

01 WATER CUTOFF CHANGES

METER BOXES LOCKED FOR NONPAYMENT

The City of Tulsa will be updating its customer fees and procedures for water cutoffs beginning January 1, 2024.

These changes will impact residents whose water is scheduled to be turned off when their water bill has gone delinquent for more than 24 days.

One major procedural change beginning in 2024 will be that City workers will turn off the water and lock a resident's meter box after 24 days of non-payment instead of turning the water off at 24 days late and physically removing the water meter at 31 days of non-payment.

As before, when a customer pays the delinquent bill and fees, the customer's water will be turned back on. Locking meter boxes takes the place of removing meters when an account remains delinquent. This eliminates fees for pulling the meter.


The move to locking the meter boxes instead of pulling meters will save manpower hours and costs for the City of Tulsa. The City averages approximately 73,000 water cutoff and water meter pull work orders each year, in addition to 18,000 meter reset work orders annually.

Locking the meter boxes also means residents won't be able to access the water meter illegally to turn their water back on in the interim and will need to pay the delinquent bill and any related fees to have the water turned back on by the City.

Here is information about the updated water fees:

- **The combined fee for water cutoff and for restoring water service once the bill is paid will increase from \$30 to \$40. This covers the updated cost of service.**
- **The meter pull fee will be eliminated, since the meter box will be locked instead of the meter being pulled. This results in a reduction of total water cutoff fees from \$70 to \$40.**

For more information about the new water cutoff fees and procedures scheduled to begin in 2024, residents can call **311** or visit www.cityoftulsa.org/utilities.




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+ **PLUS: PREPARE TO BE SAFE IN WINTER STORMS.**

WWW.CITYOFTULSA.ORG | TULSA311@CITYOFTULSA.ORG | CALL 311



02 FREE TAX PREP HELP

AVAILABLE FOR LOW-INCOME TULSANS

For the 2024 tax season, the City of Tulsa Office of Financial Empowerment and Community Wealth is continuing its partnership with Tulsa Responds and Goodwill Tulsa to help Tulsa's low-income households get their taxes filed for free.

Tulsa Responds and Goodwill Tulsa have recruited volunteers to participate in the Internal Revenue Service's Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program (VITA) and will provide multiple locations where tax payers can receive assistance.

VITA volunteers help low-income households file their taxes for free to avoid paying tax preparation fees. Last year, Goodwill Tulsa and Tulsa Responds filed nearly 5,000 tax returns and brought over \$5 million back to Tulsa's taxpayers. They have doubled their goal to 10,000 returns for the 2024 tax season.

In Tulsa, households with incomes of \$64,000 or less may make appointments to meet with a VITA volunteer tax preparer at one of the available locations.

For details and to make an appointment, call **(918) 581-1222** or **(918) 900-0918** or go to www.GetYourRefundTulsa.org.

For more information about Tulsa Responds and Goodwill Tulsa, visit www.tulsaresponds.org and www.goodwilltulsa.org.

03 SAVE OUR STREAMS

KEEP STORM DRAINS POLLUTANT-FREE

The City of Tulsa's storm drain system is the series of outside drains located in our streets that route rainwater to creeks, lakes and rivers. The water that goes into these drains is not cleaned or treated before it reaches them. This makes it very important to not let pollutants spill on the ground and enter our storm drain system.

City workers regularly monitor the system for pollution. Crews also routinely remove debris from storm drains to prevent water from backing up into streets and homes. It is illegal to introduce pollutants into the system. Pollutants include lawn chemicals, car fluids, soaps, leaves and grass, pet waste and basically anything that isn't pure rainwater.

It is important to protect the quality and control the quantity of the water flowing into the drainage system. Here are steps you can take to protect Tulsa's creeks and reduce flood risks:

- **Maintain vehicles to prevent fluid leaks. Don't pour used motor oil, antifreeze, pesticides or other pollutants into storm drains. Storm drains are for rain.**
- **Pick up pet waste and dispose of it in the sanitary sewer, throw it in the trash or bury it in the yard to prevent harmful bacteria from entering our storm drain system.**
- **Use a mulching mower or bag grass and leaves instead of blowing them into streets. Yard wastes clog storm drains and deplete oxygen in the water. Fish need oxygen to survive.**
- **Apply fertilizers and pesticides properly. Read labels to determine how much and when to apply. The Master Gardener program has volunteers trained to answer questions about pesticides and fertilizers. Call the Master Gardener Hotline at (918) 746-3701 or visit: www.tulsamastergardeners.org.**
- **Pick up litter around your home or business so that it doesn't collect on drain inlets or cause pipes to clog.**
- **Report storm drain issues such as blockage, improper disposal of yard wastes and/or illegal fluid discharges by sending an email to Tulsa311@cityoftulsa.org or calling 311.**

WINTER PREPAREDNESS

MAKE SAFETY YOUR TOP PRIORITY

Each year, Tulsa usually experiences a few winter storms with potentially hazardous conditions. Here are some steps for readiness in case of winter storms:*

HAVE A PLAN:

- **Discuss with your family what to do if a winter storm watch or warning is issued. Download the TulsaReady app on your phone.**
- **Check that family, friends, neighbors, especially the elderly, are prepared.**
- **Remember your pets. Make sure they have food, water and shelter.**
- **Have your car winterized by checking antifreeze, washer blades, tire pressure, etc.**

IF YOU MUST GO OUT IN A WINTER STORM, ASSEMBLE A KIT FOR YOUR CAR INCLUDING:

- **Cell phone with extra battery or two-way radio**
- **Windshield scraper and small broom for ice and snow removal**
- **Blankets or sleeping bags**
- **Rain gear and extra sets of dry clothing, mittens or gloves, socks and a cap**
- **Non-perishable snacks like dried fruit or nuts**
- **Bottled water**
- **Sand or cat litter for generating traction under wheels and a set of tire chains or traction mats**
- **Jumper cables, flashlight with extra batteries and first aid kit**

*Sources: Tulsa Area Emergency Management Agency, Oklahoma Department of Emergency Management, www.ready.gov.



04 TULSA MUNICIPAL COURT

OPEN EXTENDED HOURS ON THURSDAYS

Tulsa Municipal Court began its Thursday Night Court last September to better serve citizens with municipal citations. This new service helps citizens who cannot attend court during regular hours due to scheduling conflicts.

Thursday Night Court provides various services to help citizens efficiently resolve citations, including a cashier's window open after 5 p.m. on Thursdays for citation payments, extended hours for compliance letters, and cost administration for payment plans. Additionally, the court features three separate dockets at 4 p.m., 5 p.m., and 6 p.m. and offers a Spanish interpreter.

Citizens must contact Tulsa Municipal Court to verify if their citation qualifies for Night Court and schedule a date if applicable. Those with correctable citations should email their documents to nightcourt@cityoftulsa.org and obtain prior approval to confirm their scheduled court appearance.

Tulsa Municipal Court has also taken steps to enhance safety and security for attendees by improving the facility's outdoor lighting and offering free street parking after 5 p.m. on weekdays. For more information or to schedule a Night Court appearance, contact Court Records at (918) 596-1625 during business hours or email nightcourt@cityoftulsa.org.