

# FAQ IDLE SERVICES



785-743-5561  
Toll Free: 1-800-456-6720  
635 S. 13<sup>th</sup> St.  
PO Box 278  
WaKeeney, KS 67672  
[www.westerncoop.com](http://www.westerncoop.com)

## What is the Idle Service Policy for Western?

Any service that has been disconnected for a period of 12 months or longer will, at the discretion of the cooperative, be classified as abandoned and considered an Idle Service. Disconnection is defined as the point in time at which the switch is opened in the meter or when the meter is booted.

Upon disconnection, and at the discretion of the cooperative, a letter will be mailed to the property owner and/or tenant that the disconnected service(s) is located on his/her property. The property owner and/or tenant will be given ninety (90) days to decide whether to keep or remove the service.

The following attributes will be taken into consideration by Western as to whether Western will retain the service for the cooperative's benefit at no fee to the property owner and/or tenant:

1. Retention of the easement
2. Future development potential if the service:
  - i. Is easy to patrol/low maintenance
  - ii. Exists along a main access road
  - iii. Has a probability to provide an alternative feed
  - iv. Is located within ¼ mile of a water well
  - v. Is located within ½ mile of an oil well
  - vi. Is located within ¼ mile of an irrigation well
  - vii. Is 3-phase
  - viii. Is in relatively good condition (i.e. less than ten (10) years old)
  - ix. Is within close proximity to communication equipment
  - x. Is needed to maintain the mesh communication system
  - xi. Is residential in nature

If the property owner and/or tenant takes the option to keep the idle service, an "Idle Service Fee" equivalent to the base charge will be assessed to keep the service in place. The Idle Service Fee will begin at the time the property owner and/or tenant is notified. If payment is not received, the service will be scheduled for removal, at the discretion of the cooperative, as time permits and no further notification will be sent.

If the property owner and/or tenant selects the option to remove the idle service, an Idle Service Fee will not be assessed, and the service will be removed, at the discretion of the cooperative, as time permits.

If no response is received from the property owner and/or tenant within ninety (90) days of the notice, the idle service will be removed, at the discretion of the cooperative, as time permits and no further notification will be sent.

If an idle service is removed and service is requested at that same location for reconnection within five (5) years of the removal of the service, the party requesting service may, at the discretion of the cooperative, be responsible for 100% of the construction cost. After the five (5) year period has elapsed, the reconnection request will be treated as a standard new service request whereby all costs associated with a standard new service installation will be calculated in accordance with the line extension policy in effect at the time of the reconnection request.

APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES ON 11-17-2011  
AMENDED AND APPROVED BY BOARD OF TRUSTEES ON 1-18-2018  
AMENDED AND APPROVED BY BOARD OF TRUSTEES ON 11-17-2022

## What is the difference between Idle, Disconnected, and Retired?

**Idle Service:** Any service that has been disconnected for a period of 12 months or longer will, at the discretion of the cooperative, be classified as abandoned and considered an Idle Service

**Disconnected Service:** the point in time at which the switch is opened (power stops flowing) in the meter or when the meter is booted (or the meter has been pulled out).

**Retired Service:** a service that has been permanently removed from use, with the meter and/or service equipment taken out and no intent for reconnection without a new service installation.

## Why was the Idle Service Policy changed in 2022?

In 2022, our Board of Trustees completed a Cost of Service Study to review what it truly costs to keep an idle (unused) electric service in place. Even when no electricity is being used, there are still expenses to maintain the meter, service line, transformer capacity, and system readiness for that location. The study showed that the actual cost of keeping these services available was closer to the base charge for active accounts. Based on those findings, the monthly idle service fee was adjusted from \$10 to **\$45 for single phase** and to **\$65 for multiphase** to more accurately reflect the cost of maintaining the service and ensuring it can be re-energized when needed.

## What does Western mean by "service" when talking about idle services?

When Western retires an idle service, we remove all the equipment that directly serves your location — such as the transformer, meter loop, and meter. This means your specific service is no longer active.

However, the overhead or underground primary line that feeds your area may or may not be removed right away. Whether those primary facilities stay in place is determined by Western, based on system needs and cost considerations. In other words, your "service" is separate from the larger backbone of Western's electric system, and while your service equipment will be removed, the primary line may remain. (This is determined by Western - See #2 in the Policy above).

## What is WCE's policy on someone who disconnects and reconnects within a 12 month period?

Unless otherwise specified in the Electric Service Agreement, if a member disconnects and then reconnects service at the same location within one year, WCE will bill for the total of the minimum monthly charges that would have applied during the time the service was disconnected. This ensures that the costs of keeping the service location ready for use are covered, even during the period when electricity was not actively being used.

(For this reason – most people will just decide to keep the meter on versus disconnect it).

## What are some examples when WCE would not retire a service at their discretion?

WCE may decide to keep a service in place, even if it's not currently in use, when it has potential value for future development or system reliability. Examples include services that:

- Are easy to patrol and require little maintenance
- Are located along a main access road
- Could provide an alternative feed for the system
- Are within ¼ mile of a water well
- Are within ½ mile of an oil well
- Are within ¼ mile of an irrigation well
- Are 3-phase
- Are relatively new (less than 10 years old)
- Are near communication equipment
- Are needed to maintain the mesh communication system
- Are residential in nature

These factors help ensure that Western is prepared for growth, maintains reliable service options, and uses member resources efficiently.

## What does it cost if I retire a service then decide that I would like it to be reconnected down the road?

Once a service is retired, it is considered permanently removed. Reconnecting it in the future is treated as a brand-new service installation, meaning you would be responsible for all associated construction costs, permits, inspections, and fees to bring power back to the location. While Western remains the legal owner of the equipment and property installed, we will continue to maintain it; however, the costs to re-establish service after retirement will still apply and can vary depending on factors like distance from existing lines, equipment needed, and site conditions.

While there is no way to know what the costs would be down the road, we can tell you that a new single-phase service on an existing structure would cost around **\$3,800 today, before any additional allowances or upgrades – this is a basic cost that doesn't include moving/adding poles, conductors or upgrading equipment**. Each site is specific to needs and could increase costs significantly but a site-specific estimate would be required.

## Why did it take so long for you to contact me if this was a policy in 2022?

While the Idle Service Policy was updated in 2022, applying it across all accounts required a careful, step-by-step process. Part of the delay was due to waiting for our new electronic mapping systems to be installed and updated, which allowed us to accurately identify and review all services affected by the policy. We wanted to ensure our records were correct before contacting members, so the process took longer, but it helped us be thorough and fair to everyone.

## I paid for the service to be installed initially, why can't I just keep it there without paying the monthly fee for it?

While you covered the initial cost to install the service, there are ongoing expenses for Western to keep it in place — even if you're not actively using electricity. We are responsible for maintaining the equipment, ensuring it's safe, and keeping it ready for use at any time. This includes inspections, system capacity, and liability for the infrastructure on your property.

The 2022 Cost of Service Study determined that the monthly idle service fee reflects the actual cost for Western to maintain and keep the service available. Without this charge, those costs would have to be absorbed by all other members, which our Board determined was not an equitable way to recover the expense.