

Fall 2022

UTILITIES & YOU

Don't leaf me be...

Utility budget and rate-making process now underway

This fall, we present our 2023-2024 budgets to the Public Utility Board for approval, including any related rate adjustments. We do our best to inform you about any rate impacts before the final approval of our budgets because we know our rates impact you. To keep you informed, we provide presentations about which projects rates support, information about public meetings, and a place to submit questions or comments online. You can attend meetings in person or virtually or watch videos of the presentations later.

To stay informed about our budget and rate-making process, visit MyTPU.org/Rates. U*

The story behind rate adjustments

Every time you pay your utility bill, you invest in our community. Your investment helps us provide services that are vital to our collective quality of life. Thanks to you, we can ensure reliable water, electricity, and rail services, protect fish, wildlife, and lands, provide jobs, and support the local economy and our neighbors in need.

We take rate adjustments seriously because they directly impact you. Before we recommend one, we do our homework. We analyze data and crunch numbers, run financial models, review rate impact benchmarks, and gather your feedback.

We operate under the values and outcomes identified in **Strategic Directive (SD) 3: Rates**. SD3 is one of 14 Public Utility Board SDs that guide our efforts to stay accountable to you.

Read the entire purpose of SD3 and learn more at MyTPU.org/SD. U*



What to do if you suspect a utility scam call

Scam calls to utility customers often increase during the holidays. Scammers will usually demand you make an immediate payment with a prepaid card or risk having your service disconnected - something we will never do. Scammers can also make it look like they're calling or emailing from the utility when they aren't.

1. **Check your account status at MyTPU.org/MyAccount** or hang up and call us at **253-502-8600** if you think someone is trying to scam you.
2. **We accept traditional payments of cash, check, credit, and debit cards.** It's unnecessary to buy a separate prepaid card to avoid disconnection.
3. **Never give your credit or debit card number or other personal information** without knowing the caller's true identity.
4. **Report prepaid card scammers to the utility and the Federal Trade Commission** online or by calling **1-877-FTC-HELP**. You should also report scammers to MoneyPak at **MoneyPak.com**. Click on MoneyPak Help on the home page and the "PREVENT FRAUD" link.

Find more information about utility scams at MyTPU.org/Scams. U*

How to avoid phone and lobby wait times

We currently have long wait times assisting customers and recommend using a self-service option to pay your bill now and prevent disconnection.

MyAccount

Manage and pay your bill online. You can use a credit or debit card with the Visa, MasterCard, or Discover logo or transfer money directly from your checking or savings account. You only need your utility account number to start. MyTPU.org/MyAccount.

Automated phone service

Make a payment or set up payment arrangements by calling **253-502-8600** and pressing option 1.

TPU Pay Box

Our Pay Boxes are located at select grocery stores throughout Pierce County and our office. Pay by cash, a personal check, American Express, Visa, MasterCard, or Discover card. For a complete list of locations, visit MyTPU.org/WaystoPay.

Seniors might qualify for one-time utility bill grants through the Senior Assistance Fund

Customers who might need a little temporary financial support with their utility bills could potentially qualify for help from our Senior Assistance Fund.

One-time grants from the fund support seniors with limited income who experience an unexpected hardship causing them to miss a utility payment. Many people receiving these grants are ineligible for other assistance because they make a few dollars above the financial limit.

The Senior Assistance Fund is generated entirely through employee contributions from fundraising events. Monies raised enable our Customer Solutions Office to award one-time utility bill grants up to \$200. Since 2019 the fund has supported 300 grants amounting to over \$50,000. The fund has been in place for over 25 years. U*



Our best outdoor water-saving tips for fall

Did you know that outdoor water use accounts for more than 30% of total household water use? That's why focusing on your landscape is one of the best and easiest ways to conserve water and help reduce your utility bill. With these helpful water-saving tips for fall, you'll maximize your outdoor water savings in no time.



Adjust your watering schedule

Plants require less water now, so slow down your system.



Build healthy soil

Add mulch around plants to conserve water, prevent weeds, and feed the soil.



Clean up your garden beds

Cut back and prune plants so they are healthy next spring.



Perform irrigation maintenance

Make repairs, fix leaks, and prep your system for winter.

Discover more about how to conserve water with proper yard care at MyTPU.org/WaterSmart. U*

Be prepared for emergencies

There are several easy things you can do this fall to keep your household safe during emergencies. Whether it's a minor event such as a short power outage or something bigger like a natural disaster, taking steps now can prevent injuries and property damage in a real situation.

- **Know what kind of disasters and emergencies are most common** where you live and learn what emergency responders recommend.
- **Create an emergency communications plan with your family** and store important phone numbers somewhere besides your cell phone. Keep important documents where they are safe from flooding.
- **Sign up for emergency alerts** in your area or download the FEMA app.
- **Plan where you will go if told to evacuate.**
- **Build emergency supply kits** for your home, car and workplace. You likely have many of the items for your kits at home already.

A printable checklist is available at [Ready.gov/Plan](https://www.ready.gov/Plan). U*

Power outage readiness: What you need to know

It's time to gear up for the seasonal changes that can bring unplanned power outages. Following these simple tips will help you prepare to reduce your stress and inconvenience.



Outage reporting tool and map

Sign up for our power outage reporting tool and access the outage map at MyTPU.org/Outages. You can report outages online or sign up to notify us via text message. If you sign up, we'll also send you text or email updates about outages in your area.



Tree trimming

Ask us to trim or remove hazardous trees away from power lines by calling **253-502-8729**. We will remove trees and related debris that are unlawful for a qualified contractor to remove.



Life sustaining equipment list

Get on a list of customers using life-sustaining equipment by calling **253-502-8600**. We will notify you before planned outages and tag your meter with a medical seal if your doctor completes and sends us a Healthcare Provider Form.



Emergency kits

Keep emergency kits and information handy. Stock up on batteries, flashlights, non-perishable food, and water. Have a list of contacts available and keep your cell phone(s) charged. Turn off and unplug electronics such as computers, TVs, and security systems during an outage.

POWER MOVE #19

Letting us buy you a new heating and cooling system

Tacoma Power has some Power Moves to help you upgrade your home, raise its value, and increase your comfort with ease and affordability. Start with **Power Move #19** – letting us buy you a new heating and cooling system.

Installing a heat pump in your home is the coolest way to stay warm.

Heat pumps use less energy to warm your home in the cold months and keep you cool all summer, which means a lower utility bill for you. Best of all, we'll help you pay for it!

Check out the incentives we offer:

- **7-year, 0% interest loan**
- **Deferred loan** where you don't pay us back until you sell your home
- **Contractor discount**

See what you qualify for at MyTPU.org/PowerMoves. U*

*Must have existing electric heat.



Replace your electric water heater now, before it stops working

If your electric water heater is more than 10 years old, now's the time to replace it. Most water heaters begin to fail around that age, which means you could find yourself needing an emergency replacement. Unplanned water heater replacements often come with high stress, expensive costs, and few options. Don't find yourself in that situation!

Here are some other reasons you should replace your standard electric water heater with an electric hybrid version now:

Utility bill savings

You can save about \$350 each year and lower your utility bill.

Energy efficiency

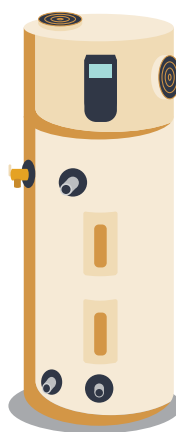
You'll use 60% less energy to heat your water, which means the hybrid water heater will pay for itself within a few years.

Easy to use

With the touch of a button on the display panel, you can set the temperature you like or select from four operating modes, including vacation mode.

Peace of mind

Hybrid water heaters are designed to last and come with a 10-year limited warranty.



Plus, we'll help you pay for it.

We've worked out a special package deal to ensure you get the best price, easiest process, and reliable service on your electric water heater replacement. For a limited time, you can get a new electric hybrid water heater installed for \$2,500 and use our three-year, 0% interest loan or deferred loan to pay for it. If DIY is more your thing, you can get an instant \$500 discount on hybrid water heaters at The Home Depot or Lowes.

Learn more at MyTPU.org/WaterHeater. U*



Bases loaded with giving hearts during TPU Night at the Tacoma Rainiers

TPU Night at the Tacoma Rainiers took place in August and helped support our TPU Senior Assistance Fund and honored our utility workers for their dedication to public service.

Five dollars of each ticket sold for TPU Night went to the Senior Assistance Fund, which helps seniors in our community who struggle to pay their utility bills. Ticket sales allowed a \$2,535 donation to the fund and a celebratory big check presentation on the field. Baseball fans also received a T-shirt with their ticket and more. During the game, we also honored many of our workers who have provided public services for up to 45 years. Thanks to everyone who contributed and our over 400 workers who continue providing services vital to the quality of life in the communities we serve!

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Working to support the clean fuel industry

Did you know that making a clean fuel out of just water and electricity is possible? When using clean electricity, that fuel is called "green hydrogen." Our utility actively supports the growth of a clean fuel industry in our service area. New business opportunities will likely be created as the U.S. and Washington state implement policies to decarbonize all sectors of our economy (including requirements to reduce carbon emissions in transportation fuels and industrial processes). With our clean, affordable power and our first-in-the-nation electrofuels rate, our customers are well-positioned to lead green hydrogen and e-fuels production.

Not only did we create the nation's first electrofuels rate, but we supported green hydrogen-related and low carbon fuel standard legislation. We also participate in a statewide effort to pursue federal funding for a hydrogen "hub." Green hydrogen and e-fuels production have the potential to help us meet our climate goals, maintain system reliability, and provide new, family-wage jobs for the region.

Visit MyTPU.org/GreenHydrogen to stay informed about the development of clean fuels. U*

New watershed strategy helps ensure your water remains clean and reliable

The Green River Watershed is the primary source of your drinking water. Our new Watershed Strategic Plan is a comprehensive strategy to prioritize and focus our work in the watershed over the next five years. Our three focus areas of leadership, resiliency, and source water protection will guide us to deliver on our mission of ensuring you receive clean, reliable water and provide ecological benefits to the region. Our 16 initiatives align with that mission to provide guidance and include developing a forest management plan, a noxious weed management program, and an annual emergency response exercise.

To increase your knowledge about how we manage the watershed and read more about the plan, visit MyTPU.org/Watershed. U*



U* Calendar

All events take place online and in-person unless otherwise noted.

OCTOBER

12

Public Utility Board meeting | 6:30 p.m.

26

Public Utility Board meeting | 6:30 p.m.

NOVEMBER

11

Veterans Day | TPU offices closed

16

Public Utility Board meeting | 6:30 p.m.

24

Thanksgiving Day | TPU offices closed

25

Thanksgiving observance | TPU offices closed

DECEMBER

14

Public Utility Board meeting | 6:30 p.m.

26

Christmas Day observance | TPU offices closed

Find a complete list of events at MyTPU.org/Calendar. U*

You make the call

Area code (253)

Report a power outage	502-8602
Start or stop service	502-8600
Home weatherization	502-8363
Fishing and recreation	502-8690
Fish and wildlife programs	502-8008
Education programs	502-8224
Power conservation	502-8363
Water conservation	502-8723
Report a water emergency	502-8384

Bill Payment Assistance

(available for limited-income customers)

- Electric bill assistance
 - City of Tacoma residents 572-5557
 - Pierce County residents 855-798-4328
- TPU Utility Bill Assistance 502-8400

U* readers know monthly billing

Congratulations and thanks to the 308 people who participated in the trivia published in the summer issue of U* - Utilities & You. Over 50,000 customers have converted to monthly billing. To learn more about the benefits of advanced meters, visit MyTPU.org/AdvancedMeters. U*



U* Trivia ANSWER AND WIN

About how long do electric water heaters last before they need replacement?

Be one of 50 randomly chosen people with the correct answer, and we will mail you a free prize. To enter, submit your answer by Oct. 31 either online at MyTPU.org/Trivia or by mail to U* Trivia, 3628 S. 35th St., Tacoma, WA 98409. Include your name, phone number, and mailing address. U*

* City of Tacoma employees and their immediate family members are ineligible to win. One entry per household.

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Communications@CityofTacoma.org.

THE END

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