



January 2021

UTILITIES&YOU



Open, open, open...

Water rate adjustment in effect Jan. 1

New water rates went into effect on Jan. 1. You will see a \$0.61 average monthly increase on your utility bills if you live within the City of Tacoma and \$0.74 if you live in our surrounding service area. As a not-for-profit utility our customers own, you entrust us to ensure you get the most value and quality services you expect. Your water rates cover the cost of providing you with safe, reliable water, maintaining utility infrastructure, protecting natural resources near our facilities, and investing in system improvements that make your services better.

Rate adjustments help cover the cost of operating the utility and caring for its assets, make up for revenue shortfalls, and provide increases in payment assistance to customers in need during the pandemic. Visit [MyTPU.org/Rates](https://www.mytpu.org/Rates) for more information. U*

Helpful ways to manage your winter utility bills

The cold, dark weather during winter in the Pacific Northwest means we leave our lights and heat on more hours of the day. Any increase in the amount of electricity you use also causes your utility costs to go up. From energy conservation programs that can help you reduce your use to payment assistance programs that help with financial need, several resources are available to assist with managing your utility bills. You can also take advantage of prepayment options and budget billing to help manage your monthly budget. Visit [MyTPU.org/Payment](https://www.mytpu.org/Payment) for more information. U*



How to protect your plumbing FROM THE BITTER COLD

If you need a jacket, the plumbing in your home or business probably does too. Protecting pipes from freezing temperatures can prevent costly damage and water leaks. When water freezes, it expands and produces pressure within pipes, which can cause them to break.

Follow these tips to protect your plumbing:

- 1** Wrap exposed pipes, valves, and hose bibs with insulation sleeves or foam pipe insulation. Don't leave gaps in the insulation and seal seams with duct tape for a perfect fit.
- 2** Shut off and drain outside faucets and insulate with covers.
- 3** Turn off and winterize your outdoor irrigation system and other water fixtures.
- 4** Locate your emergency shut off valve and learn how to turn off your water supply.

Visit [MyTPU.org/ProtectPipes](https://www.mytpu.org/ProtectPipes) for more tips. If you have a water emergency, call 253-502-8384. U*

PREPARE NOW for storm season

Preparedness gained new meaning in 2020 as hand sanitizer, disinfecting wipes, and toilet paper flew from store shelves to aid with the pandemic. Now, it's also storm season, which means it's time to double-check your preparedness kits for items you'll need if your power goes out.

We invest in and maintain our system to ensure reliability, but when the power goes out, but our crews are ready and do their best to restore your service as quickly and as safely as possible.



Flashlights



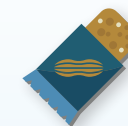
Wind-up or battery-powered clock



Battery-powered radio



Extra batteries



Food that you don't need to heat



Drinking water

Use this checklist to prepare your family for outages at home:

Our new outage portal offers more features and information, and allows you to easily report a power outage online or via text message. You can also choose to receive updates to your phone or email. The enhanced power outage map tells you where an outage has occurred, the status of our repair crew, estimated time of restoration, and more. View the new



Advanced meter installations are underway

Upgrades to our 180,000 electric and 107,000 water meters with modern digital technology began in late 2020. The remaining installs will last 18 to 24 months. Advanced

meters will provide you with greater control, choice, and convenience. You'll receive many new benefits over time to include monthly billing, remote electricity reconnection, more options to control costs, faster outage and leak detection (which improves reliability), and more safe, secure, and flexible payment options.

Watch our meter upgrade video and learn how to ensure your meter is accessible by visiting [MyTPU.org/AdvancedMeters](https://www.mt.gov/MyTPU.org/AdvancedMeters). **U***



What to expect during your meter upgrade

The installation will occur Monday through Friday, between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m.

You'll receive multiple notices by mail as your installation date approaches and a seven-day and 48-hour reminder call.

To ensure you receive the calls, log into [MyTPU.org/MyAccount](https://www.mt.gov/MyTPU.org/MyAccount), and verify your contact information. If you haven't registered for MyAccount, you only need your utility account number to start. Once you register, you can access your account and update your information at your convenience.

A certified installer from Tribus, our authorized contractor, will knock on your door before starting the upgrade, carry an ID badge, and wear proper protective gear to prevent the spread of COVID-19. The installer will not need to enter your home.

You don't need to be home unless you must provide access to the meter.

You'll need to **secure all animals before your installation.**

4 home improvements that will **SAVE YOU MONEY IN 2021**

The New Year often comes with new goals. If one of your goals is save more money or lower your bills, making home upgrades will help you accomplish both. **We'll even help you pay for them.**



Add insulation: Adding insulation keeps cold air out and warm air in. You could see about 15% savings on your utility bills. **We'll give you up to \$1,500 for insulation.**



Seal ducts: As much as 25% of the air you've paid to heat your home escapes through ducts before you ever feel it. To remedy this issue, seal your leaky ducts. **We'll give you \$450 for duct sealing.**



Get a better water heater: Upgrade to a hybrid water heater, which uses 60% less energy than electric tanks, and you'll save about \$3,500 over the life of your new tank. **We'll give you \$500 for a new hybrid water heater.**



Plan window upgrades: Window replacement is a costly proposition, but one that pays you back over time with significant energy efficiency and comfort. Start by getting bids from our certified contractors to see your options for this investment in your home. **We'll give you \$50 to \$100 per window.**

Start making headway on your New Year's goal now by seeing which home improvement incentives you qualify for at [MyTPU.org/Ways-to-Save](https://www.mt.gov/MyTPU.org/Ways-to-Save). **U***

Cushman sockeye salmon return FOR THE FIRST TIME IN 90 YEARS

Four years ago, we released our first juvenile sockeye into Lake Cushman and eagerly anticipated their return. We release sockeye into Lake Cushman so they can grow larger and stronger, then we collect and release them into the North Fork Skokomish River. From there, they make their trek to the ocean and (hopefully) back. Last July, our first-ever sockeye came home!

The Cushman Hydroelectric Project produces clean, renewable electricity via two dams and three powerhouses. However, building dams impacts the river and the natural environment. Therefore, we built two hatcheries and adult and juvenile fish collection facilities, and we monitor and enhance fish habitat as part of our federal license that allows us to operate the dams.

Our first sockeye is the first fish to touch every new Cushman facility.

We don't decide who gets to fish, or for what type of fish, or where or when fishing can take place – the Tribes and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife make those decisions. However, as responsible caretakers of the environment, our goal is to reintroduce and restore fish populations. The return of the sockeye is a huge leap toward making that happen.

Learn more at [MyTPU.org/Cushman](https://www.mt.gov/MyTPU.org/Cushman) under "Latest News." **U***

Employee volunteerism and giving thrive

As the pandemic increased many local needs, we quickly adapted our social responsibility program, Community Connection, to ensure our employees and their families could continue to support the community despite COVID-19. Virtual donations through Amazon Wishlists provided books, clothing, and food to local families, and we took our annual TPU United Way Campaign online for the first time. Take a look at a few highlights from our 2020 outreach.

Book Drive: Employees donated 580 books to Communities in Schools of Tacoma for students.

School Supply Drive: \$4,000 in donations allowed HopeSparks to provide school supplies to hundreds of local youth as they embarked upon a unique school year!

My Sister's Pantry Food and Basic Needs Drive: provided more than 5,000 food and basic supplies for people in need, valued at over \$3,500.

Do It Yourself Dam Ride: raised \$4,700 for our TPU Senior Assistance Fund, which provides one-time utility bill grants to seniors.

United Way Campaign: raised nearly \$164,000 with 52 new/first-time employee donors.

SAVE MONEY AND GROW GREEN

with \$30 off on trees

You can get a great deal on trees at local participating nurseries when you request a FREE tree coupon. Requesting a tree coupon gets you \$30 off per tree, up to three trees (up to a \$90 value) now through March 31, 2021.

In addition to saving money with the discount, you can enhance your energy savings, get ambient air-cooling when you need it, help improve storm water management, increase air pollutant filtration, and beautify our community landscapes with well-placed and well-tended trees. You'll even get planting and tree care tips with your tree coupon.

Our partnership with the City of Tacoma and Puyallup Watershed Initiative makes it possible for 2,000 residential homeowners to receive a coupon. That means together we can plant up to 6,000 trees in support of the City's goal to increase our community's tree canopy between 20% to 30% by 2030. You must live in Pierce County to participate.

Learn more and claim your tree coupon at MyTPU.org/TreeCoupon.

"This is a fantastic program! We love our trees. We had been wanting to add trees to our yard, but it was cost prohibitive. This program gave us the incentive to do it!" - Survey respondent

U* Calendar

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

JANUARY

1
New Year's Day | TPU offices closed

13
Public Utility Board meeting | 3 p.m.

18
Martin Luther King Jr. Day observance | TPU offices closed

27
Public Utility Board meeting | 3 p.m.

FEBRUARY

10
Public Utility Board meeting | 3 p.m.

15
President's Day observance | TPU offices closed

24
Public Utility Board meeting | 3 p.m.

MARCH

10
Public Utility Board meeting | 3 p.m.

24
Public Utility Board meeting | 3 p.m.

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 where to go for help

Congratulations and thanks to the 279 people who correctly answered the trivia question published in the October 2020 issue of U*.

As of October 2020, more than 10,000 people received emergency assistance funds from us during the pandemic. U*

U* Trivia ANSWER AND WIN

What kind of fish made it back to Lake Cushman for the first time in 90 years?

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 Jan. 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.

January 2021

UTILITIES&YOU

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THE END



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