

# City of Coldwater / Coldwater Board of Public Utilities



COLDWATER  
MICHIGAN • 1861



*Information for realtors, attorneys,  
financial institutions, and property owners*

*Beginning with the 2018 summer tax bill, any outstanding utility bill that is six months or more delinquent as of March 31st of each year will be placed on the summer tax bill, if not paid in full by April 30th of that year.*

*This means that all delinquent utility bills may become liens on the property to which the utility service was furnished by the CBPU.*

## Real Estate Closings

To protect new property owners for being assessed for delinquent utilities from a previous owner or renter, final reads and bills should be requested prior to the real estate closing. A portion of the proceeds should be held in escrow until all utility and refuse bills are paid.

Current property owners must sign an authorization form allowing for the release of information regarding their account before the request will be processed.

[Unpaid Utility Bill Payoff Sheet \(PDF\)](#)  
[Special Assessment/Lien Verification form \(PDF\)](#)

## Land Contract Sales

Land contract sellers are advised that in the event of default and forfeiture of the land contract by the buyer, the land contract seller will get the property back, together with liens for unpaid property taxes and unpaid utility bills. The only means of protecting a land contract seller from losses is for the seller to require a sufficient down payment to cover any potential losses and, or monitoring the land contract purchaser's timely payment of property taxes and utility bills owed to CBPU.

## Rental Properties

There are three options available to landlords, which they can utilize to fully or partially protect themselves from possible liens for their tenant's unpaid utility bills.

- 1.) Withhold Refund of Security Deposit Until Final Bills Are Paid
- 2.) Landlord Pays Utility Bills & Includes in Rent

## Rental Properties Cont.

### 3.) File Landlord Affidavit Form with Utility Customer Service Office

This exception enables a landlord to avoid responsibility for tenants utility bills under specified conditions, as described in this section, but applies to CITY REGISTERED rental units only. To properly register your unit(s) as rental units with the City, please contact the Rental Inspector at 517-279-6929.

The Landlord Affidavit Form is available at the Customer Service Department, Neighborhood Service Department, and online at [www.coldwater.org](http://www.coldwater.org). When submitting the Affidavit Form, please provide a copy of the valid signed lease agreement.

The Affidavit is only effective during the term of the lease and must be filed for each new lease. If a tenant continues to rent after the affidavit/lease expires, another affidavit must be filed immediately along with a new lease to continue uninterrupted protection from liens.

In addition, the City must be provided with notice if the lease is terminated for any reason prior to its expiration date, not more than thirty (30) days after the termination of the lease for any reason. Such notice must be in writing to be valid-no verbal statements will be accepted. The landlord shall immediately arrange for a final read and transfer of the account to the name of the landlord or subsequent tenant if a new affidavit is filed.

Adhering to the above procedures provides assurance that the landlord will not be held liable for tenant's unpaid bills.

[Landlord Affidavit Form \(PDF\)](#)  
[Rental Registration \(PDF\)](#)

**Ordinance 804 (Water, Sewer, Electric Utility Liens) and Ordinance 806 (Refuse Liens)**  
can be viewed in their entirety here ([804](#) / [806](#))

One Grand St. | Coldwater, MI 49036  
517.279.9531 | [www.coldwater.org](http://www.coldwater.org)

