



**HUNTSVILLE UTILITIES**

**ELECTRICITY • NATURAL GAS • WATER**

# **CUSTOMER CARE MANUAL**



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**CUSTOMER CARE MANUAL**

Huntsville Utilities (HU) has been successfully serving the community for over seventy-five years. HU is a non-profit organization owned by the City of Huntsville. We strive as a company to do what is best for our customers and employees. Our goal is to be the best utility in the country.

The purpose of this manual is to establish consistent and equitable policies governing the establishment of utility service, billing, deposits and termination of service for all HU customers. All aspects of this manual will be applied as of the effective date.

**Section I: Acquiring Service**

**Application:** Each prospective customer desiring service will be required to apply for service either online, in person, via fax or mail. (Sec 26-86, 26-421, 26-534, 26-562) Applicants must be at least nineteen years of age (unless emancipated, married, divorced, widowed, etc.) to establish service. The circumstances and credit of the applicant may determine the method required for application. Two forms of identification are required to establish service. One of the forms must be a primary form of identification. In addition, the applicant must pay a non-refundable service charge and deposit. (Sec 26-91, 26-429, 26-646) A copy of the application will be provided to applicants who apply in person.

**Acceptable Identification**

<b>Primary Forms</b>	<b>Secondary Forms</b>
Valid State Issued Driver's License	Social Security Card
U.S. Military Identification	Birth Certificate (certified copy)
U.S. Passport	Medicare or Medicaid card
Gun Permit with photo	W-2 form
Valid State Issued Non-Driver Identification	Individual Tax Identification Number (ITIN)
FAA Issued Pilots License	Selective Service Identification Card
Matricula Consular ID card or similar form of ID issued by other National government	Gun, Hunting or Fishing Permit without photo
	Voters Registration Card
	Employee Identification Card
	Naturalization Document

If the service location requires any new services/meters based on the anticipated load and/or demand, the Engineering Services Department may require additional information from the customer in order to determine fees, aid to construction amounts and establish contracts, if applicable.



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**Secondary Account Holder:** One secondary account holder may be listed on the account with the primary account holder's permission. This person will be authorized to discuss or transact any business on the account and may be subject to an identity check prior to being added to the account. Only people listed on the account are authorized to discuss or transact business on the account.

At the request of the customer, the secondary account holder can be notified of possible interruption of service if an account becomes delinquent.

**Deposit:** A deposit or suitable guarantee not exceeding twice the highest (previous or anticipated) bill (amount will be rounded down to the nearest dollar) may be required. Deposits accrue interest monthly (from the date the deposit is paid) based on the one year constant maturity treasury rate. The deposit including the interest earned on the account over its term will be applied to the customer's account at termination and refunded to the customer after any remaining bills are paid. Deposit refund checks will not be cashed by HU. The deposit balance (including earned interest) as well as the adequacy of the deposit amount can be reviewed by HU as necessary. In addition, the customer can review the deposit amount and/or interest earned. (Sec 26-87, 26-453, 26-581)

**Deposit amount determination:** The standard deposit amount for a residential account is \$300. After maintaining service for three years with excellent payment history, \$200 of the \$300 deposited will be credited to the customer's account. The following situations will determine if the amount varies from the standard.

If an applicant meets one of the following conditions, their deposit will be reduced to \$100:

- 1) The customer has had service with HU within the last five years with an excellent payment history (no past due letters, disconnections from non-payment, returned checks/drafts or any outstanding HU debt) for the last three years of the five year time frame. The same criterion applies to transfers of service from one residence to another.
- 2) New customers who apply online and receive an excellent credit score from our third party credit reporting agency.
- 3) The applicant provides a properly executed Guarantee of Account with HU. The Guarantor must have a current account with HU that has been active and in good standing for at least three years.

If the applicant has outstanding HU debt that they incurred during the last seven years the deposit amount will either be \$300 or an amount not exceeding twice the highest bill at the location where service is being requested, whichever is greater. This deposit is maintained for the life of the account. The applicant may be required to pay or setup an agreement to pay the outstanding debt prior to establishing service.

Customers filing for bankruptcy that include HU as a debtor will be required to open a new account and provide a deposit based on the above guidelines. (U.S.C. Section 366(b))



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**Non-Residential Customers:** Security deposits are required for non-residential customers. A deposit or suitable guarantee not exceeding twice the highest (previous or anticipated) bill (amount will be rounded down to the nearest dollar) may be required. Non-residential accounts will be reviewed annually to ensure the deposit is sufficient based on consumption. In addition, an adequate securities agreement, proper application and appropriate identification, may be required. The type of application that is required is based on the type of business. The applications are available on HU's website ([www.hsvutil.org](http://www.hsvutil.org)), in person or by contacting HU.

### Documents Required for Each Type of Entity:

**Sole Proprietorship:** Application, Driver's License, Social Security Card and W-9

**Corporation:** Application, names and addresses of corporate officers, certificate of incorporation and/or articles of incorporation and W-9

**General Partnership:** Application, names and addresses of partners, partnership or operating agreement and W-9

**Limited Partnership:** Name and address of general partner, limited partner, officer/director, partnership or operating agreement and W-9

**Limited Liability Company:** Names and addresses of members, articles of incorporation or State of Alabama certificate and W-9

**Limited Liability Partnership:** Names and addresses of members, articles of incorporation or State of Alabama certificate and W-9

**Church:** Name and address of pastor/clergy, name and address of treasurer name and address of trustee 1 and 2, articles of incorporation or State of Alabama certificate and W-9

**Transferring Service:** Service(s) may be transferred from one location to another within the HU service area. A service charge will be assessed to the account for transferring service. Customers requesting a transfer may be required to pay any outstanding account balances. If collection activity (no past due letters, disconnections from non-payment, returned checks/ drafts or any outstanding HU debt) has not occurred on the account, residential service may be transferred without an additional deposit.

**Service Setup:** Standard business hours for HU field employees to connect services are between 7:30 a.m.-4:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. Customers requesting same day or after hours service may pay an additional service charge. In order for services to be set the breakers must be off and house numbers must be viewable at the service location. If HU has to return because the breaker was on or the house numbers were not viewable, a fee may be applied to the customer's account. In addition, an inspection or a certificate of occupancy may be required prior to services being set. The customer does not have to be home for services to be turned on or off.

**Temporary Service:** Customers requiring electric service on a temporary basis may be required by HU to pay all costs for connection and disconnection incidental to setting up and



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removing service. (Sec 26-85) A temporary service pole may be required in order to establish temporary service. If so, the customer will be required to complete a contract which will state the terms of establishing temporary service. A rental charge, service charge, installation/removal fee and refundable deposit maybe required depending on the situation.

**Lack of service restoration/setup:** No member of the customer's family, or anyone else living in the house or building or on such property with the consumer where services were cut off shall have the right to make or offer to make deposit for services, or to demand that HU turn on the services at such place, so long as the delinquent customer lives in the house or on the property and the bill or charges, plus a reasonable charge for turning on and off the services, is paid. (Sec 26-107, 26-431, 26-647)

### Section II: Information to Consumers

**Service Practice Policies Access:** This manual is available to anyone applying for service, on HU's website ([www.hsvutil.org](http://www.hsvutil.org)) or a copy may be requested by contacting HU.

**Rates:** HU rates for Electric, Water and Gas are available at each HU branch where services can be established. Moreover, rates are published on HU's website ([www.hsvutil.org](http://www.hsvutil.org)) and updated as frequently as they change. Any rate changes that are initiated by HU will be communicated to the public through HU's website.

**Privacy:** HU will not sell nor provide customer data to any private organization without the prior written consent of the customer unless subpoenaed by a court with proper jurisdiction. This applies to all personal customer information. Customers have the right to see all records pertaining to their account and receive a printed copy without being charged for these records. Customers have the right to request that extraneous personal information (e.g. SSN, phone number, etc.) be removed from their account. The removal of this data can impact the ability of HU to notify the customer of emergencies, outages and account problems in a timely manner.

Additional information regarding the security of personal information is listed in HU's Identify Theft Policy which is available upon request.

**Bills:** Customers may request a copy of their monthly consumption for any available month.

**Bankrupt Accounts:** Upon receipt of notice of bankruptcy, the customer's account(s) is(are) placed in pre-petition and post-petition status. The amount owed prior to bankruptcy is placed in pre-petition status, and the amount owed after bankruptcy is placed in post-petition status. If the bankruptcy is dismissed, the full amount owed, both pre-petition and post-petition, is placed on the customers' account. An additional deposit may be required, as stated in the deposit policy above.

**Water Leak Adjustments:** Customers may request an adjustment for a high water/sewer bill once a hidden or underground leak has been verified, repaired and repair documentation can be supplied to HU. The following information must be provided to HU to determine if an adjustment will be processed:

- 12-digit Account Number



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- Customer Service Address
- Exact Date of Repair
- Description of Leak and Exact Location of Repair

A web form is available on HU's website ([www.hsvutil.org](http://www.hsvutil.org)) where customers can provide their supporting documentation.

HU does not make adjustments for leaks associated with fixtures such as commodes, faucets, showers, etc. (Sec 26-632)

*Note: Customers outside of the city limits, including Madison County or other water utilities should contact the utility who provides their water/sewer service to inquire about possible adjustments.*

**Water Quality:** HU maintains records of testing on all sources of water to the city service area (Tennessee River and various wells). A copy of these results may be obtained from HU. Water quality statements are distributed annually to HU's water customers. For questions regarding water quality or testing please contact the water quality lab at 256-650-6374.

**Water Conservation:** HU can implement city ordinances when necessary to limit customer usage of water. The stages of conservation can range from voluntary conservation to water emergency. (Sec 26-672-679)

**Seasonal Service:** Seasonal service is provided to customers that maintain non-residential service during certain portions of the year for the purpose of operating a farm or cotton gin. Offices, outdoor lighting and other business functions as defined by HU during the account setup or review process are excluded from this rate class.

**Due Process:** Each customer has the right to due process.

**Payment Agreements:** HU considers disconnecting service for non-payment a last resort and would prefer to work out a satisfactory payment agreement. Customers will be provided, whenever possible, with the opportunity to enter into an installment plan to allow them to keep their monthly bills current and pay off any balance in arrears over an agreed period of time.

**Cash Only Customers:** Customers who have had three returned checks will have their account placed on a "cash only" basis. Accounts with a "cash only" status can make payments with cash, money order or certified check. If no collection activity occurs during the six months after the account has been placed on a cash only basis the customer will be allowed to pay with any method of payment.

**Account Review:** Each customer may request an account review if they believe their bills are incorrect. The review will be administered by the corresponding supervisor depending on the basis of the dispute. The Customer Service Manager or Customer Relations Manager will serve as the second step in the process if the supervisor is unable to resolve the dispute. A three member management panel will be established to review the account as the third and final segment of the process if the customer is dissatisfied with the manager's decision. Service will not be



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terminated for the disputed amount(s) during the review process; however undisputed charges must be paid in full. To request this review, customers must complete the account review form while the account is still active and prior to termination of service. The form can be downloaded from HU's website ([www.hsvutil.org](http://www.hsvutil.org)) or requested from HU. Documentation of billing inaccuracies must be provided by the customer.

**Meter Tests:** Customers have the right to request that HU complete an analysis of their meter. If the test shows the meter to be inaccurate based on industry standards, an adjustment will be made to the customer's bill for the thirty days prior to the test. If the meter is accurate, the customer will be charged a meter testing fee. (Sec 26-99, 26-427, 26-608)

For information on how to read your meters please contact HU or visit HU's website ([www.hsvutil.org](http://www.hsvutil.org)).

**Agency Assistance:** Customers should contact HU for a list of agencies that are currently available to assist customers with their bill or call 211 for additional information.

**Average Monthly Billing (AMB):** AMB is an optional program designed to allow for a more even distribution of utility payment amounts by making averaged payments based on a twelve month history. This results in a fluctuating amount due each month (or rolling average) and eliminates considerable deferred balances from being carried forward. The AMB program is not designed to save money nor is it designed for customers that need to make payment agreements on monthly bills. If customers discontinue the program, or close their account, any deferred balance will be due in full.

Qualifications:

- Residential Customer
- No Collection Activity
- Zero account balance
- Twelve months of continuous billing at current address
- No payment agreements are provided while on this program

To learn more about this program please contact HU. To determine if you qualify for this program please complete the form on HU's website ([www.hsvutil.org](http://www.hsvutil.org)).

**Due Date Assistance:** This program provides a fixed due date on the fifth of each month for customers receiving benefits from Social Security or retirement. Customers can pay on or before this date without incurring a penalty.

To qualify, customers must meet one of the conditions listed below:

- Receives Social Security benefits
- Receives disability income
- 55 years old and retired
- 62 years old & over





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Additionally the utility account must be in the same name as the person receiving the benefits and the meters must have a monthly read date between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> of the month.

To enroll upload the following documentation on HU's website ([www.hsvutil.org](http://www.hsvutil.org)) or bring the documentation to HU for assistance:

Legal Identification (Driver's License, Non Drivers ID)  
Proof of Social Security, disability, retirement or other qualified benefits

**Project Share:** Project Share launched in November 1988 to help elderly, disabled and handicapped customers pay utility bills during the winter months. One hundred percent (100%) of funds contributed to Project Share go directly to those in need.

Customers can help by:

- Making an additional contribution of \$1.00 or more when they pay their utility bill.
- A summary of previous year's contributions are listed on each customer's January & February utility bills.
- All contributions are tax deductible.

To designate a contribution please contact HU or sign up through HU's website ([www.hsvutil.org](http://www.hsvutil.org)).

**Round Up:** Customers can sign up to round their utility bill to the next highest dollar and contribute the difference directly to local schools. Funds go directly to the Schools Foundation, which supports public education of local area schools.

To enroll in this program please contact HU or sign up through HU's website ([www.hsvutil.org](http://www.hsvutil.org)).

**Green Power Switch:** This program is a simple way for HU's customers to support regional renewable energy. HU customers have the opportunity to buy blocks of green power which is added to their utility bill and ensures 150 kilowatt hours of electricity is generated by a renewable resource such as wind, solar or biomass.

To enroll in this program please contact HU or sign up through TVA's website (<http://www.tva.gov>).

**Energy Surveys:** HU will complete a home energy conservation survey at the request of the customer. Energy and money saving tips will be offered at the conclusion of the survey.

**Generators:** Customer should contact HU with information on any pending and/or completed generator installations. An increasing number of homeowners are using generators to supply power during outages. Improper operation and installation can lead to electrocution, carbon monoxide poisoning and even death to members of the customer's household and utility employees. HU recommends that customers



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contact a licensed electrician to determine the generator size and proper installation configuration necessary for their needs.

**Streetlights:** In order to have a streetlight installed on a public road, customers must contact the appropriate city department or county commissioner (City of Huntsville Engineering, City of Madison Public Works or Madison County Commissioner). HU does not provide security lighting on personal property. If a streetlight is on all the time, out or blinking, please contact HU. It may take up to ten working days to repair a streetlight depending on the workload of the repair department.

**Tree Trimming:** One of the leading causes of power outages are tree branches and limbs that fall on electric utility wires. Due to this fact, HU and its contractors must trim trees around the lines to try to prevent power outages. All trimming is done in accordance with the approved principles of modern arboriculture and tree surgery using lateral and natural tree trimming methods from the American National Standard Institute (ANSI).

The safety of our customers and employees is our biggest concern. If a power line has fallen please do not approach it, simply contact HU at 256-535-1200. For additional safety tips please see the Safety Tips section below.

### Section III: Maintaining Service

**Billing:** Bills are sent out monthly based on each customer's meter being read every 28-34 days. Failure to receive a bill does not release the customer from the obligation. In cases where a full billing cycle is not feasible every effort is made to send out a prorated partial bill. Bills may be estimated if a reading could not be completed or if the reading appeared abnormal. Bills are due fifteen days from the date on the bill. If the due date of the bill falls when HU is closed (weekend, HU holiday, etc.) the next HU business day becomes the due date. (Sec 26-89, 26-90, 26-423, 26-424, 26-641, 26-462)

Occasionally, bills are held for review by the Billing Department if the dollar amount or usage data appears to be out of line. In some cases, the meter will have to be re-read and a new bill generated. This may result in delayed delivery to the customer. If a customer does not receive a bill in a timely manner they should contact HU. For more information on how to read your bill please refer to HU's website ([www.hsvutil.org](http://www.hsvutil.org)).

*Note: HU furnishes billing services for sewer and trash for the City of Huntsville; sewer for Owens Cross Roads; water and sanitation for Madison County; trash for the City of Madison and water, sewer, and trash for New Hope. For questions regarding these portions of your bill please contact the corresponding entity.*

**Minimum Monthly Bill:** The availability charge for each service constitutes the minimum monthly bill for all customers. (Sec 26-145, 26-454-469, 26-631)

**Estimated bills:** To ensure billing accuracy, a limit has been established for the number of consecutive times a meter reading can be estimated. The following is the established limit for each service:



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- electric (other than demand meters) may not be estimated more than one consecutive time
- gas meters may be not be estimated more than one consecutive time
- water meters may not be estimated more than two consecutive times

The word “Estimate” will appear on the bill if the bill has been estimated. There are situations where all measures to get an actual reading were exhausted and a reading was simply not obtainable. In these situations a bill may be estimated more than the maximum numbers of times listed above. The Billing Department will determine if this is applicable during their monthly review of estimated bills.

**Collective Billing:** Customers that have multiple non-residential accounts in the same name may request that their bills be consolidated into one collective billing statement with one due date and payment each month for all accounts. Customers can contact HU or complete the web form listed on HU’s website ([www.hsvutil.org](http://www.hsvutil.org)) to request their accounts be placed on collective billing.

**E-Billing:** Customers may sign up for e-billing through their online account. HU employees can also set this service up for customers at their request. Customers who have setup their account for e-billing will receive an email each month when their bill is available for review.

**Outages:** Customers should check their breaker or fuse panel for any open breakers or fuses if their power is partially or completely out. If none are found, customers should report outages to HU as soon as possible. It is possible that HU has turned off services to complete repair work or add services. (Sec 26-426, 26-531, 26-541) HU will notify customers of planned repair work whenever feasible. An outage map is available on HU’s website and app. Outages and updates are posted on HU’s Twitter and Facebook pages as well.

**Backbilling:** If a customer is over or undercharged for their bill HU will reimburse or charge the customer for the difference for a period of up to six years.

**Payments:** Payments may be made to HU through the following methods: (fees, if applicable, depend on method of payment)

- Automatic Monthly Bank Draft, Mail, Person, Drop Boxes, Phone
- Credit cards through SpeedPay
- Western Union
- Wal-Mart
- Mobile App

**Account Refunds:** Customers can request refunds on active accounts that have a credit balance. The refund will be issued to the account holder and mailed to the mailing address on the account. The customer can also request that the refund be applied to another account where they are transferring service.

**Late Fees:** A late fee of five percent will be applied to any amount not paid by the due date that is under \$250 and a one percent late fee will be applied to any amount over \$250 for each service. (Sec 26-146, 26-454-469, 26-644) Late fees are assessed to



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encourage customers to pay their bills in a timely manner. Each customer is entitled to one late fee removal per calendar year at the customer's request. Payments sent by mail that are received after the due date will not be subject to late fees if the incoming envelope bears a postmark date on or before the due date.

**Owner Allocation:** The Owner Allocation Program is a contractual agreement between HU and property owners. It was designed to assist owners of residential rental property and property management groups who have multiple properties and want to avoid the inconvenience of connecting/reconnecting services between tenants as well as related fees.

Only the owner or owner's agent can request services or make changes to the account. When utilities are taken out of the tenant's name, services remain active in the owner's name. The owner is responsible for reading the meter(s) at each location whenever there is a change in occupant and reporting the meter reading to HU. Due to the rotation of occupants in rental properties, the owner will not incur a service charge in between tenants. In addition, the owner may request that the properties be placed on collective billing.

**Access:** HU's employees (including contractors) shall have access to customer property at all reasonable times for the purpose of reading meters, testing, repairing, removing or exchanging any or all equipment belonging to HU. (Sec 26-102, 26-426, 26-540) If a customer has a locked gate on their property that HU would need to get through to read their meter the customer can provide HU with the combination or a copy of the key. The information on where to send combos/keys can be found in the Contact Information section below. Or the customer can contact HU (256-535-1253) to find out their meter reading date each month and have the gate unlocked and pets secured so their meter can be read.

**Property:** All meters, service connections, and other equipment furnished by HU, shall be, and remain, the property of HU. Customers shall provide a space for and exercise proper care to protect the property of HU on their premises. (26-422) In addition, in the event of loss or damage to HU's property arising from customer neglect, the cost of the necessary repairs or replacement shall be paid by the customer. (Sec 26-105)

**Excavation (Digging):** Alabama state law requires that anyone engaging in excavation activities notify underground facility owners prior to the start of excavation so they can locate their utilities. Customers should call 811 to have their utilities located. A locate ticket will be completed after the customer calls 811. The ticket number must be maintained by the customer in order to provide evidence of compliance with the law. The customer's yard will be spray painted a different color for each service located (yellow-gas, red-electric, blue-water).

### Section IV: Terminating Service

**Termination:** Failure to pay, setup a payment agreement or honor prior agreements to pay bills due to HU can result in termination. In addition, checks returned on customer accounts for payment can result in termination. HU will provide reasonable notice to customers via telephone, mail or an employee will leave a notice on the customer's



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premises prior to terminating service (only one notice will be provided for each bill). When available, notices will be provided to customers via text message or e-mail. The notice will inform the customer of the account review procedures available to them that are described above. Following the notification, if no payments are received or agreements are made by the time stated on the notification, service(s) will be terminated. Failure to receive a final notice does not relieve the customer of the obligation to pay.

Once a customer has met their contractual obligations they may request that service be disconnected or transferred either online, in person or over the phone. (Sec 26-103) Services will be disconnected on the business day following the request, if workload permits. Customers who have disconnected their service with HU may request a letter of credit to provide to their next utility company.

HU may decide to terminate service if the customer prevents HU from obtaining reasonable access to HU equipment, violation of and/or noncompliance with HU rules/policies and failure of the customer to fulfill their contractual obligations for service. (Sec 26-104)

Reasons why service may be suspended without notice are listed below:

- a) HU has determined a hazardous condition exists on the customer's premises. In the event services were disconnected due to a hazardous condition through no fault of the customer, the reconnect charge will not apply.
- b) The customer is utilizing equipment in such a manner as to adversely affect HU equipment or HU's service to others.
- c) Someone tampered with the equipment furnished by HU.
- d) Unauthorized usage or the appearance of unauthorized usage of HU service has occurred. (Sec 26-104)
- e) A signed mandate or order from a municipality, county, law enforcement and/or court of competent jurisdiction over the location where the service is being provided.

\*\*\*Reconnection fees and other service charges may apply for services disconnected with or without notice. An additional fee will be assessed for after-hours reconnection and returned checks. (Sec 26-91, 26-425, 26-428-430, 26-643, 26-645, 26-646) A list of potential service charges is available on HU's website ([www.hsvutil.org](http://www.hsvutil.org)).

**Name Change:** Customers who have had a legal name change can bring the corresponding documentation into one of HU's offices to have the name changed on their account.

**Theft of Services:** HU monitors usage throughout its system and makes every effort to ensure that HU customers are not charged for service they do not use. To that end, HU also strives to make sure customers are not abusing the system by stealing utility services. Anyone who suspects that a person is attempting to use electricity,



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natural gas or water without paying for it should contact HU. If HU discovers someone is stealing services they will be fined and billed for the services that were stolen. Moreover, HU may elect to prosecute for theft of service.

**Extreme Weather:** Customers will not be disconnected for non-payment during cases of extreme temperatures (high or low) based on the criteria outlined in the Extreme Weather Policy below.

### Extreme Weather Policy

During extreme weather conditions, when the National Weather Service forecasts temperatures below 32 degrees or over 100 degrees Fahrenheit, a HU representative will visit customers whose service is set to be terminated in an attempt to collect any delinquent charges. (*Note: Fees will be placed on the customer's next bill for this attempt.*) The customer's service will not be terminated for non-payment until weather conditions improve. Disconnections postponed due to extreme weather will be resumed when weather permits and no further notification will be provided. Services already terminated for non-payment will not be reconnected due to extreme weather.

### Critical Care Policy

**This policy applies to water and electric services provided to HU customers.**

Customers with medical conditions requiring certain types of electrically operated 24/7 home life support equipment may be placed on the critical care list. The following conditions may qualify a customer for the critical care list:

- Tracheotomy patients on breathing machines/respirators
- Children (under five years old) on apnea monitors
- Patients on home hemodialysis units
- Patients on breathing respirators who otherwise would be hospitalized if the equipment was unavailable

Electrically powered oxygen does not meet the criteria listed above due to the fact that bottled oxygen can be obtained in emergency situations. All scenarios will be reviewed by HU's physician to determine if the customer should be placed on the critical care list. The customer's medical representative may submit the critical care request form to HU via fax or mail (attention Customer Service Manager). The critical care request form can be found on HU's website ([www.hsvutil.org](http://www.hsvutil.org)) or the customer can request a copy by contacting HU. The customer will receive a letter notifying them of HU's decision.

Customers should not be disconnected if they are on the critical care list. However, no guarantee can be made by HU that service(s) will not be interrupted to critical care list customers due to unforeseen circumstances. Every reasonable effort will be made to prioritize the distribution of services to critical care customers. The customer is responsible for arranging emergency backup devices for their medical equipment in the event of a service outage.

Customers are given thirty days to setup a payment plan or make other arrangements for housing or medical care. Services already terminated for non-payment will not be reconnected due to a customer being added to the critical care list.



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If the customer must be transferred to another facility during an outage the Emergency Management Agency (256-427-5130) may be able to provide assistance.

### Section V: Collection Activity

**Collections:** Once an account has reached ninety-one days past due a Collection Specialist is assigned to try to collect on the account. Inactive accounts that have not received payment in full or setup a payment agreement may be pursued in court after the Collection Specialist has exhausted all efforts to collect from the customer.

**Delinquent Charges:** Delinquent charges owed by any member of the consumer's family or anyone else living in the same house/building or on such property with the consumer will be charged back to the current active account. (Sec 26-107, 26-431, 26-647)

**Damage Work Orders:** In the event that utility property has been damaged and requires repair HU may require the responsible party to reimburse HU for the cost of the repairs. Damage work order charges will not be added to a customer's regular utility bill.

### Section VI: Miscellaneous Regulations

**Point of Delivery:** The point of delivery is the point, as designated by HU, on the customer's premises where the service becomes the responsibility of the customer. (Sec 26-88)

**Single Point Delivery:** If service is supplied to the same customer through more than one point of delivery or at different voltages/pressures, the supply of service at each delivery and metering point and at each different voltage/pressure shall be separately metered and billed. (Sec 26-147, 26-454-469)

**Customer Wiring:** All electrical customers wiring must conform to HU requirements and accepted modern standards, as exemplified by the requirements of the National Electrical Safety Code and National Electrical Code. (Sec 26-84)

**Interruption/Allocation of Service:** HU will use reasonable diligence in supplying electric current, but shall not be liable for breach of contract in the event of, or for loss, injury or by negligence. (Sec 26-97) HU may also have to allocate the amount of electricity/gas that is made available to HU's customers due to an emergency or other event causing an electric/gas shortage. (26-98, 26-452)

**Fluctuations in Voltage:** Electric services must not be used in such a manner as to cause unusual fluctuations or disturbances to HU's system. HU may require any customers causing fluctuations in voltage to install a suitable apparatus, at their own expense, which will reasonably limit fluctuations. (Sec 26-92)

**Load:** Due to the fact that HU equipment has load restrictions, customers must notify HU of any changes or additions in load and receive HU approval for these changes. Failure to provide notification and obtain approval may render the customer liable for any damage to lines or equipment caused by the additional or changed installation. (Sec 26-93)



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**Standby/Resale Service:** All purchased electric service (other than emergency or standard service) used on the premises of each HU customer shall be supplied exclusively by HU, and customer shall not, directly or indirectly, sell, sublet, assign, or otherwise dispose of the electric service or any part thereof. (Sec 26-94)

The permission and consent of the city and HU is required for any person having charge or control of any hydrant or water pipe connected to the water system to allow or permit any other person to habitually take, draw or use any water from the hydrant or water pipe as the other person's primary source of water. (Sec 26-533)

**Trouble Notification:** Customers should notify HU immediately if their service is unsatisfactory for any reason, or if there are issues caused by defects, trouble or accidents affecting the supply of electricity. (Sec 26-96)

**Non-Standard Service:** Customers shall pay the cost of any special installation necessary to meet their particular requirements for service at other than standard voltages, or for the supply of closer voltage regulation than required by standard practice. (Sec 26-95)

### Section VII: Tips/Contact Information

#### Safety Tips

**Electric:** Electricity is the most widely used energy source in the world, however it is often taken for granted. Most accidents involving electricity can be traced to three causes:

1. Lack of knowledge about using electrical equipment
  2. Careless use of equipment
  3. Faulty electrical equipment or cords
- Keep ladders, kites and other tall equipment out of power lines and out of trees that are near power lines. Do not try to trim a tree that is in a power line. Contact HU to request tree trimming by using the form on HU's website ([www.hsvutil.org](http://www.hsvutil.org)).
  - Check electrical cords to ensure they are in good shape. If they are frayed or damaged in any way, do not use them. Also, shield electrical cords from excessive wear or damage. Place them where they will not be stepped on or subject to heat or water. Do not pull on cords to unplug them (pull from the plug), and do not twist or kink cords.
  - Turn off lights when changing a bulb and unplug appliances to clean or service them.
  - Turn appliances off or unplug them when not in use.
  - Never use an electric appliance while you are wet, standing in water or in the rain.
  - Never use an electric appliance that may be damaged or has a damaged electric cord.
  - Teach children to stay away from electrical outlets and not to play with electric appliances. If an appliance has a third prong (grounding prong) on the cord, make sure it is plugged into an outlet or extension cord that will accept the third prong. Never remove the third prong so that the appliance can be plugged into a two prong receptacle.
  - In case of an electrical fire, call the fire department, disconnect the breaker that provides electrical service to the appliance on fire, or disconnect the main breaker. If you can safely unplug an appliance that is on fire then do so. Never try to extinguish an electrical fire with water. Use baking soda or an extinguisher rated for electrical fires. It is a good idea to make sure all adults and older children in the home know where the breaker panel for the home is





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and how to disconnect the main breaker. Breaker panels should be labeled as detailed as possible.

- In the event of an electrocution, disconnect the power if the source is known and accessible. In the event a person is touching a downed power line or other damaged facilities belonging to HU, call HU immediately at 256-53-LIGHT (256-535-4448) and be prepared to give the location (address). Never touch a person that is being electrocuted or in contact with electric power lines until power has been disconnected. To assist before power has been disconnected, could cause the person assisting to be seriously or fatally injured. Call for medical help (local hospital or 911), and if knowledgeable in first aid, administer.

### **Natural Gas:**

- Never store household chemicals or combustible materials near a natural gas appliance.
- Always follow manufacturer's instructions when operating or doing work on gas appliances.
- Keep burners on all natural gas appliances clean.
- Make sure flames burn blue. A yellow flame indicates inefficient burning and can be hazardous.
- Natural gas, in its native form, is odorless, colorless, and tasteless. HU injects a very detectable odor into the natural gas before it enters the local pipeline system. The odorant smells like rotten eggs.
- If the odor of natural gas is detected, ventilate the building. If the odor is very strong, get out of the building. Do not light matches or operate any equipment including electrical switches, light switches or on/off switches. These can easily cause a spark. Call the Natural Gas Department to report a natural gas leak at 256-53-LIGHT (256-535-4448).
- Have the furnace or central heating unit checked at least once a year, before the heating season, to ensure it is operating efficiently.
- Always have natural gas equipment serviced by a professional.
- Never block the return air vents as this can lead to an unsafe condition in the home.
- Make sure there is at least one multipurpose fire extinguisher in your home or place of business.
- Do not use your stove or oven for anything other than cooking (for instance, do not use one to heat your home).

Please visit HU's website for additional safety tips ([www.hsvutil.org](http://www.hsvutil.org))



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### WINTER ENERGY TIPS

- Thermostat settings: Start at 68 degrees and move the setting up until you reach a livable comfort temperature. In the winter, each degree increase from the 68 degree base will add about 2.5% to the monthly heating costs. In extreme temperatures, this percentage will be greater.
- Windows: More heat transfers through glass than any other material in the home. Keep blinds or drapes closed at night to temper heat transfer and open them on south facing glass during the day to allow radiant heat from the sun to enter. Clouds are typically very thin when temperatures are low, and we are likely to see sunshine on these days.
- HVAC filters: Make sure your central system is operating with a clean filter. This will not only increase system efficiency but also improve your comfort level. This tip is especially important during extreme winter temperatures when the system is working overtime.
- Air sealing: The issue of air infiltration is an important part of efficient energy usage. Weather-stripping around doors, caulk around windows, and expansion foam around envelope openings can significantly reduce energy usage by reducing air and moisture infiltration.
- Air duct: Air leakage around connections and duct seams are very common and it is not unusual to see loses in the area of 30%. Mastic or mastic tape applied to duct system connections and seams are in many cases, the most cost effective measures available to us.

### SUMMER ENERGY TIPS

- Moisture: Moisture is a significant comfort factor during the summer months and makes the air temperature feel warmer. Homes built on crawl spaces need a solid ground cover and it is a good idea in almost all cases to apply downspout extensions so that rain water will be channeled away from the structure.
- Exhaust fans: The use of bath, kitchen and laundry room exhaust fans are more important during the summer months due to the moisture issue mentioned above.
- Air circulation: Air movement during the summer months removes moisture from the skin and makes the temperature feel cooler. Fans typically do not use a lot of energy and can make a higher thermostat setting feel more comfortable.
- Attic insulation: Attics are a lot like ovens during the summer months. Hot air is compressed within the attic space that tries to push its way through the ceiling and into the house. To slow down this heat transfer, make sure the attic is insulated with a thick, level blanket of insulation and make sure the access door or stairway is insulated and weather-stripped if located within conditioned space.
- Landscaping: Trees or tall shrubs planted on the east and west side of the house can significantly reduce air conditioning costs by slowing radiant heat gain from the sun.



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### Contact Information:

**Administration Building**

112 Spragins Street  
Huntsville, AL 35801

**Chase Office**

1145 Jordan Road  
Huntsville, AL 35811

**Pulaski Pike (Drive-Thru Only)**

1100 Pulaski Pike  
Huntsville, AL 35816

**Please Send HU Payments to:**

Huntsville Utilities  
Huntsville, AL 35895

**Please send HU Correspondence to:**

Huntsville Utilities  
P.O. Box 2048  
Huntsville, AL 35804

**Please send Combinations and Gate Keys to:**

Huntsville Utilities  
Attention: Meter Reading Coordinator  
P.O. Box 2048  
Huntsville, AL 35804

**EMERGENCY: Electric, Gas, Or Water 256-535-4448**

Main:	256-535-1200
Toll Free Phone:	1-866-478-8845
Customer Service Fax:	256-535-1381
Commercial and Industrial Fax:	256-535-1344
Toll Free Fax:	1-888-884-5329
Call Before You Dig	811
Report Power Outage	256-535-4448

Tele-interpreters are available upon request through HU's call center.

City ordinances that relate to the information provided in this manual are referenced in parentheses throughout. The full ordinances can be reviewed at the office of the city clerk-treasurer (Sec 26-106) or on the following website: <https://www.municode.com/>

This manual (HU's service practice policies) and its contents are subject to change. Manual revisions that do not require changes to the City Ordinances can be approved by the CEO.