



New Home Owners Account Management

Written by **Poppy Louw**

Guide for Property Ownership: What Municipal Services Are Your Responsibility?

The start of the year is a time of reflection, planning and renewed intention. For many households in Johannesburg, the start of the year brings fresh financial goals – including saving for, purchasing or transferring property in the year ahead.

Whether you are a first-time homeowner, planning to buy property in 2026, or reassessing your household finances, understanding how municipal accounts work is a critical part of responsible property ownership. From opening a rates account and understanding property valuations to managing monthly invoices and selecting suitable payment options, being informed helps residents plan effectively, avoid unnecessary challenges, and ensure uninterrupted access to essential City services.

With municipal tariffs already in effect for the current financial year, the City of Johannesburg encourages property owners – particularly first-time buyers – to take proactive steps in managing their municipal responsibilities. Ensuring accounts are accurate, up to date and aligned with long-term financial plans supports sustainable homeownership. Paying your municipal account on time ensures continued access to water, electricity, sanitation and refuse services in your community.

Understanding the Clearance Process

Before any property transfer, a Rates Clearance Certificate (RCC) must be issued. This certificate confirms that all municipal charges – including rates, taxes, water, electricity, sewer and refuse – have been fully settled for a period of up to 24 months.

The Deeds Office will not register a property in a buyer's name without this certificate.

Once the transfer is registered, the buyer's

municipal account commences from the date of transfer. Any historical debt remains the responsibility of the seller. New homeowners are advised to work closely with their conveyancers and the City to ensure that accounts are activated promptly to avoid any delays in service continuity.

Creation of a Rates Account

Following registration of ownership at the Deeds Office, the City receives automated notification of the transfer. This notification is typically received within six to eight weeks.

The ownership change on the City's billing system is processed through a semi-automated system. As a result, new property owners are not required to apply separately for a municipal account.

Once processed, the account is automatically transferred into the new owner's name and includes property rates and applicable metered services such as water and refuse removal.

If a new property owner does not receive a municipal statement within two months after registration, a query should be logged through the City's official query resolution channels to ensure billing is correctly activated.

Account Finalisation and Refunds for Sellers

Once the automated confirmation of transfer is received from the Deeds Office, the City begins finalising the seller's account. This includes closing the account up to the transfer date and crediting any refundable amounts arising from the clearance payment process.

In some cases, adjustments may be required if additional charges are raised after ownership has changed.

Sellers are advised to review their municipal statements after transfer. Where a credit balance

is reflected, they may approach a Customer Service Centre or their conveyancing attorney to apply for a refund or credit transfer, accompanied by the required supporting documentation.

Refunds and credit transfers are processed in line with the City's approved policies. Sellers are encouraged to follow up through official query channels if processing takes longer than expected.

Property Valuations and Billing

Property rates are calculated in accordance with the Municipal Property Rates Act, based on the municipal valuation of the property. Each property is valued according to its market value, with general valuations conducted every four years and interim valuations applied in cases of major alterations or changes.

Valuations directly impact the rates bill:

- Higher property value = higher rates
- Lower property value = lower rates
- Homeowners who believe their property has been incorrectly valued may lodge a formal objection, supported by evidence such as recent sale prices or independent valuations.
- It is important to note that payments must continue based on the current valuation while objections are under review. If unresolved, matters may be referred to the Valuation Appeal Board.

Understanding Your Municipal Invoice

A City of Johannesburg municipal invoice reflects both:

Metered services (water and electricity – billed in arrears), and

- Fixed charges (rates and refuse – billed for the current month).
- Invoices detail:



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- Account number
- Amount due
- Payment due date

The due date is critical. Payments received after this date may result in arrears, interest charges, and potential credit control action. Invoices are distributed via email, SMS notifications, and are available online at www.e-joburg.org.za

Residents facing financial difficulties may apply for payment arrangements or settlement options. The City encourages customers to seek assistance early rather than allowing accounts to fall into arrears.

Account holders are also encouraged to:

- Update their contact details with the City
- Apply for a convenient due date between the 15th and 31st of each month
- This flexibility can assist households in managing monthly cash flow more effectively.
- Convenient Payment Options
- Residents can pay their municipal accounts through:
- The e-Joburg portal (www.e-joburg.org.za)
- Banking apps and EFT
- Debit orders
- Third-party partners such as retailers, post offices and EasyPay outlets
- Payment methods may vary depending on the provider, but card and cash options are widely available.



Your Rights as a Homeowner

In terms of the Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (Act 32 of 2000), residents have the right to query or dispute charges on their municipal accounts without risk of service disconnection, provided that undisputed amounts are paid on time.

Disputes may be lodged:

- Via regional revenue email addresses, or
- At Customer Service Centres
- All disputes must be accompanied by relevant supporting documentation.
- The City is required to investigate and respond within 30 days.

If a resident is not satisfied with the outcome, a phased escalation process is available. The City has a total of 90 days (inclusive of the initial 30 days) to respond during the escalation phase. Should the matter remain unresolved, customers may escalate the complaint to the City of Johannesburg Ombudsman for independent review.



Need Assistance?

Residents experiencing challenges can contact the City's Call Centre at **0860 562 874**, email their regional revenue office, or visit the nearest Customer Service Centre:

Customer Service Centre:	Region email address:
Midrand CSC 300, 5th Road, Randjiespark, Midrand	regionArevenue@joburg.org.za
Randburg CSC Cnr Bram Fischer Drive and Jan Smuts Avenue	regionBrevenue@joburg.org.za
Roodepoort CSC 100 Christiaan de Wet Road, Florida Park	regionCrevenue@joburg.org.za
Jabulani CSC 1 Koma Road, Jabulani	regionDrevenue@joburg.org.za
Sandton CSC 137 Daisy Street, Sandton	regionErevenue@joburg.org.za
Lenasia CSC Cnr Rose Avenue & Eland Street, Lenasia Ext. 1	regionGrevenue@joburg.org.za
Thuso House CSC 61 Stiemens Street, Braamfontein	regionFrevenue@joburg.org.za

