



Outstanding Accounts: Stay On Track

Written by Poppy Louw

Staying on top of your City of Johannesburg account is a team effort. The City's revenue office uses a clear, step-by-step communication process to make sure you always know where you stand.

Each month, you are sent a detailed account statement (by email, post or via the e-Joburg portal) that lays out what you owe and when it's due. These statements are designed to be clear and concise in explaining charges and usage.

In other words, your bill will clearly show any new charges, previous balance and the due date, so nothing is hidden. A follow-up is then initiated to keep you on track.

Communication Pipeline

1. Monthly Bill Issued: At the start of each billing cycle, your statement arrives (by email or post) showing all charges and the due date. This first notification is your baseline for what you owe.

2. Due Date Reminders: As the payment deadline approaches, a polite reminder is sent (by SMS or email) if you haven't paid yet. Think of it as a friendly nudge – just in case you overlooked the due date. These reminders encourage early payment and keep your account current without penalties.

3. Overdue Notices: If the account is still unpaid after the due date, an overdue notice is sent via SMS, email and/or post, highlighting the outstanding balance and urging you to settle it. This notice clearly states that the account is in arrears and invites you to contact the City if there's an issue (for example, if you have a dispute or need a payment plan). Acting early at this stage can help you avoid extra charges.

4. Credit Control and Final Demand: When an account remains overdue, formal credit-control actions begin. You'll receive written final demand letters (pre-termination notices) warning of possible service restrictions if the debt isn't resolved. These letters spell out exactly what you owe, any added interest or penalties and the next steps. Importantly, our policy is that residents in good standing are not disconnected without proper warning. In short, the City gives multiple chances and clear explanations before any drastic measures are taken.

Credit Control Cycle

A GUIDED STEP-BY-STEP OF YOUR CREDIT CONTROL CYCLE

1. Invoice Issued
The process starts when the customer receives an invoice. Payment is usually due within **14 days**, provided the bill has no irregularities.

2. Pre-Due Reminder
Customers receive an **SMS** reminder 2 days before the due date to encourage on-time payment.

3. Overdue Follow-Up
If payment is not received, the customer is contacted **3 days** after the due date via **SMS, email, and phone call**.

4. Pre-Termination Notice
After **7 days of non-payment**, a pre-termination notice is issued for metered services. The notice remains valid for **14 days**.

5. Disconnection Process
If payment is still not made after the notice expires, **service disconnection is implemented**. Further action may be taken for **illegal reconnections, bypassed meters, or continued non-payment**.

6. Legal Collection
Accounts that remain unpaid for more than **61 days** are **handed over for legal debt collection**.

5. Service Restrictions (Last Resort): Only if there's still no response does the City proceed to service cut-offs or legal handover. Even at this stage, communication continues – final disconnection notices reiterate how to avoid or resolve the situation. The City never disconnects without notice. Throughout the process, the message is: get in touch and pay what you can – we can help.

Alongside these steps, the City makes sure help is always available. You have many payment and support options at every point:

- **Multiple Payment Channels:** To avoid confusion, everyone is reminded that all official payment methods are valid. You can pay through e-Joburg online, bank transfers, ATMs, the Post Office, or at retail partners like Pick n Pay, Shoprite and others (using EasyPay). All these payments are posted automatically to your account. In practice, this means if you pay via any approved route, your account will update correctly.
- **Customer Support:** You are encouraged to reach out at any stage. If you have questions about your bill or need help, contact Joburg Connect (0860 562 874) or visit a Customer Service Centre. Assigned staff can explain charges, help arrange a payment plan or adjust an error if needed. The City also publicises relief options: for qualifying residents there are programmes like the City's Debt Relief (Phase 4), property rebates and the Expanded Social Package (ESP). Whenever possible, the City aims to work with customers to keep services on and resolve debts.
- **Face-to-Face and Digital Outreach:** Beyond letters and calls, the City engages the community directly. Open Days are held in each region where you can meet officials about billing issues. These forums have been very helpful for answering questions on the spot. The City further uses email newsletters, SMS blasts and social media to spread the word about payment reminders and available help.

Customers are encouraged to keep their contact details up to date to receive every notification and rely on the City's official channels for information.

For regular updates and information, please follow us on:

- X: @JoburgFinance
- Facebook: Joburg Finance
- Instagram: @joburgfinance
- City's website at www.joburg.org.za