



Council Extends Declaration of Local Disaster Caused by Energy Emergency

DENTON, TX, Feb. 24, 2021 – On Tuesday, Feb. 23, the Denton City Council extended the Mayoral Declaration of Local Disaster and Order that was issued on Feb. 19 in response to the statewide energy emergency. This extension will last until March 16, and will allow the City of Denton to continue waiving select plumbing permit fees, waive certain plat reapplication fees, and remove ordinance restrictions for winter wastewater averaging and leak adjustments to provide additional relief for water customers.

This extended Declaration of Disaster and Order allows for the following:

- Plumbing permit fees and other associated fees are waived for the duration of this Order for permits necessary for emergency repairs, and any fees that would have been waived under this Order but have already been paid may be reimbursed.
- Reapplication fees are waived for plat applications listed on the Feb. 17, 2021 Planning and Zoning Commission meeting agenda that were voluntarily withdrawn.
- The calculation of winter Average Daily Usage beginning March 2021 through February 2022 shall be based on the December 2020 and January 2021 water consumption if that results in a lower Average Daily Usage than the existing winter average, otherwise the winter Average Daily Usage in place on Feb. 23, 2021 will be used for the duration of this Order.
- Customers who have experienced a substantial increase in water during the timeframe of Feb. 14 to Feb. 28, 2021, caused by damage to water pipes due to winter weather or the energy emergency, may be eligible for a bill adjustment upon submitting a leak adjustment application and proof of repairs. Find the application form [here](#).

The Council will consider two ordinances prior to March 16 that will extend the provisions regarding leak adjustments and winter wastewater averaging beyond the expiration of this declaration.

This extended Declaration of Local Disaster and Order, prompted by the energy emergency, took effect Feb. 23, 2021 and will last until 11:59 p.m. March 16, 2021, unless continued or renewed by the Denton City Council.

See the **attached** Declaration and Order for more information. Visit www.cityofdenton.com/winterweather for additional updates.

Additional Information

There are many questions and rumors regarding customer utility bills following the week of extreme weather and related service outages experienced statewide. In regard to utility billing, permitting, and repairs, the City would like for residents to know the following:

OUR CORE VALUES

Integrity • Fiscal Responsibility • Transparency • Outstanding Customer Service

Electric Rates

DME customer electric rates have not changed due to the recent winter storm and rotating outages. Denton Municipal Electric (DME) is a resident-owned electric utility that provides responsive, affordable electric services to its customers. DME rates are fixed and determined by the Denton City Council. Non-DME customers impacted by extremely high spikes in their bills are billed through a variable rate for electricity – making them vulnerable to sudden price swings from the wholesale energy market. **This is not the case with DME.** Any change in rates must be approved by the Denton City Council after a thorough and transparent financial and rate review process.

DME customers are charged only for the actual electricity consumed and will be charged at the existing fixed rates as approved by the Denton City Council. If a customer used more electricity than usual (consumed higher than average kWh), their electric bill will be higher than a normal month due to that higher usage. If a customer used less than their average kWh, their bill will be lower than a normal month.

Winter Wastewater Averaging

For City of Denton customers, wastewater charges are based on water usage amount. Rather than calculating the amount of water used each month to determine wastewater charges, the City averages the water used for December through February (the months with lowest water usage) and applies that average across the whole year. This ensures customers who have higher water bills in the summer, often due to irrigation, are not charged at that higher amount for wastewater charges, since much of that water never enters the wastewater system.

Since many customers are experiencing unusual February usage because of the storm, under this extended Order, the City of Denton will work to keep customer wastewater bills low by using one of two options to select customers' new rates. Customers' rates will either continue as their current rate, or the City will remove February from the standard wastewater averaging calculation and only charge customers based on their average usage from December 2020 and January 2021. Between these two options, customers will receive the lower rate beginning March 2021 through February 2022.

Billing Adjustments for Leaks

Under current City ordinance, billing adjustments for leaks can only be accepted in the cases of "hidden" leaks that are defined as "not immediately and reasonably detectable." Additionally, the current ordinance does not include piping in homes. Under this extended Order adopted on Feb. 23, burst or leaking pipes which occurred between Feb. 14 and Feb. 28, 2021 will be considered for billing price adjustment through the March billing cycle. All other leak adjustment application requirements continue to apply. Find the application form [here](#).

Delayed Shutoffs

The City of Denton is postponing any planned utility interruptions resulting from nonpayment until Monday, March 15, 2021, to give customers additional time to assess the impacts from the winter storm without worrying about losing power.

Waived Permit Fees

To assist in the reduction of repair costs for customers, the City is waiving some plumbing permit fees and other associated application fees. Under this extended Order, Development Services has extended the hours for permitting and inspections of weather related repairs for residents. They will be open 7 days a week from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. Staff will also be completing virtual inspections for contractors to expedite the repair process.

You can find a list of registered plumbing contractors in the city of Denton by going to this [link](#). You can also reach them by calling (940) 349-8360.

Contact: Ryan Adams, (940) 349-8565, Ryan.Adams@cityofdenton.com

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