

SANFORD WATER DISTRICT

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Information for Sanford Water District Property Owners

According to Title 35-A, Section 6111-A; the Maine Water Utility Lien Laws; water districts may secure liens for unpaid water charges. Although the Sanford Water District's initial means of collection is the shut-off process, we will use the lien process to collect any remaining debt.

Many property owners are unaware of this law and its use. Like the property tax and sanitary district lien laws, these liens create secured mortgages on the property, and municipalities and water and sanitary utilities have the highest claims on the property – higher than any bank that holds a mortgage.

There are two major aspects of these laws that a property owner needs to know in the event that a property is liened as a result of unpaid bills.

1. These liens can result in automatic foreclosure on the property if the charges remain unpaid when the lien matures.
2. The lien follows the property, not the person who used the service. In other words, if a new property owner does not deal with unpaid utility bills during a property closing, the new owner will be responsible through the lien process for the unpaid charges of the prior user. In the case of landlord tenant relationships, the landlord will be responsible through the lien process if a tenant leaves without paying their water charges.

A \$350.00 charge in addition to the applicable reconnection fee to cover the costs of collection of the account balance, including the cost of notification of tenants, preparation and filing of the lien and the preparation, filing and service of the complaint, summons and other associated pleadings will be added to the past due amount. This charge is in addition to any damages, costs, interest and attorneys' fees as may be awarded by the court in any collection action.

Any questions may be directed to the Business Manager, Judy McKula.