



Natural Gas Water Wastewater Stormwater Streetlighting -- Serving Richmond, Henrico and North Chesterfield

The Department of Public Utilities is Here for You with News You Can Use

Save on Energy Costs this Winter

'Tis the season for dropping temperatures outside and cranking up the temperature inside. Don't let the chilly weather impact your natural gas bill.

Combat door and window drafts. A simple solution is caulking, sealing and weather-stripping around doors, windows and fireplaces. And if you don't have a storm door, invest in one! It'll pay for itself.

Adjust your thermostat. Keep it at a comfortable level while you are home and turn it down when you leave. Using a programmable thermostat could save 10 percent on energy every year.

Change the direction of your ceiling fans. The clockwise motion pushes the warm air that naturally rises back down where you can feel it.

Add insulation to exposed areas. Areas like crawl spaces, basement ceilings and attic floors are places where you may need to add insulation to keep the heat in and the cold out. And if you have an older house, check your existing insulation periodically, since insulation deteriorates over time.

Look for **Richmond Gas Works** on Facebook and Twitter (@Richmond-GasWrks) for more money-saving tips and life hacks related to natural gas.

MetroCare Heat Needs Your Help

MetroCare Heat assists those having financial difficulties paying their heating bills.

Contributions are made to MetroCare by donations made through customer utility bills. Direct contributions can also be made by sending a check to DPU/MetroCare Heat, 730 E. Broad Street, 5th Floor, Richmond, VA 23219.

All donations are used to aid in the payment of primary home heating bills. No funds contributed are used for administrative expenses.



Keep Natural Gas Meters Clear of Snow, Debris, Dirt

Remove excessive accumulations of snow and ice from the natural gas meters and piping at your home or business.

Always ensure there is a three foot clearance around your natural gas meter to allow easy access by the utility provider. Make sure your natural gas meter is clear of mulch and dirt as these substances can cause rust in the meter and possibly lead to escaping natural gas.

The pipe or outlet side of the natural gas meter is the responsibility of the homeowner. It is good practice to ensure that this pipe is painted to keep it from rusting and causing natural gas to escape. Using an

over-the-counter rust resistant spray paint makes for a safer environment for the consumer.

Leave your residence or office immediately if there is a strong rotten egg odor of natural gas, then contact the Department of Public Utilities at 646-4646 or call 911. If your natural gas appliances are not functioning correctly, call an appliance repair company and have the problem fixed immediately.



www.RichmondGov.com

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IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

Customer Service: 646-4646 Streetlight Outages, Gas, Water and Sewer
Emergencies: 646-4646
TTY: 711 to 646-4646
Miss Utility: (Call Before You Dig): 811



CITY OF RICHMOND
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC UTILITIES



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Jacqueline Dwyer's English cocker spaniel Trevor (left) has a pick-up kit along on all his walks. Jervetta Burns' dog Kallan (right) smiles next to his clean up bag. Good for him!

Win a \$25 bill credit with a photo

The Department of Public Utilities would like to see photos of *you* using one of our five utilities -- water, wastewater, stormwater, streetlighting or natural gas. We'll share them with the readers of *Utility Talk* and on our blog at

www.cordpu.blogspot.com

Send a digital photo as an attachment (2-4 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! Entries may also appear on our social media, so follow us on Twitter and Facebook, too! (Signed photo releases are required for photos accepted for publication.)

This month's winners all feature picking up after your dog!

Despite what we want to believe when our furry friends do their business while on walks together or visiting the dog park, pet waste is not an acceptable fertilizer. A single gram of dog poo can contain as many as 23 million fecal coliform bacteria, and not picking up and properly disposing of pet waste exposes both humans and other dogs



Pam Janney lives on a busy street and provides dispensers and a reminder for dog-walkers passing her yard. Good idea!

to this bacteria.

When it rains and snows, precipitation and snowmelt washes pet waste and its bacteria into Richmond's streams, storm drains, the James River, and even the puddles that children play in and other dogs drink from. Since dog poo contains high levels of nitrogen, downstream it grows algae in abundance and depletes available oxygen for fish and aquatic life.

Do your part to keep waterways clean by carrying a bag with you, scooping the poop -- every time, even when it's cold, raining or snowing -- and making sure you always toss it in a trash can, not your neighbor's trash can, and especially not their recycling cans!

Pipeline Safety Awareness

Richmond Gas Works ensures pipeline safety through a variety of measures, including the one-call Miss Utility system (811) and Dig Safe programs, inspections, design and construction practices, workforce qualifications, public education, industry safety practices and government oversight, pipeline markers and facility mapping, gas leak surveys, and patrols of critical gas facilities.



How to Get Additional Information

City of Richmond Department of Public Utilities and Richmond Gas Works-- 804-646-4646

<https://www.rva.gov/public-utilities/natural-gas-safety>

Call Before You Dig (Virginia) -- 811 or 800-552-7001

Web -- www.va811.com Office of Pipeline Safety -- <https://www.phmsa.dot.gov/about-phmsa/offices/office-pipeline-safety>

What Happens When There's a Gas Leak

What happens when an excavator reports escaping natural gas?

Emergency response officials -- usually the Fire Department -- will secure the area and take steps to eliminate ignition sources. They will evacuate the general public from the vicinity of the leak and contact Richmond Gas Works.

Does your excavator know what to do if they damage a natural gas line?

Excavators who damage a natural gas line should immediately stop work, eliminate all sources of ignition such as trucks, cars, backhoes, other potential ignition sources and evacuate the site to a safe distance and call Richmond Gas Works at 804-646-4646. Everyone on the premises should be made aware of the damage and the public and traffic kept away.

Do not try to fix the pipe or slow the rate of leaking gas. Do not try to extinguish a gas burning fire unless there is a threat to life.

If you suspect or become aware of a dent, scratch, or coating damage to the pipeline, Richmond Gas Works should be notified immediately by calling 646-4646.

What the Law Requires

Did you know every eight minutes an underground utility line is damaged because someone decided to dig without first calling 811?

The law requires that all excavators notify the local one-call (Miss Utility) system by dialing 811 or 800-552-7001 before digging.

The one-call (Miss Utility) center will contact the owners of the underground facilities and pipelines in the immediate area of digging so that they can mark the location of their facilities prior to excavation. Excavators are required to allow utilities to mark their underground facilities and take certain precautions when working in the immediate area of these underground facilities.

The use of mechanized equipment is prohibited within two feet of either side of any utility. The one-call (Miss Utility) center can provide the specific details of what is required. Failure to comply with this law can jeopardize public safety, and can result in costly damages and substantial fines.