



City of Richmond Department Of Public Utilities UTILITY TALK

Natural Gas | Water | Wastewater | Stormwater | Streetlighting

Serving Richmond, Henrico and North Chesterfield.

Winter 2021 Edition

How To Save On Energy Costs This Winter

'Tis the season for dropping temperatures outside and cranking up the temperature inside. Don't let the chilly weather impact your natural gas bill.

Combat door and window drafts. A simple solution is caulking, sealing and weather-stripping around doors, windows and fireplaces. And if you don't have a storm door, invest in one! It'll pay for itself.

Adjust your thermostat. Keep it at a comfortable level while you are home and turn it down when you leave. Using a programmable thermostat could save 10% on energy costs every year.

Change the direction of your ceiling fans. The clockwise motion pushes the warm air that naturally rises back down where you can feel it.

Add insulation to exposed areas. Areas like crawl spaces, basement ceilings and attic floors are places where you may need to add insulation to keep the heat in and the cold out. And if you have an older house, check your existing insulation routinely since insulation deteriorates over time.

In an effort to assist those age 65+ this winter, FREE senior weatherization sample kits are available during regular business hours at City Hall (900 E. Broad St., Room 115) and East District Initiative (701 N. 25th St) until supplies last. Look for the City of Richmond Department of Public Utilities on Facebook and Twitter (@RichmondDPU) for more money-saving tips.



WHO CAN I CALL?*

REASON FOR CALL	646-4646	311
Utility Account Information	✓	✗
Utility Payment Plans	✓	✗
Start, Stop or Transfer Utility Services	✓	✗
Natural Gas Leaks (Leave the area first! For strong gas odors call 911)	✓	✗
Water Main Breaks/Leaks	✓	✗
Meter Checks or Flooded Water Meters	✗	✓
Streetlight Outage	✗	✓
Stormwater Drain Backup	✗	✓
Sinkholes	✗	✓
Sewer Backups and Odors	✓	✗
Standing Waters	✗	✓
Damaged Gas Meters	✓	✗
Missing Manhole Covers	✓	✗
Erosion	✗	✓
Illicit Discharges	✗	✓
Trash (Pickup, Cans)	✗	✓
**Public Works and Animal Control Issues	✗	✓

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.

*To mark underground gas, water, sewer and cable lines before digging or construction call 811.

**All Public Works and Animal Control issues should be called in to 311 or reported via rva311.com or the RVA311 app: traffic signals out, road and sidewalk issues, trees and vegetation issues, trash pick-up, trash cans, code enforcement, stray animals, parking and vehicle issues, graffiti, dumping and other city services.



CITY OF RICHMOND
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC UTILITIES

30901-I-0254



MetroCare Heat Needs Your Help

MetroCare Heat assists those having financial difficulties paying their heating bills. Customers wishing to assist a family in need can make contributions to MetroCare through their utility bill. Direct contributions can also be made by sending a check to: DPU/MetroCare Heat

730 E. Broad Street, 5th Floor
Richmond, VA 23219



All donations are used to aid in the payment of primary home heating bills. No contributions are used for administrative expenses. *Eligible families needing assistance can apply by calling Capital Area Partnership Uplifting People (CAPUP) at 804-788-0050. Eligibility guidelines include household income below the federal poverty guidelines, unemployment or a family crisis.*

NOTICE

On November 1, DPU reinstated late fees and resumed collection activity on all past due utility accounts. To avoid late fees and collection activity, customers that are past due on their utility bill are strongly encouraged to enroll in a payment plan. *

*It is important to make the agreed upon payments as failure to do so will result in cancellation of the payment plan. To enroll in a payment plan, call us at 804- 646-4646. Agents are standing by to assist Monday through Friday 8:00 am – 5:00 pm. Please be prepared to make a down payment and have your customer account number along with your last or current bill statement. For other payment assistance options visit our website, rva.gov/public-utilities/billing. If you have a bad debt balance that has been transferred to Ballato Law Firm, you will need to contact them for further assistance.

News from the Office of Finance

The City of Richmond's tax relief program provides assistance to elderly and disabled homeowners. Citizens who participate in the program can have their annual real estate tax bills reduced by 25% to 100%, depending on household income. To qualify for this program, homeowners must (as of December 31): be 65 years of age or older or permanently and totally disabled; live in the dwelling; have a combined household income of \$60,000 or less; and have assets (net worth) of less than \$350,000. The Department of Finance must receive applications and recertification forms by March 31st. Applications for first-time applicants and hardship cases will be considered through June 15th and are available at City Hall, East End and Southside offices, Libraries, Social Services, Senior Connections, City Council offices, at rva.gov or by calling the Tax Relief line at 804-646-6015.

There is also a tax freeze program that allows eligible citizens an opportunity to pay the same amount of taxes over a three-year period by freezing the current year's tax amount. Both this program and the tax relief program participants receive a monthly credit on their Solid Waste and Recycling fee.

First half of real estate tax payments are due January 14, 2022.

Natural Gas Safety: Making You Aware. Keeping You Safe.

What The Law Requires

The law requires that all excavators call 811 or 800-552-7001 before digging to have the location of utility lines marked prior to excavation. The use of mechanized equipment is prohibited within two feet of either side of any utility line. Failure to comply with this law can jeopardize public safety, and can result in costly damages and substantial fines.

Pipeline Safety Awareness

DPU works diligently to ensure pipeline safety through a variety of measures, including the 811 system and Dig Safe programs, inspections, design and construction practices, workforce qualifications, public education, industry safety practices and government oversight, pipeline markers and facility mapping, gas leak surveys and patrols of critical gas facilities.

What Happens When There's A Gas Leak

Emergency response officials (usually the Fire Department) will secure the area and take steps to eliminate ignition sources. They will evacuate the general public from the vicinity of the leak and contact Richmond Gas Works. Excavators who damage a natural gas line should immediately stop work, eliminate all sources of ignition such as trucks, cars, backhoes and other potential ignition sources and evacuate the site to a safe distance and call Richmond Gas Works at 804-646-4646. Everyone on the premises should be made aware of the damage, and the public and traffic kept away. Do not try to fix the pipe or slow the rate of leaking gas. Do not try to extinguish a gas burning fire unless there is a threat to life. If you suspect or become aware of a dent, scratch, or coating damage to the pipeline, Richmond Gas Works should be notified immediately.

How to Get Additional Information

Richmond Gas Works - 804-646-4646

Web - www.richmondgasworks.com

Call Before You Dig (Virginia) - 811 or 800-552-7001 Web - www.va811.com

Office of Pipeline Safety - www.phmsa.dot.gov



CONNECT WITH US



Official DPU Twitter:
@RichmondDPU



PHONE:
804-646-4646
TTY: 711 to 646-4646



For Twitter Updates
On Street Closings:
@DPUstreetnews



Youtube:
Richmond DPU



Official DPU Website:
www.rva.gov/public-utilities



Facebook Page:
www.facebook.com/rvadpu/



Richmond Gas Works Website:
www.richmondgasworks.com