



Natural Gas Water Wastewater Stormwater Streetlighting -- Serving Richmond, Henrico and North Chesterfield

## The Department of Public Utilities is Here for You with News You Can Use

### Keep Natural Gas Meters Clear of Snow, Debris, Dirt

Remember to remove excessive accumulations of snow and ice from the natural gas meters and piping at your home or business.



Always ensure there is a three foot clearance around your natural gas meter to allow easy access by the utility provider. Make sure your natural gas meter is clear of mulch and dirt as these substances can cause rust in the meter and possibly lead to escaping natural gas.

The pipe or outlet side of the natural gas meter is the responsibility of the homeowner. It is 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.

Leave your residence or office immediately if there is a strong rotten egg odor of natural gas, then contact the Department of Public Utilities at 646-4646 or call 911. If your natural gas appliances are not functioning correctly, call an appliance repair company and have the problem fixed immediately.

### Are You Ready for Cold Weather?

With crisper, cooler days ahead, now's the time to make your preparations before the winter sets in!

- **Change disposable air filters** in your furnace three times a year, more often if you have pets.
- **Caulk storm windows** wherever you feel drafts.
- **Weather strip doors** to keep cold air out. As much as 40 percent of a home's heat is spent warming cold air leaking through outside doors.
- **Set the thermostat lower.** Going from 72 down to 68 degrees can save up to 12 percent on your heating bill.
- **Adding insulation to attics and basement ceilings** can result in significant energy-savings if you live in an older home.
- **On sunny days, pull open the**



Ceiling fans are not just for summer! They circulate heat, too.

**drapes and blinds.** Use sunlight to warm the house.

• **Adjust ceiling fans** to turn clockwise in the winter. Ceiling fans can bring heated air down from ceilings, but they must be turning clockwise to accomplish this.

• **Move furniture away from vents, registers and radiators.** Blocking an air vent can cause a pressure imbalance that will disrupt the flow of heat throughout the room.

### MetroCare Heat Needs Your Help

MetroCare Heat assists those having financial difficulties paying their heating bills.

Contributions are made to MetroCare by donations made through customer utility bills. Direct contributions can also be made by sending a check to DPU/MetroCare Heat, 730 E. Broad Street, 6th Floor, Richmond, VA 23219.

All donations are used to aid in



the payment of primary home heating bills. No funds contributed are used for administrative expenses.



[www.RichmondGov.com](http://www.RichmondGov.com)

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### IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

Customer Service: 646-4646 Streetlight Outages & Gas, Water & Sewer  
Emergencies: 646-4646  
TTY: 711 to 646-4646  
Miss Utility: (Call Before You Dig): 811



CITY OF RICHMOND  
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC UTILITIES



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**Chesterfield customer Delsenia Willis-Sammons says her family fills four tubs of recycling each pick-up. (Pictured left is her grandson, Miles.) Customer Quianna Adams (right) is also a faithful recycler.**

## Win a \$25 bill credit with a photo

The Department of Public Utilities would like to see photos of *you* using water, conserving water, picking up after your dog, pouring grease in a can, using natural gas -- anything related to our five utilities -- water,

wastewater, stormwater, streetlighting or natural gas. We'll share them with the readers of *Utility Talk* and on our blog at

[www.cordpu.blogspot.com](http://www.cordpu.blogspot.com)

Send a digital photo as an attachment (2-4 MB) to [dpuc@richmondgov.com](mailto:dpuc@richmondgov.com). If your photo is selected for the next *Utility Talk*, you'll win a \$25 credit on your gas bill! All entries also appear on our Twitter account @UtilityBuddy and our Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/rvadpu](http://www.facebook.com/rvadpu) as they are submitted so follow us on Twitter and Facebook, too!



**Customer Sarah Lageman shows off her new, stylish stormwater rain barrel. "It blends so well with my landscaping!" she says**

## Pipeline Safety Awareness

DPU works diligently to ensure pipeline safety through a variety of measures, including the one-call Miss Utility system (811) 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

What happens when an excavator reports escaping natural gas?

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 the City of Richmond Department of Public Utilities.

Does your excavator know what to do if they damage a natural gas line?

Excavators who damage a natural gas line should immediately stop work, eliminate all sources of ignition such as trucks, cars, backhoes, other potential ignition sources and evacuate the site to a safe distance and call the Department of Public Utilities 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, the Department of Public Utilities should be notified immediately by calling 646-4646.

## What the Law Requires

Did you know every eight minutes an underground utility line is damaged because someone decided to dig without first calling 811?

The law requires that all excavators notify the local one-call (Miss Utility) system by dialing 811 or 800-552-7001 before digging.

The one-call (Miss Utility) center will contact the owners of the underground facilities and pipelines in the immediate area of digging so that they can mark the location of their facilities prior to excavation. Excavators are required to allow utilities to mark their underground facilities and take certain precautions when working in the immediate area of these underground facilities.

The use of mechanized equipment is prohibited within two feet of either side of any utility. The one-call (Miss Utility) center can provide the specific details of what is required. Failure to comply with this law can jeopardize public safety, and can result in costly damages and substantial fines.



**Know what's below.  
Call before you dig.**

### How to Get Additional Information

City of Richmond Department of Public Utilities -- 804-646-4646

<http://www.RichmondGov.com/PublicUtilities/NaturalGasSafety.aspx>  
Call Before You Dig (Virginia) -- 811 or 800-552-7001

Web -- [www.va811.com](http://www.va811.com) Office of Pipeline Safety -- [www.phmsa.dot.gov](http://www.phmsa.dot.gov)