

UTILITIES&YOU

April 2017



Spring forward

Power and water you can count on

Tacoma Public Utilities is committed to delivering clean, reliable power and water to you now and for years to come. We're also committed to keeping the rates as low as possible for those vital services. We do that by providing almost 90% of our electricity through clean, renewable hydropower; selling extra electricity and water; and getting the most value out of equipment like pipes and power lines.

Still, there are other factors that affect the cost of producing and delivering power and water that in turn affect the price you pay for them. For example, we are making less money now than in past years selling excess power and water in the wholesale market. Conservation is a good thing that will keep rates lower in the long run because it avoids the need to purchase new, costly sources of power or water. In the short term, however, there is less revenue when people use less water and electricity.

As costs increase, the only way to make up that revenue is through rates.

PROPOSED RATE CHANGES

The following are proposed changes to your rates in the next two years:

- Residential power bill increase of about \$5.75 per month in both 2017 and 2018.
- Residential water bill increase of about \$1.49 per month inside Tacoma and about \$1.79 outside Tacoma in both 2017 and 2018.

Making such adjustments would help TPU remain a strong, stable organization that provides you safe and reliable electricity and water.

Get more information, like how our rates compare to others in the region, at MyTPU.org/Rates. U*

KEEPING YOUR BILL DOWN

We understand that increases to your utility bill directly impact you, and we try to minimize those impacts as much as possible by offering rebates and payment assistance.

Our energy and water conservation programs can help save the amount of electricity and water used, lowering your bill.

We offer zero-interest loans to help you manage the costs of energy efficiency improvements.

Our payment assistance programs help low-income customers.

We're here to help. Contact us at 502-8600. U*

Stay current on water supply updates

Weather impacts the sources of water we use to meet our customers' needs from season to season. Rain and snow accumulation in the Green River Watershed – where most of our water supply comes from – over the winter is a key indicator of the health of the overall water supply.

At the time of this newsletter's printing, both snowpack and rainfall in the watershed were very close to normal. That's a good indication there will be adequate supply to meet the needs of Tacoma Water customers and fish this summer and fall. Tacoma Water continues to closely monitor these and other factors that affect water supply. You can find up-to-date water supply conditions at



HOW MUCH WOOD . . .

Free wood chips for your yard

'Tis the season to get your yard looking good! Get started with free wood chips delivered by Tacoma Power.

You can use wood chips for mulch by adding a layer of chips several inches deep around your trees and across your flower garden. The mulch adds nutrients to the soil and holds moisture in so you don't have to water as much. You can also use the wood chips to fill in wet or muddy areas in your yard.

Why does Tacoma Power give away wood chips? We run a robust tree trimming program to keep branches off power lines and your electricity on. After we cut and trim branches, we send the brush through a wood chipper. The chips are a mixed variety of trees; they are not beauty bark.

How to get free wood chips

Call (253) 502-8729 or email treeline@cityoftacoma.org with your name, address and phone number, and we'll get back to you with a delivery date. Tacoma Power will deliver five to seven yards of wood chips. (Sorry – we can't provide smaller deliveries.) **U***



Don't get scammed

When in doubt, call us at (253) 502-8600.

Protect yourself from being scammed on your utility bill by understanding what to do if you get a suspicious call about your bill.

Tacoma Public Utilities will not call you and ask for your debit, credit or prepaid card info. We only ask for your payment card number if you call us to make a payment over the phone.

And, we offer many ways for you to pay your bill. You do not need to buy prepaid cards to make an immediate payment, as some scammers suggest.

If you've been contacted

If you think someone is trying to scam you, contact Tacoma Public Utilities to find out if payment is due. You can also check your account status at any time at MyTPU.org/MyAccount.

Don't give your credit or debit card number, or any other personal information, to anyone without knowing their true identity.

Remember that scammers can make it look like they're calling or emailing from the utility when they are calling from somewhere else. **U***

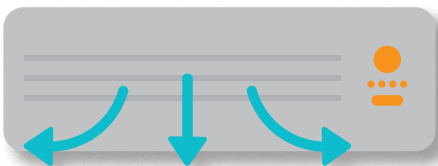
FREE RESOURCE

Experts help make efficiency an easy choice

Energy efficiency experts at Tacoma Power know what it takes to make your home or business more energy efficient and save you money.

They can demonstrate energy-efficient products, provide information about rebates, share a list of participating contractors who can do the installation work, and discuss financing that will help put your energy-saving projects within reach. Our energy efficiency experts are a free, reliable resource.

Update your spaces with the most efficient technologies using rebates that lower the final cost. Call (253) 502-8377 to connect with an energy expert or visit TacomaPowerRebates.com for more information. **U***



TLC FOR YOUR DHP

How to use and care for your ductless heat pump

Properly using and maintaining your ductless heat pump is an important part of ensuring its long life and the efficiency that will save you money on your electric bills. Follow this simple guide to care for and maintain your investment, and your savings.

USE

- For heating and cooling, set your remote control to HEAT mode during the winter and COOL during summer. Avoid using AUTO, which uses more electricity.
- For fan speed, use AUTO FAN mode instead of quiet, low, medium or high; the fan will adjust itself.
- Leave doors to other rooms open to allow heating and cooling beyond the main living area.

CARE

- Clean the air filter to the indoor unit monthly; refer to your product manual for instructions.
- Keep plants and debris from blocking air flow to the outdoor unit.
- Call your contractor to schedule equipment checkups.

Refer to your manufacturer's operation manual for more details and information. **U***

Spring into savings with 3 home improvement solutions



The cold of winter is gone and the heat of summer isn't quite here. That makes spring a great time for home improvements. Simple energy-efficient updates to your home can lower electric bills, improve comfort and increase the value of your property.

Wish you had air conditioning?

Add a ductless heat pump.

A DHP provides heating and air conditioning when you need it. It's efficient, affordable, quiet, works with your existing electric heating system and can save up to 50% on your heating costs.

Want to improve the comfort of your home?

Weatherize it.

Adding insulation, sealing air ducts and replacing inefficient windows helps prevent cool air from escaping in the summer and keeps the heat in your home when it's cold out.

Thinking about upgrading your lighting?

Buy Energy Star labeled LEDs.

Energy Star LEDs meet high standards for energy efficiency and will save you money on your electric bills. And – bonus – they often come with instant utility rebates. Look for the Tacoma Power stickers when you buy in local stores. **U***

1 INCH OF WATER PER WEEK.....

Sprinkler system check in

Over the winter, sprinkler heads can break or get turned in the wrong direction. Before you're ready to water regularly, give your sprinkler system a test run. Most sprinkler systems have a setting to quickly go through all of the water cycles so you can check the spray and direction of each sprinkler head.

If sprinkler heads are broken, you'll see water shooting out at odd angles. If they're tipped or turned around, you'll see water running where it's not supposed to, like the driveway or sidewalk. Replace the broken sprinkler heads and redirect the others before you start running your system.

Look for any extremely wet patches or puddles, which could indicate a leaky pipe that needs to be fixed or overwatering in those areas.

Timing is everything

The best time to water is from late evening to early morning – especially on very warm days. Otherwise, you'll lose a good chunk of that water to evaporation.

How much?

Grass only needs about one inch of water per week – about the depth of a tuna can. Try this: Make (and eat!) a tuna sandwich. Drop that tuna can in the yard and adjust your watering to fill up the can over a week. No tuna or water will be wasted during this test! **U***



3 SIMPLE STEPS Financing energy-saving upgrades to your home

If you're looking to upgrade your home with energy-saving products, keep reading. Tacoma Power helps pay for upgrades by offering rebates and a seven-year, zero-interest loan to qualifying owners of single-family homes and multifamily buildings (two to four units). You can get a loan for a ductless heat pump, windows and insulation. Loan payments can be as low as \$20 a month.

The three-step loan process is easy:

- 1 Call or email to find out if you and your home or rental property are eligible.
- 2 Get bids from participating contractors and submit supporting documents.
- 3 Tacoma Power will review your project and determine if you qualify.

Once approved, contractors can begin working.

Visit TacomaPowerRebates.com for a list of participating contractors who know Tacoma Power's rebate and loan programs, or call (253) 502-8363 to speak with an energy efficiency expert. **U***

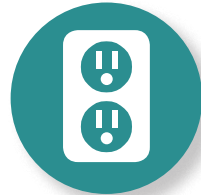
EASY PEASY

Use TPU's web services to take care of business

Trying to keep it simple this year? We can help. TPU's account management sites offer great ways to quickly and easily take care of business. No phone calls, no worries!

With **MyTPU.org/MyAccount**, you can:

- View and pay your bill; it's fast and free
- Enroll in paperless billing and get statements electronically
- Make payment agreements to request a due date extension
- Enroll in Budget Billing to have a consistent monthly payment
- Download your usage data to see how much electricity and water you're using



If you own or manage rental properties, you may be eligible to use the **MyTPU.org/PropertyManager** website for your power and water services to:

- Access your current occupant's name and move-in date
- "Move" new tenants in and out
- View the current balance and last bill for your own accounts

U* trivia – answer and win!

U* readers report the answer.

Congratulations and thanks to the 234 readers who answered the trivia question published in the January issue of U*. The correct answer to the question, "Will you receive a personalized report after a Tacoma Water efficiency expert conducts a walk-through of your home?" is "yes!"

Will Tacoma Public Utilities ever call a customer to ask for debit, credit or prepaid card information?

Be one of 50 randomly chosen customers with the correct answer and you'll get a super cool TPU nylon tote bag! Submit your answers at MyTPU.org/Trivia or call (253) 396-3389 by April 30. Leave your name, mailing address, phone number and answer to enter. **U***

City of Tacoma employees and their immediate family members are ineligible.
One answer per household.

Send comments and suggestions to:

u@cityoftacoma.org





You make the call

U* Calendar

All events take place in the Tacoma Public Utilities Auditorium, 3628 S. 35th St., Tacoma, unless otherwise noted.

APRIL

12 & 26

Public Utility Board Meeting
6:30 p.m.

MAY

10 & 24

Public Utility Board Meeting
6:30 p.m.

JUNE

3

Drip Irrigation Workshop – FREE
EnviroHouse | 10 a.m.
Register at (253) 573-2426

Natural Yard Care Workshop – FREE
EnviroHouse | 1 p.m.
Register at (253) 573-2426

14 & 28

Public Utility Board Meeting
6:30 p.m.

Area code (253)	
Report a power outage.....	502-8602
Start or stop service.....	502-8600
Order Click! Cable TV	502-8900
Home weatherization	502-8363
Fishing & Recreation Line	502-8690
Fish & wildlife programs	502-8008
Education programs.....	502-8224
Power conservation.....	502-8377
Water conservation	502-8723
Report a water emergency	502-8384

Bill Payment Assistance

(available for limited-income customers)

- Electric bill assistance – Family Need Program
 - City of Tacoma residents572-5557
 - Pierce County residents..... (855) 798-4328
- Click! Cable TV discounts.....502-8900
- Water and Environmental Services payment assistance and discount rate info line.....502-8369

FREE SPRING EVENTS

Information and instant rebates on LED lighting and showerheads at local stores. Stop by!

April 14 | 10 a.m. to noon
Oakbrook Ace Hardware
8123 Steilacoom Blvd. S.W., Lakewood

April 22 | 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Marlene's Market & Deli
2951 S. 38th St., Tacoma

May 6 | 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.
McLendon Hardware
1015 N. Pearl St., Tacoma

May 12 | 6:30 to 10:30 a.m.
Lakewood Hardware & Paint, Inc.
9020 Lakewood Dr. S.W., Lakewood



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We produce and mail this newsletter
for about 33 cents each.
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u@cityoftacoma.org or 502-8600.
THE END



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