

Trash Collection Rules & Regulations

Each water customer is provided with a trash cart by the City of Wells; below are the trash collection rules.

1. Trash service is mandatory within the city limits.
2. Trash service is billed one month in advance. Failure to pay for trash service with your bill will result in the termination of the account.
3. Trash collection runs every Wednesday morning; the Dumpster collection runs Monday and Friday.
4. All trash cans must be out on the road by 6:00 am during the months of June, July and August and at 7:00 am all other months. Trash cans not out by the road will not be collected; the city right of way is the trash collection location. Republic Services employees will not cross the ditch line to collect trash containers.
5. Only Republic Services trash containers will be collected; no personal cans may be used.
6. All trash must be bagged before being placed in the trash container; loose trash will not be collected; trash bags must be in the cart and not sitting on the ground. If the cart is full, place them on top of the cart.
7. All trash bags must be tied so that the trash stays in the bag.
8. Loose trash must be removed from the cart by the customer and placed in a bag.
9. No loose trash will be collected from the bottom of the trash cart; lift trash trucks are rarely used to collect trash.
10. No yard debris will be collected from the cart.
11. No heavy or metal materials should be placed in the trash cart.
12. Sharps such as medical needles should be placed inside an aluminum can or milk jug and then placed into your trash bags to prevent accidental needle sticks. No medical waste allowed.
13. Trash carts with large amounts of trash at the bottom of the cart will not be collected until the cart is cleaned out.
14. Cardboard boxes should be flattened before being placed in the container.
15. Additional trash carts can be obtained from the city with a $2.00 + tax per month charge; limit two.
16. Senior citizens and disabled customers can request trash pick-up without the placement of a can on the street. Contact the city hall for this service.
17. Rinsing your trash cart on occasion will keep insect larvae from living in your trash cart.
18. All trash carts must be removed from the roadway and placed behind the city right-of-way 48 hours after trash collection. Any violations will be reported to the city hall by Republic Services. The city will mail out a letter explaining the violations and how to prevent them from occurring. The city will charge a $10.00 fee for each trash cart left in the city ROW; the utility department will check each Friday morning and report violators to city hall. (Established 9/1/2020; Revised 10/1/2023)
19. The city only provides free bulk trash service in the spring and fall. Bulk items are not allowed on regular Wednesday trash pick-up, and customers should not place these oversized items out on the roadway. This service will consist of two large roll-off dumpsters located behind city hall for the citizens of Wells to dump their bulk trash. Other times the customers will need to dispose of their bulk trash at the county dump located at Cherokee County Solid Waste, Airport Rd, Rusk, TX 75785 (903) 683-6455

If your cart becomes broken or unusable, please contact city hall for a new cart. If you have trouble rolling the cart out to the road, please contact the city hall to be placed on the city's special pick-up list for elderly and handicapped customers.

Rules & Regulations

1. Water meters are read as close to the 25th of each month as possible. Bills are mailed out on the last day of the month; customers with a Wells mailing address will receive their water bills the next day due to the postmaster not sending these bills out to be processed. Customers with mailing addresses outside of the Wells zip code will receive their bills when the postal service sends them out to be processed and back to the associated zip code on file with the City. The City of Wells has no control over the amount of time it takes the postal service to deliver a customer's bill to them.

2. If the customer moves out of Wells, the City will obtain a final reading. The customer's final bill will be removed from the service deposit on file. Any refund will be processed at the end of the following month. (Example: Moving out in January, the expected refunds will be processed on the last business day in February). If someone other than the customer pays the water deposit, they will receive a refund when the account is closed. If there is a balance left on the account, the deposit will go to the balance and will not be refunded to the person that made the deposit.

3. Services that are disconnected for non-payment will have the deposit applied to cover the outstanding balance on the 30th day of disconnection; at this time, the City will require a new service deposit, the first month's trash payment, and any outstanding balances to be taken care of before services are reconnected.

4. The City of Wells allows each customer for 30 days to pay their final bill after their deposit is applied to their account. If this bill is not paid, a 30% collection charge will be added to the customer's account, and the customer will be sent to the city collection agency.

5. The City may terminate a customer's utility service for the customer's failure:
   a) To pay a delinquent account; or
   b) To comply with deposit requirements; or
   c) To comply with rules and regulations; or
   d) Failure to allow a city employee on your property to access a water meter; or
   e) To make payment for a bill initially paid by a check or credit card returned by a bank for any reason; or
   f) To provide the City with a valid mailing address; or
   g) To pay for trash service that is billed; or
   h) The discovery of the existence of a meter tampering device or diversion of service, a known dangerous condition, or any unlawful use of service. These findings will be filed with the local law office, and theft of services will be charged to the violator.

6. One meter is required for each residential, commercial, or industrial service connection. Failure to have the proper connections will result in the termination of a customer's utility service. This does not apply to a single travel trailer or storage building located on the customer's property and not used as a dwelling. A dwelling is defined as a structure that houses anyone for longer than 30 days per year. The water and sewer service is the property of the City of Wells; connecting any building to the utility without permission from the City is a violation of the rules and regulations. No existing dwellings will be grandfathered. **(REVISED 11/13/2017)**

7. Before any structure is connected to the City's water and/or sewer lines, customers must first get permit approval from the city hall. All structures are described as but are not limited to a 1) Travel Trailer, 2) Motorhome, 3) Utility Trailer, and 4) Storage Buildings. The permit will require a copy of the person making the connection's driver's license, the license plate # of the item (if applicable), and a tentative removal date. The limit for allowing such items to be connected to city utilities is 30 days. After 30 days, the structure will require it on the water tap. Extensions will be considered depending on the situation. (See also Item 6). **(REVISED 6/11/2018)**

8. There is no charge to transfer services to another address while living in the City. If a customer transfers their water deposit to a new address, we will obtain the last meter reading at the old address and a new meter reading at the new address. This usage will follow the customer from the old address to the new address and will reflect on the bill. If the customer requests to have both meters on during the moving period, this will only be allowed for five business days.

9. The City requires that all secondary service lines have 36" of clearance between water mains and secondary services in the utility easements. All lines shall be marked with an electrical marking ribbon 12" below ground level.

10. All residences on the City of Wells utility system are required to have a personal shut-off valve on their side of the meter; at the property owners' cost; this valve will be installed within the 2-foot ROW of the meter.
    The City of Wells will charge residential owners $50.00 to install the person shut-off on the property; the meter will belong to the property owner and will be serviced and maintained by the property owner. Customers are only allowed to turn the personal shut-off valve. The meter shut-off can only be turned off by City employees. When a shut-off valve is installed the $50.00 charge will appear on the customer's utility bill and will be payable with the payment made that month.
    a) If a customer requests the City to install a personal shut-off the City will make the installation and the charge will be billed to the customer.
    b) If the customer's meter is replaced and a personal shut-off valve isn't on the property one will be installed, and the charge will be billed to the customer.
    c) When the customer calls to have the meter turned off due to a leak and there isn't a shut-off valve at the meter one will be installed, and the charge will be billed to the customer.
    d) If the customer has a shut-off valve up by their home and that shut-off valve is not usable the city employees will install a shut-off valve at the customer's meter at the customer charge at the meter one will be installed, and the charge will be billed to the customer. **(ADDED 3/8/2021) (REVISED 9/12/2022).**

11. Water meters are the property of the City of Wells; at no time should they be accessed by anyone but a city employee. Any damage made to a water meter by the property owner/customer will be the responsibility of the property owner/customer to pay for replacement or repairs. The replacement cost plus a $25.00 labor fee will be added to the owner/customer's water bill. Turning a water meter back on that was initially turned off by the City due to the property being vacated, a leak being detected, or due to an outstanding water bill being due is a violation of the City's policy and procedures. These findings will be filed with the local law office, and theft of services will be charged to the violator. Customers should never drive over a meter; the meters cannot hold the weight of a vehicle and will break. If this happens the customer will be charged for all repairs.

12. Utility employees shall be allowed access to the customer's property for reading meters, testing water quality, line installation, maintaining meters, removing meters, and using utility flush valves. Any conditions that may hinder access include, but are not limited to, fences with locked gates, vehicles or objects placed on top of meters or meter boxes, and unrestrained animals. The City will require that any of the items listed be removed from the meter access within five business days.

13. The location of the water meter will be at the discretion of the City of Wells water and sewer superintendent and or the Council.

14. The City of Wells water service for the rental property owner (Landlord) applies to these established rules and regulations. A rental property owner (Landlord) letter listing other items concerning this rule will be supplied to the rental property owner (Landlord). See the Landlord's letter for a list of these rules and regulations.

15. Installation of a new water/sewer tap will provide placement of the meter and a hookup stub for the customer to hook up to the water meter. A shut-off valve must be installed by the customer or the customer's contractor. If the service meter needs to be moved due to unforeseen location conflicts, the customer will receive the following services. Rule # 8 will apply to this service.
    a) Notice in writing stating the nature of the work and the date the work will be done.
    b) Placement of water meter in a new location; the customer will be responsible for hooking their service line up to the new meter and installing a personal shut-off valve.
    c) Water taps, Sewer taps, and water meters are the property of the City of Wells. These tap fees are not refundable and do not give ownership of the property taps or water meter.

16. Upon the request of a customer, the City will calibrate the meter without charge to test the accuracy of the customer's meter every year. If the initial test shows that the meter is reading correctly, another request during the same year for a calibration test will cost $10.00 and will be charged to the named customer's account. The customer will not be charged for any failed test. Meters that fail the calibration test will be replaced. After three months of usage on the new meter, the City will go back three months before the meter is changed out to determine if a refund is warranted. Credits applied to the customer's account will reflect on their bill and will only be refunded if the customer terminates their water account. If a water meter must be sent to the manufacturer for calibration and the meter is calibrated correctly, the customer will be responsible for all charges. If the calibration shows that the meter is not working correctly, the City will pay all charges.

17. If the customer asks to observe the calibration test, the test shall be conducted in the customer's presence or the presence of the customer's authorized representative. The test shall be done during the utility's normal working hours at a time convenient for the customer. Whenever possible, the test shall be done on the customer's premises but may, at the utility's discretion, be done at the utility's testing facility.

18. All driveway culverts belong to the property owner and should be cleared of debris time can natural waste be burned in the ditches; this will cause excess debris to be washed into the culvert. If the culvert is damaged for any reason, it is the property owner's responsibility to make any culvert repairs or replacements. The City is not responsible for damaged culvert repairs.
    The City of Wells will install an approved culvert for all property owners. The fill dirt that is dug out will be used at the time of installation. If the customer has an additional fill product on site this material will be used.
    At no time shall a property owner fill in the city drainage ditch to allow access to the property; a culvert must be installed.

19. Water leaks on the customer's side of the meter are the customer's responsibility; repairs must be made promptly to save the customer money on their bills and to stop any water waste. If the leak is directly at the meter on the customer's side, the city utility crew will make the repairs so that no damage is done to the water meter. If the customer makes the repair and damages the meter in the process, the customer will be charged for a replacement meter.

20. Customers must report any problems that occur on the city's side of the lines to the city hall. The office employees will then place a work order on the customer's behalf. The work order will be turned over to the water-sewer employees to address the reported repairs. If it is found that the problem is on the customer's side of the line, the employee will then notify the customer either by phone or door hanger of the findings of the work order. Work orders are addressed in the order that they are received.
21. The account holder is solely responsible for the payment of their water bills. There will be no adjustments to reflect a landlord paying any portion of the bills. This kind of payments arrangements will be between the tenant and Landlord only and will in no way be the responsibility of the City of Wells. If the customer has a water leak that causes an excessively high-water bill, the customer will be responsible for payments, and any bills over $200.00 will be given a 3-month payment plan. This plan will be paid for in combination with the monthly water bill that is charged.
22. No application, agreement, deposit, or contract changes may be assigned or transferred without written or face-to-face consent from the account holder. Please, direct changes to the city hall employees.
23. The City of Wells reserves the right to refuse service to anyone. Foul language is prohibited in city hall; the use of foul language or improper business conduct can result in the local authorities being called and a criminal no-trespassing warrant filed against the violator due to causing a hostile work environment for the city employees and customers.
24. All properties serviced by the City of Wells without active service billing will have the meter on the property removed from service. There will be a $150.00 installment fee to be paid by the property owner when a new account is activated, and a utility deposit is paid. The City will have three (3) days to reset the meter from the date the deposit is paid. This includes services terminated by the property owner.
25. RVs, camper trailers, and any other mobile devices may not use city utilities to fill their holding tank, and waste from RVs, camper trailers, and any other mobile devices cannot be released into the city sewer if the device is being used as a permeant dwelling without also having a tap and account with the City. **(REVISED 06/11/2018)**
26. All living-in dwellings located inside the city limits of Wells are required to have both water and sewer services with the City of Wells. At no time may any livable dwelling located inside the city limits of Wells be connected to a personal water well or a personal septic system. Personal water wells may be used for watering livestock and irrigation only. **(REVISED 06/11/2018)**
27. All wastewater is required to go into the sewer system; this includes all gray water. Gray water is not allowed to run onto the ground by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ). Gray water is defined as wastewater from showers; bathtubs; handwashing lavatories; sinks that are used for disposal of household or domestic products; sinks that are not used for food preparation or disposal; and clothes-washing machines. Any customer that has gray water running on the ground must make the necessary repairs for their gray water to run into the city sewer system. **(REVISED 06/11/2018)**
28. No free water or wastewater service shall be rendered to any person. No utility connection shall be received without the payment of the deposit amount set by the City as herein set forth or as otherwise established by ordinance.

29. It is the responsibility of all customers to provide the City with the correct contact information. Mailing addresses, home phones, cell phones, and email addresses are used to send notices to all customers. The City is required by the State of Texas to notify utility customers of any event that will affect their service. All contact information is confidential and will not be given out by the office staff. **(REVISED 11/13/2017)**

30. Any person violating the provisions of a Utility Ordinance shall be deemed in violation of a Class C misdemeanor and, upon conviction, shall be punished by a fine not to exceed Two Hundred ($200.00) Dollars for each violation. **(REVISED 06/13/2016; ADDED 6/11/2018)**

31. All property on the Wells utility system is required to follow Ordinance No. 2020-1: Rules & Regulations Governing Plats and Subdivision of Land. Customers with active service are considered grandfathered to the ordinance for the service that they currently have. This only applies to active service at the time the ordinance was passed. In the event, there is more than one meter on the property, and there is a change to the property such as 1) a change of ownership, 2) additional dwelling being added to the property, 3) reactivation of a dormant second meter, the property the owner is then required to subdivide the property as stated in Ordinance No. 2020-1. **(ADDED 2/17/2020)**

32. All services installed for new homes, mobile homes, or replacement of existing services must be inspected by TCEQ. Customer Service Inspection Certification can be obtained at the city hall and must be turned into the city hall to be placed on record for TCEQ inspections. Property owners may utilize a licensed plumber with a water supply protection specialist (WSPS) endorsement or a certified water operator with a customer service inspection (CSI) license to conduct the inspection and complete the form. **(REVISED 09/09/2019)**

33. The City of Wells requires that all meters serviced by the city pay a base rate bill to keep the meter on the property. Customers that own vacant homes (that do not live in them for more than 3 consecutive months a year) can receive base rate billing. There will be no trash service at the home and sewer will not be charged unless there is usage on the meter during the service month that is billed.

34. Rental property that is vacant for more than 30 days will have a base rate bill mailed to the property owner until the property is rented or sold. Trash service will not be billed; sewer will not be billed unless there is usage on the account. Failure to pay the base rate bill will result in the meter being pulled from the property and a $150.00 fee applied to the collections account to have the meter reinstalled.

35. The city ROW is located from the center of the street 25 feet towards the residential property. At no time can this area be obstructed preventing the city utility department from getting access to the water and sewer lines that are in this area. This includes permanent parking of vehicles, parking non-operational vehicles in the ROW, storage of junk and debris in the ROW, building of a fence, and building of any permanent structure in the ROW is prohibited. The city council will mail a letter to anyone that is in violation of ROW section, allowing 30-days for the property owner to correct the violation. If the property owner does not comply with the request the city will remove the problem at the cost of the property owner.

36. Vacant City streets and alleyways are the property of the City of Wells; these areas are not maintained by the city for public use but if the area has any dead trees or vegetation that needs to be removed to prevent damage to the private property around the vacant streets and alleyways the city will take care of it. Adjoining properties may use the vacant streets if other community members are not blocked from accessing the area, the property owner will be required to maintain any portion that they use for personal use with approval of the city council. Trees may only be removed from vacant streets and alleyways at the approval of the city council. No permanent structure may be built on vacant city streets or alleyways. If a fence is built it must be able to be removed if a request is made by the city council.

37. All Dwelling/Building connected the the City of Wells Serwer System shall have a sewer clean out installed between the dwelling/building and the city manholes. These sewer clean outs must be at least 6 inches above ground and be maintained by the property owner, be secured with a sewer cap to prevent debris and rainwater infiltration into the city sewer system. If at any time the sewer pipe or sewer cap becomes broken the property owner will be required to make any needed repairs.

38. All customers connected to the City of Wells Sewer System are required to report all sewer discharges to City Hall immediately after locating the sewer discharge that has encountered the ground.

Customer Complaints Rules & Regulations

Customer complaint forms are available at city hall. The City shall make a prompt and suitable investigation into the complaints made in writing and will advise the complainant of the results thereof. Results will be documented and kept on file in the city hall.

Customers objecting to the actions, policies, or decisions of the City concerning service and billing may informally appeal to the water and sewer superintendent or the city secretary to attempt a resolution administratively.

If the problem is not resolved by an informal appeal, the customer may request a formal appeal hearing with the city council by requesting to be placed on the agenda for the next regularly scheduled council meeting. Such a request will not be granted when the customer's only complaint regards the:

a. Determination of reasonableness or the denial of a deferred payment agreement; or customer's financial inability to pay for services rendered, and there is no dispute as to the accuracy of the billing or the customer's liability; or design and fairness of the rate schedule.

Pending the formal appeal, the customer's service shall be continued if not terminated before a valid formal appeal. In the event service was terminated before a valid formal hearing, service will be reconnected upon payment of the non-payment and/or reconnection fee. The non-payment and/or reconnection fee will not be charged if the Council's decision is in favor of the customer in whole or part.

The City shall provide a copy of the "Rates and Regulations" to each new customer upon initiation of a contract for utility service. Copies will be available to customers upon request. Rules and Regulations are subject to changes made by the city council at any designated regular council meeting or any special council meeting.