



Reminder—Water By-Pass Customers

Effective March 31, 2017, the Water-Line Freeze Prevention Policy is no longer in effect. Water and sewer will be billed based on actual usage from this date forward.

Steam Service Policy

The customer shall be responsible to divert roof drains, gutters or any other high concentration of service water from steam lines to prevent deterioration of the steam piping system. PLEASE DO NOT SHOVEL SNOW INTO STEAM MANHOLES.

Thinking of connecting to Natural Gas?

Applications can be turned in anytime, but work will only take place when there is no frost in the ground. Please apply early so we can schedule the work this year.

Construction Season Begins

Please watch for utility workers as you drive throughout Virginia over the next several months. With the warm weather comes repairs and upgrades to many of the utility lines located under the City's streets. In order to perform needed repairs and installations, Utility workers may have to barricade areas in the streets and alleyways.

Equal Payment Plan Enrollment

Property owners, with at least a one year history of utility usage, are eligible for the Equal Payment Plan. Interested customers who qualify may enroll this spring. Please watch your utility bills for the application.

The Cold Weather Rule Ends 4/15/17

VPU, however, remains committed to working with customers to avoid disconnection. Customers experiencing a difficult time paying their utility bills must come into the office and set a mutually agreeable payment arrangement to avoid disconnection. Contact Mary Johnson at 748-2113 with questions.

The Final Phase of the Highway 53 Realignment is Expected to be Completed by September 2017

Changes occurring due to the project:

Midway residents will still be connected to Virginia proper for water service and sewer collection, but a new booster station, new lift station, new sewer and water mains across the bridge should provide more reliable service. There may be a short time where Midway will be served water from Eveleth while the final connections are being made.

The Midway residents are currently being supplied electricity from the new substation that was constructed near the intersection of Bourgin Road and Anderson Drive. They are being supplied Natural Gas from a new Town Border Station and over 2 miles of new gas main for the Intersection of Hwy 37 and Station 44 Rd east of Eveleth. Final disconnection of the gas main from Virginia will take place this spring.



APRIL 2017

The VPU office will be closed on the following dates:

- April 14, 2017
- May 29, 2017



The VPU Customer Newsletter is published quarterly by the City of Virginia, Minnesota Department of Public Utilities.

DPU – QUICK NOTES

KNOW THE SMELL OF NATURAL GAS—BE SAFE!
If there is a faint smell of natural gas, call VPU at 218-748-7540.
If in doubt, leave the building immediately & call 9-1-1.

STREET LIGHT OUT?
If you notice a street light that is burnt out or flickering, please call VPU at 748-7540 so that we may get it fixed and keep our streets bright!

Before You Dig, Contact Gopher State One Call
 Dial 1 8-1-1 or 800-252-1166 or www.gopherstateonecall.org

CHECK YOUR WALL PATCHES
If you have steam heat in your home, or an abandoned steam line to your home....
Periodically check the wall patch where the steam enters your building for leaks.

If you have a vacant property please check property often, as damage can occur quickly...
Call 748-7540 with questions



DISPELLING A MYTH

Before I started here at the Utility I had somewhat the same impression about VPUC employees that a lot of people around this town have. That there's a lot of leaning on shovels and a lot of standing around. I learned real quick that that is not the case and I'll share a story with you that says it all.

My brother is both observant and inquisitive, and one day a few years back he called me up with an observation and a question. "I'm driving down 6th avenue by the bank parking lot, and you guys have this construction job goin' on over there. There must've been 10 guys standing around there looking down in the hole. What's up with that?" Well, after taking a deep breath and counting to ten, I responded: The site you're referring to is the take-off point for a major steam line that we are looking to replace and it's likely there's steam, water, sewer and natural gas all within a few feet of each other right there. Three of those guys were the Utility's steam crew working on the replacement. They handle the water, natural gas, and steam issues. Two of those guys do the digging and rebuilding work and the third is a certified welder probably assessing how he's gonna get down in that muddy hole and weld a high quality weld on his back for two hours with a piece of pipe that he can't move. The City has a two man sewer crew that is likely involved in whatever issue they are discussing. That's five. A sixth is likely the Public Works Director, the seventh is our Outside Distribution Director. The eighth is a representative from the engineering firm we consult on issues like this, and I would venture to guess that someone from the bank mozied on over to check it out. That's nine. And I would also guess that the guy from the phone company is there making sure his underground phone lines don't get clipped while the work is proceeding. You just happened to drive by when they were all there trying to assess the situation.

Folks, if you see a guy standing alone on top of a hole leaning on a shovel, it is highly likely that he's the man "up top" required to be there (OSHA safety standards) when there's a man in the hole. The guy in the hole could be either hand digging, clamping steel water or steam pipe, fusing gas pipe or water PVC pipe, or welding steam pipe. But if something goes wrong, that guy "up top" is there to respond. It's safety. When there's digging going on with heavy equipment, the second guy on the crew has to be standing over the hole. But he's not just waiting around, he's watching for possible unmarked utility structures. Making sure no one's service take-off gets hit. Again, it's a safety issue.

And one more thing. The frost causes a lot of movement underground and in late winter of just about every year, it causes an otherwise good water pipe to break. And water breaks don't wait until regular work hours to break. They happen anytime. And when they do break, a Utility crew of four or five work in often bitter cold weather for often up to twelve hours. Slopping around in mud and water, ice building up on their rubber boots, they locate ice covered shutoffs to stop the water flow. Then they hammer and dig through rock solid frozen ground to get to the break; they crawl down into that muddy, watery hole to clamp the break; they open the valves to restore water service, and then they put it all back together before they leave. Often all done while you sleep. I'm 58 and I cannot imagine myself being physically capable of putting in twelve hours of that kind of work after having already worked my regular shift. It's likely that two of the five guys on that crew are older than me. And this time of year, that happens twice, three, sometimes even four times. So, instead of jumping to conclusions and complaining about the "lazy" Utility employees, it's time they got a thank you for their hard work.