

UTILITY TALK

Winter 2022

Natural Gas Wastewater Stormwater Water Streetlights

Serving Richmond, Henrico and North Chesterfield

Weatherizing Your Home Doesn't Have To Be Expensive

According to The Department of Energy, the average American family spends \$2,000 each year on energy costs; \$200 to \$400 of that could be going to waste due to drafts, air leaks around openings and outdated equipment. Upgrades aren't always an option so here are some affordable tools you can use to still save money this winter:

1. Water Heater Tank Cover – Cover your tank with a water heater blanket and reduce heat loss by more than 25% and your total water heating costs by 4% or more. If you have a tankless water

heater pipe, using insulation foam will give similar results.

2. Outlet Covers – Use outlet covers to reduce the amount of heat loss in your home. Almost 2% to 5% of air infiltration comes from outlets on outside walls.

3. Door Sweeps – Attach door sweeps to exterior doors. Gaps as small as 1/8-inch around the front and back doors let in as much air into the home as a small window opened halfway. To fix this issue, we recommend attaching door sweeps to exterior doors.

4. Caulking – Seal gaps and cracks around the non-moving

parts of the window. Use caulking or expanding foam sealants. 1/16-inch cracks around a window are equivalent to a window open 3 inches.

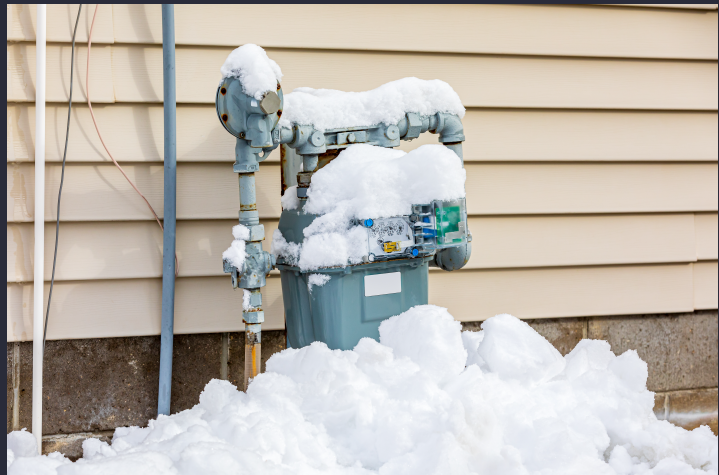
5. Weather stripping – Install weather stripping on exterior doors and windows to prevent heat loss.



Get Assistance With Past Due Utility Bills

We understand financial hardships and want to help you get back on track. Financial assistance programs are available for DPU customers, including MetroCare heat and water assistance for households below federal poverty guidelines, payment plans for all past due accounts and equal monthly payment plans for gas accounts. DPU will soon be offering more convenient and flexible payment plan options through a partnership with PromisePay. Be sure to visit www.rva.gov/public-utilities and follow DPU on social media for the latest information and how to apply. Customers with past due utility bills are strongly encouraged to take steps to come current to avoid disconnection.

Keep Natural Gas Meters Clear of Snow, Debris & Dirt



- **DO** remove excessive snow, ice, dirt and mulch from your meter.
- **DO** have at least a 3 foot clearance around your gas meter to allow the utility provider easy access.

- **DON'T** have a buildup of snow, dirt or mulch on your gas meter (these substances can cause rust and possible gas leaks).

Keep in mind the pipe or outlet side of the natural gas meter is the responsibility of the home or business owner. It is a good practice to ensure that this pipe is painted to keep it from rusting and causing natural gas to escape. Using an over-the-counter rust resistant spray paint makes for a safer environment for the consumer.

DID YOU KNOW?

A dripping faucet can waste as much as 2,000 gallons of water in a year. A leaky toilet can waste as much as 200 gallons per day. Identify and repair leaks as soon as possible. Take a look at your water usage during a colder month. If a family of four exceeds 12,000 gallons (or over 16 ccfs) per month, there are most likely some leaks.

DPU Senior Care Program

The City of Richmond Department of Public Utilities Senior Care Program provides benefits to the primary residence for seniors age 65 and above:

No late fees. Customers whose accounts are marked as seniors do not incur late fees.

Security deposit waiver. Deposits are waived for transferring and restoring services for seniors.

Third party notification. Seniors can designate a third party to receive a copy of their utility bill or to ask about past due balances on their behalf.

For more information and guidelines for these programs please call (804) 646-4646.

Stop Pipes From Freezing This Winter

Your home's water line can leak or break due to frozen water. Below freezing temperatures cause water to freeze midflow through your home's pipes. This can lead to a burst pipe or leaking water line. Typically, your home's pipes are at risk to freeze when the outside temperature is at 20°F or below.

To prevent your water pipes from bursting try these tips:

- Leave cabinet doors open. If your kitchen sink is on an outside wall, be sure to leave cabinet doors open to allow warm air into the cabinet.
- Keep faucet running. If the temperature is below 20°F always keep one or two faucets running slowly. Water moving through the system should prevent the line from freezing.
- Keep the temperature up. If you plan to be away during the cold weather, leave the heat on in your home. Set your thermostat no lower than 55°F.

Does Your Home Have Lead Water Lines?

As we now know, lead is a harmful element and all sources of it in our drinking water should be eliminated. Many older water service lines are made of lead. The City treats its drinking water with a substance to prevent lead particles from leaching into our drinking water. DPU began removing lead piping from the City's water distribution system in the early 1990s and encourages the replacement of lead piping on private property. Grant funds are available to assist property owners as well as schools and daycares to replace lead service lines. The City's Healthy Homes Grant program assists homeowners with the replacement of interior lead piping. More details and an application for Lead Service Line Replacement Grant funds are available at www.rva.gov/public-utilities or by calling the Lead Service Line at (804) 646-8600. This program is made possible by funding from the Virginia Department of Health and the American Rescue Plan Act.

Winter Snow Stormwater Pollution Prevention Tips

When temperatures drop, the ground is frozen so it is harder for soil to absorb the melted snow. This leads to increased flooding during times of heavy snowfall. Also, standing and flowing water on the ground picks up debris, litter and pollutants. These elements make winter runoff a potential threat to the health of the James River.

The next time it snows remember these tips:

- Clear out snow surrounding your downspouts. This will allow melting snow from your roof to flow instead of collecting at your foundation, which can help prevent basement flooding.
- Do not pile snow on top of storm drains. Clear off any blocked storm drains near your property.
- Pile snow in flat areas where it is likely to be absorbed by the ground when it melts instead of becoming stormwater runoff.

**Stay connected with us for more information
on programs, events and conservation tips.**

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