

MEADOW LAKE COUNTY WATER & SEWER DISTRICT

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Who Are We?

The Meadow Lake County Water & Sewer District (MLCWSD) was formed February 6, 1984 as a duly authorized non-profit corporation to provide water and sewer services to users pursuant to Section 7-13-2214, Montana Code Annotated. Management of the District is the responsibility of the five members of Board of Directors, elected by members of the District every other May. The current Directors are:

Ann Stephens, President/Director
Dean Berkram, Vice President/Director
Kathy O'Connor, Director
Pierson Forbes, Treasurer/Director
Kurt Sandberg, Director

The Board meets on an irregular schedule, but all members are encouraged to attend and participate in meetings. Meeting notices are posted at www.meadowlakemontana.com.

How do I get in touch with the District?

General Manager:

Contact:
Alpine Pacific Utilities
Marc Liechti, General Manager MLCWSD
P. O. Box 1193
Kalispell, MT 59903
Tel: 406-261-4810
Email: marc@aputilities.com

Billing & Account Questions:

Contact:
Alpine Pacific Utilities
Jessica Petras, Billing Manager
P. O. Box 1193
Kalispell, MT 59903
TEL: 406-885-0776
Email: accounting@aputilities.com

Emergencies:

For water outages, low water pressure, leaks, or other water system emergencies:

Contact: Alpine Pacific Utilities,
Marc Liechti, General Manager (24/7) - (406) 261-4810
Mark Leighty, Operator (backup) – (406) 261-6475
Justin Ahmann (backup) - (712) 790-3145

Your facility:

Contact your plumber.

Our Water Sources:

Our water sources are three deep wells: Well #1 is 743' deep; Well #2 is 750' deep; Well #3 765' deep. We have over 350 service connections on our system. Our drinking water is safe and meets federal and state requirements. Tests are performed on a scheduled basis as required by the Montana Department of Environmental Quality. If you have questions concerning the water, contact General Manager.

The City of Columbia Falls, by Contract, Processes our Sewage

A sewer line, roughly 8,000 feet, extends from the southern boundary of Meadow Lake to the Columbia Falls processing plant. The City calculates your monthly sewage charge based on their own formulas adding a premium of 25% because Meadow Lake is not in the city. They meter our total sewage; they provide no repair or maintenance services to our District.

How Do I Get Water & Sewer Service?

Application for Service

An "Application for Service" is attached and must be completed prior to beginning construction. An "Application for Service" is also required on property transfers.

Meter and Remote Reading Requirement

Effective July 2003 the District established the following meter and remote as its standard:

For Single Family Residential:

INVENSYS, Model SR II 5/8" x 3/4", including a remote reader pad & GPS census unit. The meter and remote/GPS reader, including connectors, is available from the District at a cost of \$500.00 (cost subject to change based on manufacturer's rate at time of order). The homeowner shall arrange for installation at his/her cost.

For Multi-Family Residential and Commercial:

Prices vary according to size needed. The specification is the appropriate INVENSYS, Model SR II with larger diameter(s) and remote reader. The District's purchasing program is available; the District's cost will be passed through with no mark-up.

Current users must ensure the remote reading device is placed in a position easily accessible to our meter reading personnel to the front of the building (facing roadway), at a height that will not be blocked by snow, landscape, or other items, and must have clear space (no trim) at least 6" in diameter of remote device. New construction requires meter pits, where meter, remote and GPS unit will be installed. Should you have any questions about the placement of the remote reading device, call/text the General Manager.

Ownership of Meter/Meter Replacement

While the applicant purchases the original meter/remote reading device, the District thereafter owns it. The District will make replacements, at no charge to the homeowner, after certain time periods, usage or mechanical failure.

Responsibility for Repairs and Maintenance:

The customer will assume all responsibility beyond the point of delivery (service shut off, typically at the property line) for water supplied by the District. The District will be exempt from all liability for loss or damage caused by leakage or escape of water furnished by the District, after the same has passed the point of delivery. All service pipes and fixtures on the premises of the customer must be kept in good repair and protected from freezing by the customer. Where there are leaking or defective pipes or fixtures, the water may be turned off at the option of the District until the proper repairs are made.

Hook-up Fees:

New services must:

1. Agree to notify their construction contractors to use the eastern entry of St. Andrews Drive, Meadow Lake Drive or west entrance of Mountain Watch at Turnberry Terrace.
2. Purchase the District's approved meter and remote reading device.
3. Effective July 1, 2025, all new construction shall install meter pits at the street-side boundary of the lot. Contractor to verify with Alpine Pacific Utilities (406-261-4810) for procedures and installation requirements.
4. Provide their own construction, in accordance with specifications including the Uniform Building Code (UBC), Uniform Plumbing Code (UPC), and requirements of the Montana State Water Quality Bureau, from the water shut off to the home.
5. Provide their own construction, in accordance with specifications including the Uniform Building Code (UBC), Uniform Plumbing Code (UPC), and requirements of the Montana State Water Quality Bureau, to the sewer.
6. Pay a hook-up fee. The single-family hook up fee as of January 1, 2026, is \$7,000.00, plus cost of meter & remote. Multiple unit projects pay a hook-up fee for each dwelling unit. Effective 1/1/2027, hookup fee will be \$7,500.00.
7. Effective April 1, 2026, all new connections will be responsible for a Capital Reserve Assessment of \$3,000.00, billed with the hook-up fee.
8. Connections into all phases of Mountain Watch/Tamarack Heights/Tamarack Meadows are subject to the City of Columbia Falls "Plant Investment Fee" in the amount of \$655.64. This amount is in addition to the "hook-up" fee and is collected as part of the hook-up fee invoicing process.
9. Remote location must be placed to the street-side of the property at least 2 ft above foundation in location that allows District to mount 6"x 8" GPS box to wall (not against trim/siding edges or in rock wainscots).
10. Water service will not be turned on at the curb to new construction until verification of hookup fee payments, approved meter and remote devices have been installed and are confirmed to be in proper working order.

Note to purchasers of lots in the western Meadow Lake subdivision (Meadow Lake Estates): Connecting to the water and sewer system may be more difficult than expected. The system was built in the mid-1970's and may not have curb stops for water hook-ups. In addition, while the water and sewer services are in the street in front or back of all lots, the exact location may not be precisely known. Construction costs for hooking into both the water and sewer may be more costly than hooking into other phases of the Meadow Lake subdivision. Please consult with your engineer and/or builder. Please be aware of the notes above that require the lot owner to pay for all costs of connecting to both the water and sewer services; the District will not pay for any portion of the construction costs associated therewith.

Monthly Water & Sewer Rates: Water & Sewer rates are reviewed as necessary, no less frequently than bi-annually, and adjusted to meet the needs of the District. Any increase or decreases in sewer rates imposed by the City of Columbia Falls will be passed along effective on the date those increases or decreases are received.

Current (set in April 2026) Water:

Base Monthly Rate, \$30.00 per VRU (Volume Ratio Unit). (Note: all single-family residences are one VRU because the size of their water service is 5/8"-3/4". The number of VRU's each larger service establishment is assigned is proportional to the volume supplied by the size of the service line. Therefore a 1" water service is assigned 1.78 VRUs. A 1.5" water service is assigned 4 VRU's. A 2" service is assigned 7.11 VRU's. A 3" service is assigned 16 VRU's.

Plus \$2.00 per 1000 gallons used. (Note: This rate applies to actual water usage each month. If there were no usage, there would be no usage charge. If a user used 100,000 gallons in a month, variable charge of \$200.00 would be added to their base rate.)

Current (set in April 2026) Sewer:

Base Monthly Rate, \$45.00.

Plus, Usage Charge equal to Columbia Falls' Fee:

The Columbia Falls fee is \$6.25 per thousand gallons registered on the water meter modified as follows:

- From November 1 to April 30, the billing is the actual amount of water shown on the meter.
- From May 1 through October 31, the city assumes excess water is used for irrigation. Consequently, they take the average usage from December to February and bill the lesser of the average versus actual usage each month from May through October.

Payment Requirements/Shut Offs and Terminations

1. The property owner is responsible for payments of amounts due.
2. All accounts must remain in the name and responsibility of the property owner.
3. Payment is due by month end following billing; unpaid accounts are charged a late fee equal to 1.5% per month on the outstanding balance. There is a \$35 charge for NSF checks.
4. Late fees are assessed when payment is greater than 60 days late.
5. The District has the authority to utilize Flathead County's property tax assessment mechanism to collect outstanding balances. In August each year, customer accounts are reviewed, and delinquent balances are transferred to the property tax invoice for the landowner of record for the physical service connection.
6. The District has hardship procedures available on a case-by-case review.
7. Any costs, including reasonable attorney fees, incurred by the District in the collection of any debt from the property owner, shall be borne by the property owner.

Other Provisions and Agreements:

1. Certain Discharges into the District's Sewage System are Not Permitted:
 - i. Any stormwater, surface water, groundwater, roof runoffs, subsurface drainage, uncontaminated cooling water or unpolluted industrial process waters. **IT IS ILLEGAL TO CONNECT SUMP PUMP DISCHARGE TO SEWER LINES. VIOLATIONS FOUND WILL BE FINED \$1,000.00 AND REQUIRE CORRECTIVE ACTION AT THE COST OF THE PROPERTY OWNER.**
 - ii. Any gasoline, benzene, naphtha, fuel oil, or other flammable or explosive liquid, solid or gas, or high concentrations of waste material such as septic or vault toilet residue.
 - iii. Any waters or wastes containing toxic or poisonous solids, liquids, or gases in sufficient quantity, either singly or by interaction with other wastes, to injure or interfere with any sewage treatment process, constitutes a hazard to humans or animals, create a public nuisance, or create any hazard in receiving waters of the sewage treatment plant.
 - iv. Any water or waste having a pH lower than 5.5 or having any other corrosive property capable of causing damage or hazard to sewers, structures, equipment and personnel of the sewage works.
 - v. Solid or viscous substances in quantities or of such a size capable of causing obstruction to the flow in sewers, or the other interference with the proper operation of the sewage works, such as but not limited to, ashes, cinders, sand, mud, straw, shavings, metal, glass, rags, feathers, tar, plastics, wood, underground garbage, whole blood, paunch manure, hair and fleshings, entrails and paper dishes, cups, milk containers, etc., either whole or ground by garbage grinders.
2. Entry onto Property Owner's Property: The District's General Manager and other duly authorized employees or representatives of the District shall be permitted to enter upon all properties at a reasonable hour for the purpose of inspection, observation, measurement, sampling, and testing in accordance with the provisions of this document.
3. Liability to District. Any person who shall violate any provision of this document shall be liable to the District for any expense, loss, damage, cost of inspection or cost of correction

incurred by the District by reason of such violation, including any expense incurred by the District in collection from such person of such loss, damage, expense, cost of inspection or cost of correction.

Questions?

Call either Marc Liechti, General Manager on (406) 261-4810, or any of the Directors.

**MEADOW LAKE COUNTY WATER & SEWER DISTRICT
APPLICATION FOR SERVICE**

- ☐ **This is an application for a new service connection. Please complete Sections A and B.**
- ☐ **This is an application because of a property transfer. Please complete Section B.**

Lot #	Street Address (Columbia Falls)	Phone
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Section A. (To be completed by property owners requiring a new service connection.) Please check all boxes and sign below.

- ☐ **I have read and agree to the policies and procedures set forth in the District's statement.**
- ☐ **I agree to the new service requirements and agree to pay a hook-up fee in approximately the amount of \$_____ by _____, 20__.**

Section B. (To be completed by new residents and new property owners.) Please check all boxes and sign below.

- ☐ **I have read and agree to the policies and procedures set forth in the District's statement.**
- ☐ **I agree to the District's "Payment Requirements/Shut Offs and Terminations" provisions.**

Signatures of Property Owners:

Print & Sign Name

Date

Print & Sign Name

Date

Primary Mailing Address

Phone (required)

Email Address

Mail or Email *(circle one)*
Preferred Method of Billing

Please return to Meadow Lake County Water & Sewer District, P.O. Box 1139, Kalispell MT 59903.