

# UTILITIES & YOU

October 2020



Back from our  
COVID-19 hiatus...

# Looking forward



Many in our community have been impacted financially by the pandemic. When Tacoma Mayor Woodards declared a state of emergency, she also approved suspension of utility disconnections for nonpayment. At the same time, we quickly reallocated

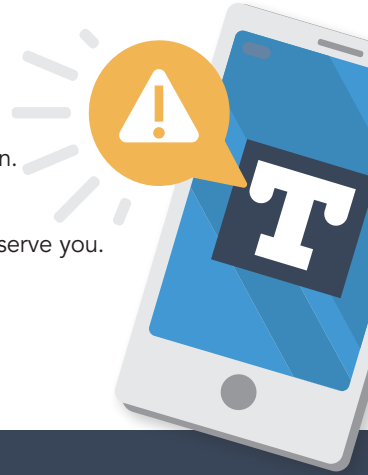
## Savvy appointment tool helps keep everyone safe

When we know it is safe to reopen our lobby, our new online appointment scheduling tool will allow you to book a specific time to visit one of our Customer Services representatives. The new tool enhances convenience and helps keep you and our staff safe.

Appointments are available in 10-minute intervals and you can schedule up to one week in advance. When our lobby is open, go online to reserve your spot and tell us your reason for visiting so our team can prepare.

### How it works

- Visit **MyTPU.org/Appt** to book your appointment.
- Wait for a confirmation email with a code you will use to check in.
- When you arrive for your appointment, check in at the kiosk.
- Wait outside or in your vehicle until a representative is ready to serve you.
- Watch for text message alerts that let you know when your turn approaches.



We look forward to welcoming you back! **U\***

## THREE SIMPLE WAYS to prep for power outages



### 1. Get on our list of customers using life-sustaining equipment.

We'll add your name(s) to our list, notify you before planned outages, and tag your meter with a medical seal. Your doctor must complete and send us a Healthcare Provider Form. Call **253-502-8600**.

# together through COVID-19

assistance funds to help customers in need by expanding eligibility guidelines to support significantly more households. Customers were also able to request extended payment plans and late fee waivers. To date, more than 10,000 have received Emergency Assistance funds from us.

For details visit **MyTPU.org/Assistance**.

*If you want to help others in need with their utility bills, check the donation box on the payment stub of your paper bill and enter the amount you would like to donate. U\**



## More ways to report and track power outages

Stay in the know when your power goes out. New features added to our power outage map offer you more information, and you can easily report outages online or sign up to report outages via text message. You can also choose to receive updates on your cell phone or sent to your email address.

It's simple to sign up – when you register online, have your account number and the phone number associated with your TPU account handy so we can confirm your record. Once you enroll, you can choose your notification preferences and even add other members of your household or family and friends to receive alerts when the power goes out at your home.

You'll never wonder if yours is the only house without electricity on the block either. If someone reports an outage in your area, we'll send you an alert. See our new outage map and create your account. Visit **MyTPU.org/Outages** for instructions and the link to register. U\*



### 2. Ask us to trim or remove hazardous trees away from power lines.

We will remove trees and related debris that pose hazards under or close to power lines or that are unlawful for a qualified contractor to remove. Call **253-502-8729** (some restrictions apply).



### 3. Keep emergency kits and info handy.

Stock up on batteries, flashlights, non-perishable food, and water. Keep a list of emergency contacts available, cell phones charged, and apps loaded with our Twitter and Facebook feeds (we post info there). Make a list of equipment requiring electricity that needs turning off during an outage such as computers, TVs, and security systems. U\*

# BEWARE of utility scammers



We often see an uptick in scams as the fall and winter holidays approach.

If you receive an automated phone call claiming to be from us and demanding immediate payment from you or threatening disconnection, do not pay them. We will not disconnect service due to nonpayment during the current COVID-19 State of Emergency.

## We will never:

- Call, email, or make an in-person visit demanding immediate payment.
- Call, email, or make an in-person visit requesting your credit card, banking, or financial information.
- Request payment on a prepaid card.
- Shut off your service(s) without providing written notice at least seven days in advance.

Learn more about utility scams at [MyTPU.org/Scams](https://MyTPU.org/Scams). U\*

## Advanced meter installs coming in 2021

We will begin to install new power and water meters at homes and businesses throughout our service area in early 2021. Upgrading the entire system will take between 18 to 24 months. Expect a brief interruption in your power and water service when we install your meter(s). If your meter(s) is accessible, you don't need to be home. You will receive multiple notices before the upgrade. Watch our meter upgrade video and stay up to date at [MyTPU.org/AdvancedMeters](https://MyTPU.org/AdvancedMeters). U\*



## Get \$500 instantly for a better water heater

Most people don't think about their water heater until it stops working, leaving no time to consider the best replacement option. Here's why you should think about your electric water heater now instead of later:

- ✓ It uses more energy than your refrigerator, dishwasher, clothes washer, and dryer combined.
- ✓ Replacing your electric water heater with a better model - one that uses heat pump technology to warm - can save you money; about \$3,500 in electricity savings over the life of the water heater.
- ✓ Called a heat pump water heater, these more efficient models use 60% less energy than the electric versions.

If your water heater is over 10 years old, now is the time to replace it. You can save \$500 on a heat pump water heater with an instant rebate at some Tacoma Lowe's and Home Depot stores. Find out more at [MyTPU.org/ReducedHPWH](https://MyTPU.org/ReducedHPWH). U\*

# Tips to prepare your yard for winter

Fall is a great time to get your yard ready for colder weather. Prepping now may reduce your water bill and save you money. These tips will help you start:

- **Disconnect your garden hoses from hose bibs.** Circle up your garden hose and attach the ends together, so nothing can get inside while you store it.
- **Adjust and slow down your irrigation system** to prevent overwatering in the colder months.
- **Put your garden to bed** by cutting back, cleaning, planting, and protecting.
- **Fertilize lawns** to improve root structure.
- **Plant trees and shrubs** so their roots establish themselves over the winter.

Learn more about how to save money on your water bill at [MyTPU.org/WaterSmart](https://MyTPU.org/WaterSmart). U\*



## Home improvements MADE EASIER AND AFFORDABLE

### New loan allows you to pay nothing until you sell

The cost of home improvements can seem daunting, maybe even out of reach. Tacoma Power now makes energy efficiency upgrades for your home so easy and affordable you can stop dreaming and make them a reality. Getting better windows, a heat pump that keeps your house warm in the winter and cool all summer, and temp-controlling insulation (so you don't lose the heating and cooling it provides), are finally within reach with our deferred loan and bonus rebate.

If you own your home and your income doesn't exceed the allowable maximums, you could qualify for our deferred loan. With that loan, we'll pay a Tacoma Power Participating Contractor you choose to provide and install the energy-efficient upgrades. We'll also give you a rebate by deducting a chunk of the cost from your loan. You owe nothing and pay nothing until you sell your home! Go to [MyTPU.org/DeferredLoan](https://MyTPU.org/DeferredLoan) or call **253-502-8363** for more info. U\*

### How to pay for energy-efficient upgrades

#### Deferred loan and bonus rebate

We buy, you pay us back when you sell your house. Plus, we'll subtract a chunk of the project cost with a bonus rebate.

#### 7-year 0% interest loan

Finance your project with low monthly payments.  
No credit check required.

#### Rebate

You pay for your project and we'll provide a rebate that subtracts a chunk of the cost.

# EVERGREEN OPTIONS

## Apply for a renewable energy project grant by Nov. 13

### Help us spread the word

Tacoma Power will award one \$50,000 Evergreen Options renewable energy grant by the end of 2020 to a local non-profit, school, or government agency with interest in advancing renewable energy efforts in the Pacific Northwest.

Grant funds come from the power utility's residential and business customers, like you, who participate in our Evergreen Options renewable energy program. If sustainability and energy efficiency matter to you, you can make a difference by joining Evergreen Options. Participants determine the winning grant recipient through their votes.

We will announce this year's award recipient in December.

To learn more about Evergreen Options, visit [MyTPU.org/Evergreen](https://MyTPU.org/Evergreen). Apply for the grant at [MyTPU.org/EOGrant](https://MyTPU.org/EOGrant). **U\***

## U\* readers know our employees give big

Congratulations and thanks to the 318 people who correctly answered the trivia question published in the January 2020 issue of U\*.

Our TPU employees gave \$175,000 through the United Way in 2019 to help fight poverty and provide basic needs for people in our community. **U\***

## U\* Trivia ANSWER AND WIN

How many people to date have received emergency assistance funds from us during the pandemic?

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](https://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.*



# U\* Calendar

All utility events take place online during COVID-19 unless otherwise noted.

## OCTOBER

14

Public Utility Board Meeting | 3 p.m.

28

Public Utility Board Meeting | 3 p.m.

## NOVEMBER

11

Veterans Day | TPU offices closed

18

Public Utility Board Meeting | 3 p.m.

26 & 27

Thanksgiving | TPU offices closed

## DECEMBER

9

Public Utility Board Meeting | 3 p.m.

25

Christmas | TPU offices closed

Find a complete list of events at [MyTPU.org/Calendar](https://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 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



# Utility rates WATCH

This fall, we will be presenting our budget and rates proposal for 2021-2022 to the Public Utility Board and City Council for approval. Stay up to date at [MyTPU.org/Rates](https://MyTPU.org/Rates). U\*



Send comments and suggestions to

[U@CityofTacoma.org](mailto:U@CityofTacoma.org)



October 2020

UTILITIES FOR YOU

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for about 33 cents each.  
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THE END



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