

Your Voice Matters: How to Participate in Richmond DPU Rule-Making

A Plain Language Guide to Public Notice, Comment & Hearing Procedures¹

What is this about?

When Richmond's Department of Public Utilities (DPU) wants to create or change rules about your water, gas, electric, wastewater, or stormwater services, YOU have the right to learn about it and share your opinion. This guide explains how.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. How will I know when DPU is proposing new rules?

DPU must notify you **at least 10 days** before any public hearing through:

- Local newspaper
- DPU website
- DPU social media

2. Where can I see the proposed rules?

- **Online:** DPU website (searchable PDFs)
- **In person:** DPU Office, 730 East Broad Street, Richmond (Mon-Fri, 8 a.m. -5 p.m.)
- **Free copy:** Request one free copy; email is free, additional paper copies at cost

3. Can I share my opinion?

YES! You can:

- **Speak at the public hearing** (3 minutes per person)
- **Submit written comments** at the hearing or within 3 days after
- **Email comments** to the contact person listed in the notice

4. What happens at a public hearing?

1. DPU staff explains the proposed rule (15 minutes)
2. Citizens speak for or against it (3 minutes each)
3. Questions can be asked and answered
4. Written comments are accepted
5. Next steps are explained

5. Do I need to sign up to speak?

Sign-up starts 30 minutes before the hearing, but walk-ins are welcome too!

6. What if I need special accommodations?

- **Wheelchair access:** All venues are ADA compliant
- **Translation/Sign language:** Request 3 business days before the hearing
- **Alternative formats:** Available upon request

¹ This handout summarizes Richmond City Code Section 28-26 procedures. For complete details, see the full Public Notice, Comment, and Hearing Procedures policy at the DPU office or website.

7. What happens after the hearing?

- DPU reviews all comments
- Director decides within 30 days to:
 - Adopt the rule as proposed
 - Adopt with changes based on your input
 - Withdraw or delay the proposal
- Final rules are filed and posted online

8. When do new rules take effect?

After all requirements are met and the Director approves.

Your Rights at a Glance

- ✓ **10+ days notice** before any hearing
 - ✓ **Free access** to all proposed rules
 - ✓ **Speak** at public hearings
 - ✓ **Submit** written comments
 - ✓ **Receive** responses to your concerns
 - ✓ **Know** the final decision and reasons
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Tips for Effective Comments

1. **Be specific** - Explain how the rule affects you
 2. **Offer solutions** - Suggest alternatives if you disagree
 3. **Stay respectful** - All viewpoints are welcome
 4. **Ask questions** - Staff can explain technical details
 5. **Follow up** - Check the website for final decisions
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Important Contacts

DPU Main Office
730 East Broad Street, Richmond, VA 23219
Hours: Monday-Friday, 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM

For Questions About:

- Current proposals: Check notice for staff contact
 - General inquiries: Lee Crowell (804) 646-5209 or Lee.Crowell@RVA.Gov
 - Website: <https://rva.gov/public-utilities/rulesandregulations>
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Special Notice for Federal Projects

Some rules involving federal funding require 30+ days notice and additional procedures. Extra time ensures thorough review and compliance with federal requirements.

Remember: Your participation helps DPU make better decisions that affect your utility services!