

High Water Bill FAQs

Why are customers receiving high water bills?

DPU's goal is to ensure you will only be charged for services used. During the pandemic, higher than normal meter readings were being estimated. For the past year, the Department of Public Utilities has been clearing that backlog and obtaining actual meter reads. Customers with high bills are alerted of such via a letter of explanation.

What are reasons the meters could not be read?

If a customer's meter has been inaccessible for an electronic reading then the consumption was estimated. Inaccessibility can occur due to trash cans, cars, flower beds, mulch and other obstructions that block the transmission signal from the meter.

Now that DPU is obtaining actual reads from the meters, what does that mean?

When an actual read occurs, adjustments to the bill are then made based on that reading – which can result in higher or lower actual consumption.

What are reasons for an increase in consumption?

- A reminder that lifestyles have changed as a result of the pandemic, which could mean higher consumption based on occupancy
- A source of water leaks in the home is another for increases in consumption
- A faulty meter reading due to equipment malfunction or transmission interruption

What to do if you suspect a leak?

You are encouraged to engage the services of a licensed plumber for professional assistance. If the related repairs are made, you have the option to submit your receipt to DPU for potential consideration of an account adjustment. Customers are eligible for one leak adjustment every 12 months. For guidance on household leak detection or how to fix a leak, please visit <https://www.epa.gov/watersense/fix-leak-week#> or [Fix A Leak Week Demo - YouTube](#)

What if I have my home checked for leaks and none were found?

If you are certain that your property does not have a leak, DPU will change the meter and/or the meter transmitting device. Once a new meter is installed, the old meter will be tested against standards published by the American Water Works Association (AWWA).

How do I request an investigation?

Please email DPU at dpucustserv@rva.gov or call (804) 646-4646 Monday through Friday between the hours of 8:00 am and 5:00 pm so that we can dispatch a technician for field support. **To help us identify and track your email request, please insert "METER READ REQUEST" in the subject line.** If a billing adjustment is warranted, DPU will place a courtesy hold and send a corrected bill, which could take up to 3 billing cycles. *This hold protects the account from penalties, interest and any disconnection activity.* Please note DPU will use the newly installed meter to establish a daily average consumption (DAC) for billing purposes, which could take up to 45 days to calculate.

What happens if the actual meter readings are correct, the meter tests as "PASS", and I owe a significant balance?

If the test results from the old meter are confirmed as "PASS", DPU offers convenient payment plans to allow you to manage your balance over time. Please visit www.richmond.promise-pay.com