



CITY OF MOUNT AIRY

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

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NOTICE!!!

The City of Mount Airy Public Works Department needs your assistance in observing & watching for violators tampering with City utilities. **Contact the Police Department at 336-786-3535 if you witness any person committing this offense.**

Examples of tampering include:

- Opening water meter lid
- Disturbing anything inside the water meter box
- Willingly reconnecting water after the City has discontinued service
- Damaging any part of the water meter or its reading device (including register wire & ERT wire)



Meter Tampering Penalty: For a first offense, a \$250.00 charge will be applied to a customer's account when the City water meter is turned on without City authorization or when the customer continues using water after water service has been discontinued by the City. Subsequent offenses are subject to a \$500.00 charge and civil and/or criminal penalties. (City of Mount Airy Code of Ordinance, Chapter 8, Section 8-4)

Mount Airy Code of Ordinances

Sec. 8-4. - Tampering with meters. Tampering with utility meters is prohibited by G.S. 14-151. It shall be unlawful for any unauthorized person to alter, tamper with or bypass a meter which has been installed for the purpose of measuring the use of water. Bypassing a meter provided by the City for the purpose of measuring and registering the quantity of water consumed shall be considered tampering with a meter. Turning on water without City authorization or continuing to use water after water service has been discontinued by the City shall be considered tampering with a meter. There shall be a charge of \$250.00 for the first offense, \$500.00 for the second offense and civil and/or criminal penalties established by section 1-6 of this Code instituted thereafter. In addition to these charges, the cost of any damage to City property resulting from tampering with utility meters shall also be charged. Charges and penalties made under this section shall be against the account holder of the property that the meter serves. Nothing in this section shall apply to licensed plumbers or utility contractors while performing usual and ordinary services in accordance with recognized customs and standards.

Sec. 8-26. - Who may turn water service on or off; damaging or interfering with water boxes, pipes, etc..

It shall be unlawful for any person, except a duly authorized employee or agent of the City, to turn any water service on or off at the curb box or to handle, trifle with, damage or in any manner interfere with any curb box or any other part of the plant, pipes, mains or other property belonging to the City's water system.

North Carolina General Statutes

§ 14-151. Interfering with gas, electric and steam appliances or meters; penalties. (a) It shall be unlawful for any person to willfully, with intent to injure or defraud, commit any of the following acts: (1) Connect a tube, pipe, wire or other instrument or contrivance with a pipe or wire used for conducting or supplying illuminating gas, fuel, natural gas or electricity in such a manner as to supply such gas or electricity to any burner, orifice, lamp or motor where the same is or can be burned or used without passing through the meter or other instrument provided for registering the quantity consumed.

(2) Obstruct, alter, bypass, tamper with, injure or prevent the action of a meter or other instrument used to measure or register the quantity of illuminating fuel, natural gas, water, or electricity passing through such meter by a person other than an employee of the company owning or supplying any gas, water, or electric meter, who willfully shall detach or disconnect such meter, or make or report any test of, or examine for the purpose of testing any meter so detached or disconnected.

(4) Make any connection or reconnection with the gas mains, water pipes, service pipes or wires of any person, furnishing to consumers natural or artificial gas, water, or electricity, or turn on or off or in any manner interfere with any valve or stopcock or other appliance belonging to such person, and connected with his service or other pipes or wires, or enlarge the orifices of mixers, or use natural gas for heating purposes except through mixers, or electricity for any purpose without first procuring from such person a written permit to turn on or off such stopcock or valve, or to make such connection or reconnections, or to enlarge the orifice of mixers, or to use for heating purposes without mixers, or to interfere with the valves, stopcocks, wires or other appliances of such, as the case may be.

(9) Reconnect electricity, gas, or water connections or otherwise turn back on one or more of those utilities when they have been lawfully disconnected or turned off by the provider of the utility.

(b) Any meter or service entrance facility found to have been altered, tampered with, or bypassed in a manner that would cause such meter to inaccurately measure and register the electricity, gas, or water consumed or which would cause the electricity, gas, or water to be diverted from the recording apparatus of the meter shall be prima facie evidence of intent to violate and of the violation of this section by the person in whose name such meter is installed or the person or persons so using or receiving the benefits of such unmetered, unregistered, or diverted electricity, gas, or water.

(d) Criminal violations of this section shall be punishable as follows: (1) A violation of this section is a Class 1 misdemeanor. (2) A second or subsequent violation of this section is a Class H felony. (3) A violation of this section that results in significant property damage or public endangerment is a Class F felony. (4) Unless the conduct is covered under some other provision of law providing greater punishment, a violation that results in the death of another is a Class D felony.