

**§551. Entry on record; neglect to discharge**

A mortgage only may be discharged by a written instrument acknowledging the satisfaction thereof and signed and acknowledged by the mortgagee or by the mortgagee's duly authorized officer or agent, personal representative or assignee. The instrument must recite the name or identity of the mortgagee and mortgagor, or their successors in interest and the record location of the mortgage discharged. The instrument, when recorded, has the same effect as a deed of release duly acknowledged and recorded. [PL 1999, c. 230, §1 (AMD); PL 1999, c. 230, §2 (AFF).]

Within 60 days after full performance of the conditions of the mortgage, the mortgagee shall record a valid and complete release of mortgage together with any instrument of assignment necessary to establish the mortgagee's record ownership of the mortgage. Within 30 days after receiving the recorded release of the mortgage from the registry of deeds, the mortgagee shall send the release by first class mail to the mortgagor's address as listed in the mortgage agreement or to an address specified in writing by the mortgagor for this purpose. As used in this paragraph, the term "mortgagee" means both the owner of the mortgage at the time it is satisfied and any servicer who receives the final payment satisfying the debt. If a release is not transmitted to the registry of deeds within 60 days, the owner and any such servicer are jointly and severally liable to an aggrieved party for damages equal to exemplary damages of \$200 per week after expiration of the 60 days, up to an aggregate maximum of \$5,000 for all aggrieved parties or the actual loss sustained by the aggrieved party, whichever is greater. If multiple aggrieved parties seek exemplary damages, the court shall equitably allocate the maximum amount. If the release is not sent by first class mail to the mortgagor's address as listed in the mortgage agreement or to an address specified in writing by the mortgagor for this purpose within 30 days after receiving the recorded release, the mortgagee is liable to an aggrieved party for damages equal to exemplary damages of \$500. The mortgagee is also liable for court costs and reasonable attorney's fees in any successful action to enforce the liability imposed under this paragraph. The mortgagee may charge the mortgagor for any recording fees incurred in recording the release of mortgage and any postage fees incurred in sending the release to the mortgagor. [PL 2011, c. 146, §1 (AMD).]

With respect to a mortgage securing an open-end line of credit, the 60-day period to deliver a release commences after the mortgagor delivers to the address designated for payments under the line of credit a written request to terminate the line and the mortgage together with payment in full of all amounts secured by the mortgage. The mortgagee may designate in writing a different address for delivery of written notices under this paragraph. [PL 1999, c. 230, §1 (NEW); PL 1999, c. 230, §2 (AFF).]

All discharges of recorded mortgages, attachments or liens of any nature must be recorded by a written instrument and, except for termination statements filed pursuant to Title 11, section 9-1513, acknowledged in same manner as other instruments presented for record and no such discharges may be permitted by entry in the margin of the instrument to be discharged. [PL 1999, c. 699, Pt. D, §22 (AMD); PL 1999, c. 699, Pt. D, §30 (AFF).]

**SECTION HISTORY**

PL 1973, c. 18 (AMD). PL 1973, c. 625, §226 (AMD). PL 1973, c. 788, §166 (AMD). PL 1977, c. 100, §§1,2 (AMD). PL 1999, c. 230, §1 (AMD). PL 1999, c. 230, §2 (AFF). PL 1999, c. 699, §D22 (AMD). PL 1999, c. 699, §D30 (AFF). PL 2011, c. 146, §1 (AMD).

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