



We hope the following information is useful for owners of rental property in the Hartford Utilities service area. This is distributed to keep landlords informed of Hartford Utilities collection procedures. After reviewing the information, we request you update your contact information with us so that we can insure you receive notifications in a timely manner. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact us at 262-673-8212.

LANDLORD/TENANT SERVICE AND NOTIFICATION INFORMATION

It is the responsibility of the property owner to notify the utility that a property is a rental. (Owner/Landlord Form)

Landlords should ask tenants to apply for utility service before moving in. The tenant or landlord may call Hartford Utilities to provide the tenants name and phone number or visit our website to complete the Move In Service form: <https://www.hartfordutilities.org/service-forms> prior to the tenant's move-in date. If the tenant fails to sign up for service it will result in the landlord receiving the bill. Hartford Utilities is unable to backdate any move-in/move-out.

We encourage landlords to collect social security and driver's license information from each tenant. We suggest also charging a deposit for utility service in cases where tenants will be responsible for paying their utility bill, as our ability to charge a security deposit is limited by state law, and there are instances when we may look to the landlord for payment of the tenant's unpaid utility bill.

During the period that a tenant is a customer of Hartford Utilities, we will bill the tenant directly. As defined in 2013 Wisconsin Act 274 and Wisconsin Statute 66.0809, landlords will be notified via monthly letter when a tenant's utility account is past due.

The tenant will receive a past due disconnection notice, as well as a disconnection reminder. The first notice will provide 10 days for the tenant to either pay the past due balance, or make payment arrangements. If the tenant has not complied with requirements of the notice, we attempt to contact them to advise them their service will be disconnected. We follow up with disconnection of service within 24 hours of notification, which is typically effective in prompting a customer to pay their past due balance. Customers are required to pay a reconnection charge if they have been disconnected. In some instances, when the customer cannot afford to pay the full past due balance in order to have their service reconnected, we will agree to a down payment and a payment plan for the remainder.

When a tenant vacates a rental property, there will be a final reading and a final bill sent to the tenant's address on file. If the tenant has moved within our service area, and leaves a past due balance at another property, that balance gets paid off first. If a tenant has moved outside our service area, and does not pay their bill, we can place outstanding utilities as a lien against the property taxes (see section titled "Utility Bills and The Tax Roll").

During the periods of time when the rental property is vacant (between tenants), the account is placed in the landlord's name and billed to the landlord.

DISCONNECTIONS LIMITED DURING WINTER MORATORIUM AND DURING SUMMER HEAT ADVISORIES

Due to health concerns that can occur from loss of heat during the cold weather months (November 1 – April 15) or loss of the ability to cool a residence during the days when there is a heat advisory in effect, the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin prohibits utilities from disconnecting electric service to occupied dwellings at that time.



DPA TARIFF As of May 2015, there was a change made to our deferred payment agreement (DPA) policy.

A DPA will not be offered if:

- The residential tenant has a greater than \$100.00 of account arrearages more than 90 days past due.
- The tenant has defaulted on a deferred payment agreement in the past 12 months.
- The residential tenant is responsible for account arrearages that were placed on any property owner's tax bill in the utility's service territory in the past 24 months.
- The residential tenant has a balance that accrued during the winter moratorium that is more than 80 days past due.

JOINT METERING

If you have a situation where there is one meter that services more than one unit, it is the owner's responsibility to have that account in his/her name. (*Wisconsin Act 40, Sec. 196.643 (2)*) It is the responsibility of the property owner to complete any necessary maintenance to ensure proper metering to separate units. If it is found that a tenant is paying for a meter that services multiple units Hartford Utilities will notify the owner and immediately move the utility account back into the landlord/owner's name.

UTILITY BILLS AND THE TAX ROLL

As a municipal utility, Hartford Utilities is permitted by Wisconsin Statute 66.0809 to place unpaid utility bills on the tax roll as a lien. One of the primary reasons for the statute is the fact that rates charged by the public utilities are not designed to earn a profit, and bad debts are therefore not easily absorbed. Utilities cannot choose their customers nor can they typically require that customers pay a security deposit. Since we are not able to collect deposits from all customers, we encourage landlords to collect a security deposit sufficient to cover utility bills, to avoid having to take responsibility for non-payment. **We also encourage landlords to verify that utility bills have been paid in full before refunding security deposits.**

If we do not receive payment from the renter or landlord by October 15, we will send a letter to both parties with notification of a pending tax lien against the property, to be filed on November 15.

HOW CAN A PROPERTY OWNER/LANDLORD SEEK COST RECOVERY FOR PAST DUE AMOUNTS PAID BY THE PROPERTY OWNER ON THE TENANT'S BEHALF?

Statutory provisions effective in 2015 (as part of 2013 Wisconsin Act 274), provide an option for property owners. Statute 66.0809 describes that a property owner can obtain and file a lien against a residential tenant's personal assets for payment made from landlord funds for the tenant's past due utility charges.

This provision is available when the property owner does not have a security deposit available for the unpaid utility bill, and only in cases of residential rental property. Additionally, the property owner's payment for the tenant's utility charges must be made to the utility after October 15 (either directly or through their property taxes), at which time the landlord must request a letter of lien transfer. Once the payment is made it is our understanding that this process is rather simple and requires only a small fee to the County Clerk of Court for the filing.