



UTILITY TALK

Fall 2023

Natural Gas Wastewater Stormwater Water Streetlights *Serving Richmond, Henrico and North Chesterfield*

Neighborhood News

The Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) Outfall 004 project is part of Richmond's CSO Interim Plan to improve the sewer system and control combined sewer overflows. The project involves installing a larger pipe and other equipment to increase the pipes' capacity and control flow. The Department of Public Utilities will also build sewer pipelines and make changes near Gillies Creek. This project will help reduce the number of overflows by allowing more capture and storage during heavy rain events. The construction started in July 2023 and will continue for about 18 months, affecting traffic along Williamsburg Road. Federal support from the American Rescue Plan Act helped fund the CSO Outfall 004 project. This project is a further investment to protect and preserve the James River – our only drinking water source. You can stay updated on the project's progress by visiting rva.gov/public-utilities.

Prepare Your Home for Fall and Beyond

Fall is the perfect time to prepare our homes for the colder months ahead. As the weather begins to cool down, maintaining a warm and energy-efficient living space becomes a top priority. Simple weatherization measures can make a significant difference in keeping the chill out and reducing your energy consumption. Here are three top weatherization items to consider:

1. **Weather Stripping** is an effective way to seal openings in doors and windows with gaps or cracks that could allow cold air to seep into your home. By creating a tight seal around the edges of doors and windows, weather stripping prevents drafts and air leakage, ensuring your home stays cozy during fall and winter.
2. **Outlet Covers** fit between the cover and the outlet to act as additional insulation and help reduce drafts and conserve energy. Electrical outlets on exterior walls can be a source of heat loss during colder months.
3. **LED Lightbulbs** consume less electricity and have a longer lifespan, making them an eco-friendly and cost-effective choice.

The City of Richmond Department of Public Utilities will host its annual Senior Weather Kit Giveaways in October. Any customer 65 years of age and up can receive a free weatherization kit containing outlet covers, weather stripping and an LED light bulb. For upcoming weatherization kit giveaway dates and locations, visit rva.gov/public-utilities/news.



PromisePay: Your Solution to Past Due Utility Bills

The City of Richmond Department of Public Utilities has partnered with PromisePay to offer flexible payment plans for any natural gas or water customer with a past due balance. With PromisePay, customers can choose from one of the various payment plan options, allowing individuals to structure their repayments in a way that suits their financial circumstances. This financial assistance option not only assists customers in addressing past due balances but also plays a key role in helping them avoid the inconvenience of service disconnection. Also, customers enrolled in a PromisePay payment plan can sign up for automatic payments, payment reminders and other account notifications. This payment plan option is available for both residential and commercial customers. To learn more and enroll in a plan visit richmond.promise-pay.com.

DID YOU KNOW?

Switching to low-flow shower heads can decrease water consumption by at least 40%. This not only conserves water, but it reduces your monthly water bill providing significant end-of-year savings. Showers also require energy to heat the water, thus cutting down on water usage also cuts down on energy usage.

FOG Free Homes For The Holidays

With holiday gatherings just around the corner, it's important to be mindful of how we manage and dispose of fats, oils and grease (FOG). Mishandling FOG can lead to serious consequences, including clogged pipes, sewer overflows, environmental hazards and financial burdens. With the weather cooling down and festive cooking in full swing, let's take extra precautions to protect our environment, infrastructure and wallets.

- 1. Safely Contain the Grease** - Dispose of kitchen grease safely by using a designated container such as a metal can, glass jar or plastic bottle. Allow the used grease to cool before collecting it and when the container is full, dispose of it with your regular trash.
- 2. Avoid Pouring Oil Directly in the Trash** - Mix the liquid oil with an absorbent material like cat litter or used coffee grounds in a sealable container before disposal.
- 3. Wipe Greasy Pans** - Before washing greasy pans, use a paper towel to wipe off leftover grease. This simple practice reduces the amount of FOG going down the drain during dishwashing, preventing potential drainage issues.
- 4. Use Strainers** - Use strainers or mesh screens over sink drains to catch food scraps and solid debris. This proactive approach prevents FOG from entering your plumbing system. Avoiding pipe blockages can save you from spending on costly plumbing services.



Responsible FOG disposal starts at home and each action we take contributes to a healthier environment for all.

Neater Meters Makes Happy Readers

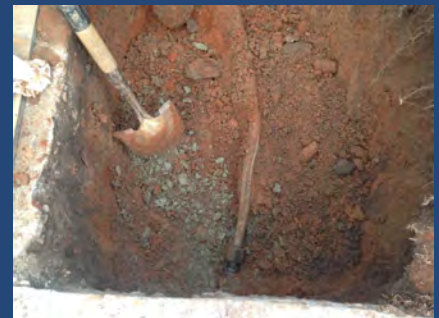
DPU has been working hard to be sure that not only are you receiving quality service but also accurate meter readings. This past spring, we introduced you to a new class of meter readers. Our new meter readers have made great strides in locating, analyzing and collecting data from the City's meters. These efforts have resulted in a significant decrease in estimated bills and allowed DPU to work towards the continued goal of providing accurate and timely billing. We still need your help to meet this goal. Help us by "keeping your meter neater." Check to see that your meter is not blocked by vehicles or other objects such as garbage or recycling bins, tall grass, mulch, flower beds or home décor. If we are unable to read your meter electronically and unable to access your meter, you will receive a door hanger with an explanation of what prevented a reading. Obstructing access to your meter can be a violation of the City of Richmond Code of Ordinances and could result in the disconnection of utility services.



Example of a covered water meter

Let's Work Together To Eliminate Lead in Drinking Water

Protecting public health and safety is at the heart of DPU's mission. Providing clean and safe drinking water is what we do each day. Recognizing the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's National Lead Poisoning Prevention Week (October 22 – 28), we remind citizens that eliminating the risk of lead getting into drinking water is a shared responsibility. Richmond's drinking water does not contain lead when it leaves the treatment plant. Rather, instances of lead in water can occur when plumbing materials made of lead corrode. This can include private piping materials between the City's water meter and your home. Learn more about how the City protects the public service lines as well as how property owners can determine if their private lines are made of lead and the funding available to replace them. For more information, visit rva.gov/public-utilities/water-utility.



Residential lead line replacement

Stay connected with us for more information on programs, events and conservation tips.

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