

UTILITY *Talk*

Fall 2011

Dwight C. Jones, Mayor
Building a Better Richmond

NATURAL GAS

WATER

WASTEWATER

STORMWATER

STREET LIGHTING



Para una copia de este boletín en español, visite la página www.richmondgov.com/departments/publicutilities/utilitytalk.aspx o llame a la Oficina de Enlace Hispano de la Ciudad de Richmond al 646-0145.

Using Our Water Wisely

The city of Richmond serves more than 62,000 water customers in the city and sells wholesale water to neighboring counties, providing thousands more with clean drinking water.

Water from the city's water source, the James River, is treated at Richmond's Water Treatment Plant near Dogwood Dell and distributed to customer homes and businesses through a series of reservoirs, pumping stations, and more than 1,200 miles of underground water mains and pipes.

The water treatment plant can produce up to 132 million gallons of treated water per day.

For the last several years, Richmond's summers have been dry enough to require voluntary, and sometimes mandatory, water conservation. Citizens are asked to water lawns and wash vehicles less frequently or not at all.

Citizens can also help during low-water periods in many small ways, including running washing machines and dishwashers only with full loads, taking shorter showers, and collecting stormwater to water houseplants. During mandatory conservation periods, surcharges for excessive water use may appear on utility bills.

Each spring, the Department of Public Utilities publishes the Consumer Confidence Report on Drinking Water Quality with complete information on how the treatment process works and what

substances are contained in city water. This report is mailed to all property owners and made available on our website at www.richmondgov.com. Extra copies can be requested by calling 646-5224 or by sending an email to dpuc@richmondgov.com.

One of the useful tips contained in the Consumer Confidence Report is minimizing your exposure to lead deposits found in water. The amount of lead in Richmond's water is minimal and safe, but if your home predates 1986, when

Congress banned the use of solder containing greater than 0.2 percent lead, you should let the faucet run until you feel the water temperature change in order to flush it.



And always use the cold water tap for cooking purposes. These two simple tips will help eliminate what little exposure to lead you may have from the pipes in your home.

When the Lights Go Out, Natural Gas Portable Generators Come On!

Natural gas is the most efficient and cleanest burning fuel for powering emergency portable generators. Compared to oil or coal, natural gas

generators produce lower nitrogen, sulfur and carbon dioxide emissions.

When a generator is set up as emergency backup power, it automatically turns on when your power fails. Natural gas generators can produce enough electricity to power your entire household or just the most important appliances like the refrigerator or hot water heater.

For safety, just be sure the generator itself is outside of the house. Never fuel or run a portable generator inside the home or garage as they pose a serious fire and carbon monoxide threat when they are operating in a contained area. During inclement weather, keep the generator free of ice and snow.



IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

Customer Service: 646-7000 TDD: 1-800-855-1155
Streetlight Outages & Gas, Water & Sewer Emergencies: 644-3000
TDD: 1-800-855-1155
Miss Utility: (Call Before You Dig): 811



CITY OF RICHMOND
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC UTILITIES



Be Safe with Natural Gas

The City of Richmond Department of Public Utilities (DPU) operates 1,825 miles of natural gas pipelines for residential, commercial and industrial use in Richmond, Henrico County and portions of Chesterfield and Hanover counties. We follow federal requirements for safety and security.

Natural gas has one of the best safety records of any energy source. And just like all other forms of energy, it requires proper handling. Gas leaks caused by damage to a pipeline may pose a hazard and increases the potential to ignite.

Leak Recognition and Response

A natural gas leak may be detected by smell, sight, or sound.

•Smell—Natural gas is colorless and odorless. We add a distinctive, pungent odor (similar to rotten eggs) so that you will recognize it quickly.

•Sight—You may see a white cloud, mist, fog, bubbles in standing water, or vegetation that appears to be dead or dying for no apparent reason.

•Sound—You may hear an unusual noise like roaring, hissing or whistling.



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

Our Customers Love Using Natural Gas!

The Department of Public Utilities would like to see photos of *you* using natural gas products to share with the readers of *Utility Talk* and on our blog at www.cordpu.blogspot.com.

Do you cook with natural gas, have a natural gas hot water heater or outdoor grill? Does your clothes dryer use natural gas? Send a digital photo (1-3 MB) to dpuc@richmondgov.com. If your photo is selected for the next *Utility Talk*, you'll win a \$25 credit on your gas bill!

This quarter's winner is Chris Price who lives near Forest Hill Park. "We love cooking on our vintage gas stove," Chris says. "Gas makes for the best, most consistent results!"

What should you do if you suspect a leak?

• Do not strike a match, use telephones, switch on/off appliances, lights, or even a flashlight in the area you smell gas. These items can produce sparks that might ignite and cause an explosion.

• Protect life: *Move* to an environment where the smell is no longer present.

• Call 911 or city of Richmond DPU at (804) 646-7000.

Miss Utility Requirements - 811

The greatest risk to underground pipelines is accidental damage during excavation. Virginia law requires:

•All excavators on public or private property to notify the local one-call (Miss Utility) underground locating system by dialing 811 or (800) 552-7001 at least two full working days before digging. This marking service is free.

Precautions Around Gas Meters

• Do not scratch or damage the protective coating (paint) on the meter and piping.

• Do not bury any portion of the meter or its shutoff valve under dirt or mulch.

•Do not hang things or anchor laundry lines or plant supports to the gas meter or piping.

•Do not chain a pet, bicycle, gas grill or anything else to the gas meter or piping.

•Maintain a safe clearance between your outdoor grill and the gas meter.

•Maintain a two-foot clearance to allow access to the meter and meter shut-off valve.

•Call DPU for meter protection if the meter is exposed to vehicular traffic.

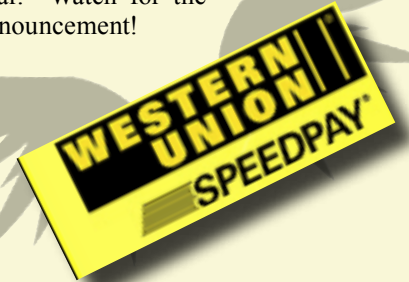


Chris Price and the vintage gas stove

Western Union SpeedPay coming to Richmond

The city of Richmond Department of Public Utilities is partnering with Western Union to offer DPU customers even more ways to pay their utility bill.

Western Union SpeedPay is coming this fall. Customers can make urgent, same-day payments by phone before 2 p.m., using major credit cards, debit cards, electronic checks or ATMs. An online payment website is coming at the end of the year. Watch for the announcement!



DID YOU KNOW...?

Prevention is key to avoiding carbon monoxide poisoning

▲ Have your fuel-burning appliances inspected by trained professionals at the beginning of every heating season.

▲ If you must use an unvented gas or kerosene space heater, carefully follow the directions, use the proper fuel, and keep doors to the rest of the house open. Crack a window for ventilation and proper fuel-burning.

▲ Never idle the car in the garage, even if the garage door is open. Fumes can build up quickly in the living area of your house.

▲ Don't use a gas oven to heat your home, even for a short time.

▲ Never use charcoal grills indoors, in the fireplace, or on a semi-enclosed porch.

▲ Don't sleep in a room with an unvented gas or kerosene space heater.

▲ Call the Consumer Product Safety Commission at 1-800-638-2772 or visit www.cpsc.gov for more information on how to reduce your risks.