



UTILITY TALK

July/August 2026

Natural Gas Wastewater Stormwater Water

Serving Richmond, Henrico and North Chesterfield

Summer Is Here & Water Usage Is on the Rise!

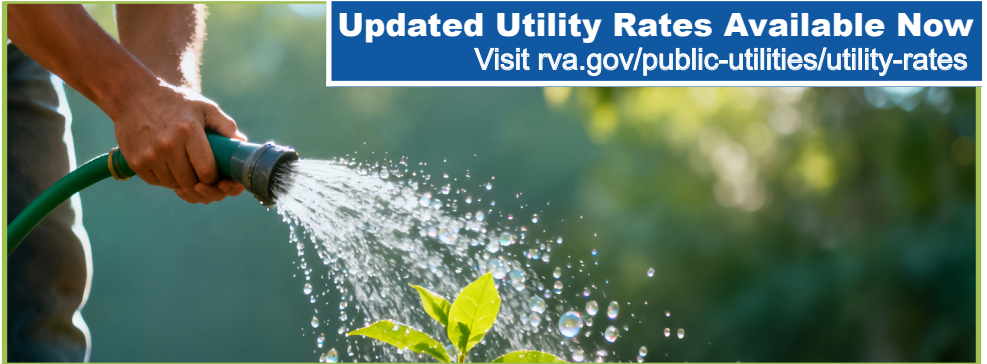


As temperatures rise, so does water demand across Richmond. During the summer months, outdoor watering, gardening, car washing, pool maintenance and increased household activity can significantly increase water usage. In fact, outdoor watering is often one of the largest contributors to seasonal spikes in water demand. Higher demand places additional stress on water treatment and distribution systems, making conservation especially important during hot weather.

Beat the heat and try these tips to conserve water this summer:

1. Water lawns only when necessary.
2. Water early in the morning or late in the evening to reduce evaporation.
3. Use a broom instead of a hose to clean driveways and sidewalks.
4. Install WaterSense-labeled fixtures and irrigation products.
5. Check irrigation systems for leaks or broken sprinkler heads.
6. Wash full loads of laundry and dishes.
7. Identify and fix leaks as soon as possible.

By using water efficiently, residents can help reduce demand, protect one of our most valuable resources and support reliable service throughout the summer.



Updated Utility Rates Available Now

Visit rva.gov/public-utilities/utility-rates

Every time you turn on the tap, take a shower, cook a meal or heat your home, you rely on critical utility infrastructure working behind the scenes. Delivering safe, reliable water and natural gas services requires a complex network of treatment facilities, pipelines, pumping stations, storage tanks, technology and skilled professionals.

To provide these essential services, the City of Richmond Department of Public Utilities (DPU) carefully plans and invests in infrastructure, operations and maintenance. Utility rates are reviewed and approved annually by City Council. Rates are based on the cost of delivering services, including operating expenses, infrastructure improvements and capital projects that help maintain system reliability.



Before rate recommendations are developed, DPU gathers input from multiple stakeholder groups, coordinates with the City Budget Department, works with financial consultants and uses advanced financial modeling tools to evaluate future needs. In addition, a comprehensive cost-of-service study is conducted every four to five years to ensure rates remain fair, equitable and aligned with actual service costs.

These efforts support DPU's Strategic Plan focus area of Financial Health and Stability, helping balance affordability, infrastructure investment, and financial resiliency while continuing to provide essential services for Richmond residents and businesses. For more information on the current utility rates, visit rva.gov/public-utilities/utility-rates.

DID YOU KNOW?

Citizens Academy returns this Fall. Want to learn what happens behind the scenes to deliver water and natural gas service throughout Richmond? Citizens Academy offers residents an inside look at the infrastructure, operations and the dedicated professionals who help keep essential services running every day. Additional details and registration information will be announced in September. Check out the highlights on our social media.



DPU conducts annual testing of gates and related infrastructure throughout the city. Regular testing helps verify that gates, doors and mechanical components function properly during emergencies.

Richmond's Floodwall Protects Our City Through Preparedness

Richmond's relationship with the James River has shaped the city's history, and at times, brought devastating flooding. One of the most significant floods occurred in 1972 when the remnants of Hurricane Agnes dropped 7 to 10 inches of rain across the region. The James River crested at 26 feet, causing widespread flooding in Downtown Richmond, Shockoe Bottom and Manchester. The storm caused over \$220 million in damage across Virginia.

In response to the region's flood risks, Congress authorized construction of Richmond's floodwall system through the Water Resources Development Act of 1986. The floodwalls were later completed in 1995 after three years of construction. Today, the floodwall system includes much more than the visible walls along the river. Gates, flood doors and underground drainage channels all work together to help protect Richmond during major weather events.



Infrastructure often goes unnoticed until it's needed. Annual floodwall testing is one example of how DPU works year-round to maintain critical systems that help protect lives and property throughout Richmond.

The floodwalls range from 15 to 25 feet tall on the north side of the James River and more than 43 feet tall on the south side. The system was designed to withstand a "100-year flood" which is a flood event that has a 1% chance of occurring in any given year. In recent history, the floodwalls have proven their necessity. In 1996, rising waters from a major blizzard and later Hurricane Fran tested the system as river levels approached flood-stage conditions.

5 Steps to Safe Digging Always Call 811 Before You Dig



Whether you're planting a tree, installing a mailbox, building a deck or starting a major construction project, follow these steps before you dig to protect yourself, your neighborhood and utility services.

- 1 **Call 811** 
- 2 **Utilities Notified** 
- 3 **Lines Marked** 
- 4 **Check Completion** 
- 5 **Dig Safely** 

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