



DEPARTMENT OF  
**PUBLIC  
UTILITIES**

September 2023

Dear Valued Customer:

The Department of Public Utilities remains steadfast in our commitment to improve the overall customer service delivery. Our work remains in progress, and I am excited to share updates since the June 2023 customer letter.

Since modifying DPU's Call Center hours on June 14 (i.e., closed to the public every Wednesday from 12:00 noon to 5:00 pm), we have been able to deliver refresher training to our tenured staff, onboard and train several new hires and process over 3,120 customer related transactions and emails. Additionally, the billing team is hard at work and has processed more than 5,900 bill adjustments during this same period. We could not have accomplished this without our dedicated staff and customers like you who have been patient and understanding while we work to recover from the challenges of the pandemic. Our modified operating hours will continue through September 27, 2023.

► **FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS:** DPU remains committed to providing safe and reliable utility service while creating exceptional value. Resuming disconnections is not an easy decision, nor is it taken lightly. If you have fallen behind on your utility payments, DPU is here to help! Full information and application details on all current programs can be found on our website at [www.rva.gov/public-utilities](http://www.rva.gov/public-utilities). If you need assistance with any account services, don't delay – email [dpucustserv@rva.gov](mailto:dpucustserv@rva.gov) or give us a call today at (804) 646-4646.

- **PromisePay Payment Plans** are available for any customer with a past due balance. Visit [richmond.promise-pay.com](http://richmond.promise-pay.com) to enroll today with as little as \$10 down and flexible and convenient payment terms up to 36 months.

► **BILLING DISPUTES:** DPU will place a courtesy hold on ANY account that is under dispute. Simply email [dpucustserv@rva.gov](mailto:dpucustserv@rva.gov) and include "**COURTESY HOLD**" in the subject line so that we can prioritize your request.

- **High Bill Notification Letters** – If your consumption is more than 200% or three times your normal consumption, in addition to issuing a bill, DPU may also call or mail you a high bill notification letter with tips on how to check your property for leaks and other recommendations. All water leaks on private property are the responsibility of the owner. For a more comprehensive list of billing adjustments, please refer to the June 2023 customer letter.



*June customer letter*

- **Backlog Response Timeline** – DPU remains focused on resolving backlog requests and has made great strides in this effort. Please allow up to three (3) billing cycles for DPU to process your request. If it has been longer than 90 days since your initial request, please send (or resend your initial email) to [dpucustserv@rva.gov](mailto:dpucustserv@rva.gov) and include the word "**STATUS**" in the subject line so that we can prioritize your request.
- **Estimated Bills** – DPU has made great progress in reducing the number of estimated meter reads since February 2023. End of June results show that DPU is producing timely and accurate bills for 92.5% water meters and 99.1% for gas meters. The goal is 97% or better for each service type. If you see **BLUE** paint or a **BLUE** meter lid in your neighborhood, that is DPU marking our assets so that we can easily locate them when it's time to read the meter each

month. A reminder that obstructing access to gas and water meters may be considered a violation of the City of Richmond Code of Ordinance.

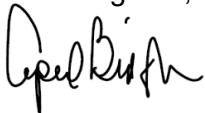
- DPU's new team of meter readers are collecting manual reads for billing purposes. Once an actual read is obtained, you may notice a fluctuation in your bill as you may have received a credit, or you may owe more to make up the difference.
- DPU remains committed to resolving estimated billing issues within three (3) billing cycles.

► **BE IN THE KNOW (*News you can use*)** - In alignment with DPU's strategic initiatives to be customer focused, innovative and efficient, we have implemented process changes to provide a better experience for you.

- **Revert to Owner** – In accordance with the City of Richmond Code of Ordinances, tenant accounts will revert to the owner if DPU does not receive new tenant information within five (5) business days of the previous tenant's final bill request. This mitigates delays in rendering the final bill and helps to improve timely and accurate billing.
- **Continuous Service**– In alignment with industry practice as well as an attempt to reduce costs and improve service delivery, DPU will no longer suspend services between occupancy changes. Customers who vacate a property should contact DPU to advise of their move-out date. Additionally, we are unable to honor requests for seasonal turn-offs of natural gas service due to staffing shortages.
- **Avoid the Wait!** – We value your time and sincerely apologize for the long wait times when calling or visiting DPU for assistance. We encourage you to use the following self-service options when wait times are high or simply for your convenience:
  - Got Questions? Email [dpucustserv@rva.gov](mailto:dpucustserv@rva.gov)
    - Request an adjustment
    - Research or transfer a payment
    - Request a refund
    - Move In/Move Out, Request Final Bill
    - Other billing / account information
  - Visit <https://www.rva.gov/public-utilities/billing> and click on **Online Bill Pay with E-Z PAY** to:
    - Access and download a copy of the current bill
    - Create a profile to access and download up to six (6) months of bills, payment, and billing history. Initially only the current bill will be available, but additional bills will accrue over time
    - Pay your bill
  - Visit <https://richmondgasworks.com/service/start-stop-transfer-service/> to request a final bill (move out) or to start service (move in) for **water, gas or both services**.
    - Click Information **you** need to get started
    - Click Information **we** need to process your request
    - Email your request to [dpucustserv@rva.gov](mailto:dpucustserv@rva.gov) and include "**MOVE IN or MOVE OUT**" in the subject line so that DPU can prioritize your request

Thank you for your patience as we work to normalize operations, with a continued focus on longer-term solutions. We appreciate the opportunity to serve you. Please stay tuned for more updates and customer enhancements at [www.rva.gov/public-utilities](http://www.rva.gov/public-utilities).

Kind Regards,



April Bingham, MPA  
Senior Director