



DEPARTMENT OF
**PUBLIC
UTILITIES**

June 2023

Dear Valued Customer:

Since the March 2023 customer letter, the Department of Public Utilities continues efforts to normalize operations in a post-covid environment. As we continue to work for you, I'd like to take a few minutes to share plans to further improve customer service levels.

► **MODIFIED OPERATING HOURS**

Effective June 14, 2023, DPU will modify the Call Center's operating hours to focus on improving and sustaining operational efficiencies and enhancing customer satisfaction levels. Specifically, the modified schedule will enable staff to give their undivided attention to addressing backlogs (i.e., correspondence, adjustments and estimated readings) that will help to ensure timely and accurate billing and improve response times. We recognize long hold times - but feel these modifications and efforts will be hugely impactful over the long-term.

Here's how the "Modified Operating Schedule" will work:

DPU Call Center's Modified Operating Schedule June 14, 2023 thru September 27, 2023		
Monday and Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday and Friday
Open to the public from 8 am to 5 pm Hold times may vary	Open to the public from 8 am to 12 noon CLOSED TO THE PUBLIC 12 noon to 5 pm	Open to the public from 8 am to 5 pm Hold times may vary
IMPORTANT DPU's 24-hour Logistics Center will remain available 24/7 for emergencies and can be reached at 804-646-4646, select Option 1.		

► **STAFF AUGMENTATION**

It takes a lot of moving parts to deliver reliable service and it is not without challenges, many of which were amplified by the pandemic. DPU has recently onboarded a team of meter readers and have plans to onboard additional classes of new hires filling various roles across the Customer Service Division. We appreciate your patience as there are a lot of complexities and a large learning curve.

- Letter continues on reverse -

► BILLING ADJUSTMENTS

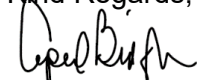
Customers waiting for a billing adjustment should note the following updates:

- Move-In / Move-Outs:
 - Final and/or adjusted bills will be issued within 1-3 billing cycles. Priority status will be given to occupancy changes that are greater than 6 months old. DPU will work with both customers to ensure a final bill is rendered for the move-out and the start of service bill is issued for the move-in. DPU will waive the applicable charges and fees as a result of any delayed processing.
- City-Side Water Leak:
 - All city-side water leaks are placed in the queue for repair. Once repairs are complete, the adjustment process is initiated as the customer is not charged for these leaks. Please allow between 1-3 billing cycles before the corrected bill is issued. If it has been more than 90 days since the city repaired the leak, send an email to dpu-waterleaks@rva.gov .
- On-Property Water Leak:
 - All water leaks on private property are the responsibility of the owner. To receive an adjustment, documentation from a plumber showing completed repairs should be submitted to dpu-waterleaks@rva.gov. If a plumber is not hired for small leaks such as toilet/flapper repairs, DPU will need to monitor the usage for up to 60 days to determine if the consumption has been normalized. The outcome of the review will determine if an adjustment is warranted.
- Estimated Bills:
 - Meters are read electronically. If the signal from the electronic reading device is blocked or unresponsive, your utility bill may be estimated based on previous usage. DPU's new team of meter readers are collecting manual reads for billing purposes. Once an actual read is obtained, you may notice a fluctuation in your bill as you may have received a credit or you may owe more to make up the difference.
 - To help reduce manual reads, DPU encourages customers to keep the meter box at their property clear from any obstruction, such as mulch, flowerbeds, trashcans or vehicles. Also note that if access is denied by a locked gate, unleashed animal or an inside location, an appointment will be necessary.
 - DPU remains committed to resolving estimated billing issues within 3 billing cycles.

A reminder that there is still time to apply for financial assistance through the Low Income Housing Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP) and enroll in a convenient payment plan through PromisePay with as little as \$10.00 down.

Thank you for your patience as DPU works to normalize operations, with a continued focus on longer-term solutions. We appreciate the opportunity to serve you. Please stay tuned for more updates and customer enhancements at www.rva.gov/public-utilities.

Kind Regards,



April Bingham, MPA
Senior Director