YOUR RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

AS A RESIDENTIAL CUSTOMER

 OF THE DOVER & FOXCROFT WATER DISTRICT



**Approximate Amounts of Water Required for Typical Household Activities**

Laundry…………………………………20 to 45 gal per load

Shower………………………………….20 to 30 gal per shower

Tub Bath……………………………….30 to 40 gal per bath

Dishwasher……………………………15 to 30 gal per load

Toilet…………………………………….3.5 to 7 gal per flush

Drinking Water………………………1-2 qt/day/person

Garbage Disposal……………..…...5 gal per minute of use

Car Washing……………………..…..5 gal per minute of use

Lawn Watering………………………7 to 43 gal per 100 ft²

The commonly accepted value for water usage for domestic populations is 100 gallons per day per person. Figuring 70 as low use, 100 average use, and 125 as high use. 1 ft² (cubic foot) = 7.5 gallons, 10 ft² = 75 gallons.

Dover and Foxcroft Water District has launched a new website! Please visit us at:

**doverfoxcroftwater.org**

The site has updates on projects and events, office information and forms, tips, and much more.

Please also subscribe to our website to receive ALERTS by email and/or text!

Online Bill Pay is also available by clicking “Pay Your Bill Now”!

**Page 2**

**Please Keep This Booklet**

**This booklet provides existing and new residential customers with a summary of their rights and responsibilities as required under Chapter 660 of the Maine Public Utilities Commission (MPUC).**

**Contents**

**Application for Service………………………….………..….…Page 3**

**Deposits………………………………………….……………….……Page 4**

**Bills……………………………………………………….………………Page 4-5**

**Meters…………………………………………………………….……Page 5**

**Payments and Payment Plans…………………….…………Page 6**

**Disconnection………………………………………….……………Page 7-8**

**Reconnection……………………………………….……..……….Page 8**

**Medical Emergencies…………………………………….……..Page 9**

**Interruption of Service……………………….………………..Page 9**

**Liability & Abatement for Interrupted Service………Page 9**

**Complaints…………………………………………………….…….Page 10**

**Utility Information……………………………………………….Page 10**

 **Page 3**

**Anti-Discrimination Policy**

The Dover & Foxcroft Water District does not and will not discriminate anyone based on race, color, religion, gender, age, national origin, disability, marital status, or sexual orientation in any of its operations. We are committed to providing a welcoming environment for all our customers and staff.

**Approval of Service**

You will be required to complete an application form when applying for service. We will either accept or deny your application within one (1) business day.

If your service application is denied, we will notify you in writing of the reasons for the denial and steps you can take for approval of service.

**Cost of Service**

When applying for service we will explain the minimum costs and usage and any other fees for installation, establishment, turn on, etc.

If you have any questions about the cost of your service please call our District Office at 564-2310.

Our rates must be approved by the Maine Public Utilities Commission. We cannot change these rates without the approval of the MPUC. You have the right to review and comment on our proposed rates before the MPUC approves or denies any changes.

**Old Unpaid Bills**

 If you have previously had service with us and have unpaid bills, you will be asked to pay the bills or make a payment arrangement before approval of a new service. If you dispute the old bill or you are unable to agree with us about a reasonable payment arrangement, please see the “Complaint” section of this booklet page 5.

 Attention landlords: State Law Title 35, MRSA; section 6111-A states the water district is able to lien your property for any unpaid water usage bills, whether it was billed to you as the owner or to your tenant. You may want to check with us to make sure the account is paid in full before returning security deposits.

**Page 4**

**Deposits**

 The water district may ask for a deposit from an applicant under certain circumstances as defined by the Maine Public Utility Commission. These circumstances include having an unpaid account balance on a service, previous disconnection for nonpayment, previous disconnection for unauthorized use or theft of service, or having no source of income sufficient to pay for the cost of the service.

**When We Require a Deposit We Will:**

* Inform you in writing
* Tell you what you can do to begin or continue service
* Tell you what to do if you disagree with the deposit request or amount
* Pay interest on your deposit
* Give you a choice between a cash deposit or allow another person to “guarantee” your bills up to the deposit amount. The guarantor must be a customer in good standing with us.

**Payment Options for Deposit Amount**

 We can require a deposit that is equal to your anticipated bills for two billing periods.

 You may either pay the full deposit or pay in three payment, with half the total due immediately, 25% in thirty (30) days, and 25% in sixty (60) days. However, we may require a fill payment of a deposit if you are already using a payment plan to pay off an unpaid bill.

**Bills**

**Estimated Bills**

We will try to send you a bill based on your actual usage, but there may be circumstances that we will need to send an estimated bill. We will note on your bill that the usage was estimated and may vary with the next reading.

**Page 5**

**Make Up Bills**

If we must issue a makeup bill for past service that you were not billed for, we will offer you a payment plan. If the reason for the make up bill is our fault (equipment failure or our billing error for example), you will be billed for only one (1) year of past service even if the billing mistake was for a longer time.

**Third-Party Notice of Bills**

 Let us know if you would like another person to receive a copy of any bill or disconnection notice we send. We will mail a copy to the person you designate, but you are still responsible for payment.

**Meters**

 Meter repair and replacement by ordinary wear will be paid for by the water district. It is the customer’s responsibility to maintain the plumbing and fixtures within his/her own premises and to protect them from freeze ups. Repairs for damage caused by freezing, hot water, or by other causes within your control may be charged to you, the customer, including the cost of removing and replacing the damaged meter.

 We test your meter regularly to make sure it is operating correctly. The Maine Public Utilities Commission establishes the schedule of required meter tests and the accuracy standards that a meter must meet. All tests shall be done at the expense of the water district unless you request more than one test in eighteen (18) months, in which case the district may charge a reasonable fee for the test. You have the right to be present when the meter is tested, but please make an appointment. (Maine Public Utilities Commission Rules, Chapter 62, Sec 3, ss F&G)

 You can check the accuracy of your bill and monitor your own usage by reading the meter yourself. Please call the office for information on how to read your meter.

**Page 6**

**Payments**
 We accept payment by cash, check, money order, or credit/debit card. Payments can also be made online at doverfoxcroftwater.org. Your bill is considered paid on the day we receive payment. If you make a partial payment, we will apply it to the oldest balance due.

 If the bank does not honor your check, a charge will be put on your account of $5.00 for each account to which the check was applied or the amount of the bank charges up to $20.00. Repayment of the check amount must be made in a reasonable amount of time to prevent the disconnection process.

 Bills are due and payable within thirty (30) days of the invoice date. Interest will be added at the current rate to your unpaid balance after thirty days. (Our current rate can be found on page 5 of this booklet).

**Financial Assistance**

Low income customers may qualify for help to pay a utility bill. The best source of information is your local Community Action Agency. We can also help refer you to available programs.

**Payment Plans**

We will continue service even if you cannot pay your account in full. You will need to pay a reasonable portion of your bill and agree to pay the rest in affordable weekly or monthly payments. You must also agree to pay all future bills within 30 days of the postmark until the overdue amount is paid in full.

We will consider the following when establishing a payment plan:

* Your ability to pay.
* Your previous payment history.
* The reason the bill cannot be paid.
* How long the bill has remained unpaid.
* Whether disconnection would pose a danger to your household.

If you do not make payments according to a written payment plan, we will send you a disconnection notice that gives you three (3) business days to pay the full overdue amount. We are not required to make a second arrangement, but we will work with you under certain situations.

You do not have to agree to a payment plan or any other proposed settlement of a dispute if doing so means giving up your rights.

**Page 7**

**Disconnection**

We do not want to disconnect your service. We will work with you to resolve any issues. However, if a customer refuses to cooperate, we have the right to start disconnection procedures.

We have the right to disconnect when:

* You fail to pay or make a payment arrangement for an overdue bill.
* You break a written payment arrangement.
* You fail to pay a deposit, arrange to pay for a deposit or provide someone who is willing to guarantee payment.
* You are using the service without having applied for it.
* You refuse to let us onto your property to install, read, inspect, or repair district property.
* You have tempered with the meter or have obtained service without payment.
* You misrepresent who you are to get service.
* You fail to comply with a decision of the Maine Public Utilities Commission or its Consumer Assistance Division.
* You have a cross-connection violation.

We are not allowed to disconnect for:

* Service charges, such as merchandise or services, not regulated by the Maine Public Utilities Commission.
* An old bill that was not properly transferred to your account when you applied for service.
* Estimated Usage. However, we can disconnect for this if you have refused to allow us to read a meter.
* Medical emergencies (see page for more information)

We also cannot disconnect service of a tenant just because the landlord asks us to or does not pay the bill. If your landlord does not pay the bill, we will issue you a notice and give you opportunity to put the service in your name. You are not responsible for your landlord’s unpaid bill.

**Page 8**

**Disconnection Notice**

 If we do have the right to disconnect your service, we will start the disconnection process. You will be notified at least fourteen (14) days before the disconnection date. We can give you only three (3) business days’ notice if you have broken a payment arrangement, failed to pay a deposit, paid with a bad check, or received service without applying to become a customer. We can disconnect without notice only if there is unauthorized use (meter tampering) or a dangerous condition.

 A notice is good for ten (10) business days after the disconnection date stated. The ten (10) days may be extended if you refuse to give us access to the meter or other device to turn off service.

 The disconnection notice will let you know what to do to avoid disconnection and how to dispute your bill or the disconnection itself.

 We will not disconnect service on a Friday, weekend, legal holiday, the day before a holiday, or on any day our office is not open for business.

 If you are requesting to have your service disconnected, we will accommodate you as soon as possible. We would appreciate an advanced notice. We will bill you for usage until your service is disconnected.

**Reconnection**

We will attempt to reconnect your service during regular business hours on the day of the request. Service must be provided by 5:00 p.m. the next business day after your request, provided you have paid your overdue bill or agreed to a payment arrangement. We may also charge you a deposit equal to two billing periods if you are disconnected for nonpayment, unauthorized use, or theft of service. When both a deposit and unpaid balance are required, you may pay the smaller amount in fill and enter a payment arrangement on the larger amount.

**Page 9**

**Medical Emergencies**

We will not disconnect your service or refuse to reconnect service when you or someone in your home is seriously ill, provided a registered physician confirms that an emergency exists. If you cannot get a doctor’s certification right away, we will wait three (3) business days to receive notice. We will require written certification from your doctor, including specific reasons why service is necessary and how long the emergency will last. Disconnection can be postponed due to medical emergency for up to 30 days, and can be renewed up to 90 days.

A medical emergency does not cancel your bill. We will refer you to financial assistance agencies and as you to negotiate a reasonable payment arrangement.

**Interruption of Service**

We may need to interrupt your service on occasion to repair or maintain our equipment. When possible, we will let you know why and how long you can expect to be without service.

 If being without service would pose a danger to any member of your household, notify us. We will put you on a priority list to restore service as soon as possible.

**Liability and Abatement for Interrupted Service**

We are not responsible for damage caused by routine system maintenance, unless it is due to our lack of reasonable care. Discoloration and low water pressure may be experienced during hydrant flushing and repairs. Our water meets State of Maine Water Quality Standards, but we are not responsible for meeting unusually high water quality standards for specialized or industrial customers.

You may apply for a pro-rated reduction on your minimum bill if your service is interrupted for more than forty-eight hours through no fault of your own.

**Page 10**

**Complaints**

 Please call us if you have any questions or complaints. We only have four (4) full time employees but will try to have at least one employee available during business hours to answer your questions, set up payment arrangements, and resolve disputes. If there is not an answer in the office, please leave a message on the answering machine and someone will get back to you as soon as possible.

 We will investigate your complaint and try to resolve it. If you have further questions or concerns after our resolution you have the right to appeal to the Consumer Assistance and Safety Division (CASD) of the Maine Public Utilities Commission, State House Station 10, Augusta, Maine 04333. You can call the CASD toll free at 1-800-452-4699. Before you call or write to the MPUC, you must give us a chance to respond to your complaint.

 We cannot disconnect you for a disputed amount, but you do have to pay the portion of the bill that is not in dispute. If you contact us before the service is disconnected and we cannot agree on a payment arrangement, you may appeal to the MPUC as described above.

**Water Utility Information**

Dover and Foxcroft Water District

48 Morton Ave., Suite B

Dover-Foxcroft, ME 04426

Telephone: 207-564-2310 Fax: 207-564-3175

Website: doverfoxcroftwater.org and facebook.com/DFWaterDistrict

Business Hours: 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Monday through Friday

(Please use gym entrance on Tuesdays as Town Office is closed that day)

Billing Schedule: Quarterly

Returned Check Policy: Minimum of $5.00 or amount the bank charged

Late Payment Fee: 0.949% per month

Collection Trip Fee: $25.00

Establishment of Service: $25.00

Reconnection Charges During Business Hours: $55.00

Reconnection Charges After Business Hours: $55.00 per hour w/ min. charge of $110.00

Answering Machine available after hours for information on Reporting Emergency Situations

**WATER CONSERVSTION TIPS**

Four Basic Steps to a Water Conservation Program

Step One: Economize!

* Look at your water habits developed over a lifetime. A lot of water goes down the drain because we have always thought of water as being plentiful and cheap. Typically, inside your house, bathroom facilities constitute nearly 75% of the water used. Become conscious of the amount of water you use and look for ways to use less whenever you can.
* Turn the faucet of while brushing your teeth. Use a glass of water for rinsing your teeth.
* When shaving, use a sunk filled with rinse water. Do not let the faucet flow.
* Take short showers instead of baths and consider bathing small children together.
* Do not use the toilet as a trash can.
* Turn off the flow while soaping or shampooing.
* Refrigerate a bottle of drinking water instead of letting a faucet flow until the water is cold.
* Turn the faucet off while cleaning vegetables. Rinse them in the sink with the drain closed or in a pan of water.
* If you wash dishes by hand, do not leave the faucet flowing for rinsing. Instead, use a dish rack and spray device to rinse them. If you have two sinks, fill one with soapy water and one with rinse water.
* Fill the sink with water to pre-rinse dishes before putting them in the dishwasher.
* Add your garbage to the trash instead of putting it down the garbage disposal. Disposals use a great deal of water and add unnecessary solids to the sewer and septic system. This also may be a good time to start composting!
* Instead of using water to defrost foods, defrost foods in the refrigerator overnight or use a microwave.
* The most important thing to do: Think as you use water!

Step Two: Repair Leaks!

* A leak of just one drop per second wastes 2,400 gallons of water a year. Leaks are one of the great enemies of your water conservation program and they can’t be taken lightly.
* Repair leaking faucets and toilets (a leaking toilet can waste 200 gallons a day)

Step Three: Install Water Saving Devices!

* Since passage of the Federal Energy Act in January 1994, all new manufactured toilets use 1.6 gallons per flush. If your present toilet was manufactured before 1994, consider placing a plastic gallon container in the toilet tank to save water with each flush.
* Install low flow showerheads that use no more than 2.5 gallons per minute at maximum flow.
* Install low flow faucets that use no more than 2.2 gallons per minute at maximum flow.
* Replace the more common, less efficient, top loading clothes washer with a high efficiency, front loading washer which uses about 30% less water and 40-50% less energy.

Step Four: Reuse Water!

* Unused or slightly used water is often suitable for other purposes, even with no treatment or filtration. During a severe drought, reusing water may become a necessity. When maximum conservation is called for, make the most of any water before you let it go down the drain!
* Keep an empty container near sinks. Put it under the faucet while waiting for water to warm up. Pour any leftover water from cooking or drinking into it. Once full, use the water for gardening.
* Place a bucket in the shower to catch water this is wasted while waiting for the shower water to warm up.
* Take dirty water from birdbaths, flower vases, or pet dishes and reuse on potted plants.
* When it rains, leave buckets outside to collect water for washing cars and watering plants and gardens.
* Turn off ice makers for refrigerators and use trays instead.
* Position downspouts, with extensions if needed, so rain water runs onto the lawn or into the garden, not down the walk or driveway.
* If a dehumidifier exists, use the water it collects to water plants and gardens.

Additional Tips: Winter Water Conservation Tips!

* Winterize outdoor spigots to avoid pipes bursting from freezing.
* Put skirting up around mobile homes or houses on pilings. Insulate and heat tape raiser pipe into unit.
* Insulate hot water pipes to reduce the amount of water which must be run to get hot water to the faucet.
* Locate the master water shut off valve in your home, and mark it for quick identification. If a water pipe were to burst, it could cause flooding and property damage, not to mention immense water waste, if the valve were left open.

Additional Tips: Summer Water Conservation Tips!

* Water lawn and garden early in the morning.
* Keep your garden weed-free, since weeds use available water in the soil.
* Do not water lawn and garden on windy days.
* Wash cars with a pail of soapy water.
* Use a hose with a trigger nozzle to rinse.
* Wash cars on the grass. This will water the lawn at the same time.
* Cover an outdoor pool when not in use. Clean the pool filter regularly. Do not discharge pool water to streams or storm sewers. Spread filter backwash and pool water on grassy areas.
* Use a broom to sweep driveways and sidewalks rather than washing them down with a hose.