



September 2012
Volume 25, No 09



Y
O
U
R

Service



Electricity—Water—Wastewater—Electricity—Water—Wastewater—Electricity—Water—Wastewater—Electricity—Water—Wastewater—Electricity—

MOVING

If you are **moving**, please notify our office at 825-3200 at least a day in advance to have your meters read for your final bill. Please have your forwarding address ready to give to us.

Also, if you are **selling** your property, we need the new owner's name when you call in to final your account.

BPU requires an application for service to be filled out if you are beginning service with us or transferring service in our service area.

The application is on our website at www.bpu.org. We can also mail the application to you. We will not read the meters until we have received the completed application, a copy of your lease (if renting) & a photo copy of a photo ID.

**Real People
Saving Real
Energy
In Real Time**



MYMETER
ACCOUNT PROFILES

A free and easy tool
to track
your energy use
and save!

*Conserve Energy!
Save Money!*

**Sign Up for
MYMETER™
today at
www.bpu.org**

Reading Your Meter

BPU has two meter readers that read over 7,000 residential & commercial electric and water meters each month. For accurate billing it's important for our readers to have access to the utility meter(s) each month. Here are some ways you can help.

- We encourage customers to unlock gates (or provide a current key) and keep a path shoveled to meter during winter months.
- Pen dogs and other pets on your scheduled reading dates.
- Remove any obstacles blocking the meter; keep shrubs trimmed and remove any other items that may block the meter(s).

Your meter(s) will be estimated if the meter readers feel unsafe conditions exist or if a property is locked and BPU does not have a key. They will leave a door hanger if they are unable to get an actual reading.



Your help makes our meter readers' job easier and ensure the accuracy of their readings.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

Brainerd Public Utilities (BPU) has had several calls from tenants that live in apartment buildings or a mobile home park, stating they have no power or have a water problem. Most of these calls occur after BPU's working hours. When BPU staff investigates the situation, it is often found that the problem is within the apartment or mobile home and is not BPU's responsibility to repair.

BPU is requesting landlords inform their tenants to call the landlord or maintenance person first, when they have an electrical or water issue, to determine whose responsibility it is. If BPU responds to calls that are not their responsibility to repair, the owner of the property will be billed for the costs that are incurred by BPU.



IMPORTANT NOTICE For Military Personnel

Effective August 1, 2007

Section 325E.028 of the Minnesota statutes pertaining to utility payment arrangements for military service personnel outlines their rights and responsibilities effective August 1, 2007. Minnesota's Municipal Electric Utilities must not disconnect the utility service of a residential customer if a member of the household has been issued orders into active duty, deployment, or change in duty station if a residential customer meets criteria set forth in this statute.

Application forms are available at Brainerd Public Utilities or on our Web site at www.bpu.org. If you would like a copy of this statute or an application sent in the mail, please contact BPU at 218-825-3200. An application received with out copies of income statements and proof of military orders overseas is considered incomplete, resulting in the possibility of no shut-off protection.

Business & Repair Office Hours

7:00 a.m.—3:30 p.m.

Business: 829-8726

Repair: 829-2193

Emergency 24 hour service 365 days a year: 218-829-2193

EMAIL@BPU.ORG WWW.BPU.ORG

NOTICE: All electrical work performed in the City of Brainerd requires a "Request for Electrical Inspection" form to be filed, and work inspected by our inspector. Please call **825-3210** or **829-2193** for more information.

BEFORE DIGGING: Call Gopher State One at **1-800-252-1166** for water and electric locations. All requests for locations must be made by calling the above toll free number at least **48 hours** before digging begins.

Annual Notice to All Residential Customers Cold Weather Rule

The Cold Weather Rule is designed to protect people who may have trouble paying their electric bills in the winter. The Minnesota Cold Weather Rule applies from October 15 to April 15. The rule, established by the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission, means that your utility cannot disconnect your residential electrical service during the winter **IF** the customer meets **ALL OF** the following requirements:



- The customer enters into and makes reasonably timely payments under a payment agreement that considers the financial resources of the household.
- Utility disconnection would affect the customer's primary heat source.
- The customer has declared inability to pay on forms provided by the utility)
If this form is not completed, you are not protected.
- The household income of the customer is less than 50 percent of the state median income level, as documented by the customer to the utility.

If you have trouble paying your utility bill, local agencies may be able to provide payment assistance. The Minnesota Department of Human Services recommends you call the county in which you live.

BRAINERD PUBLIC UTILITIES POLICY 2005-10 DISCONNECTION OF SERVICE DISCONNECTION FOR NON-PAYMENT OF BILL

Adopted 01/01/86
Revised 12/06/05

A customer's account is considered delinquent if the current charges are not paid to Brainerd Public Utilities (BPU) by the due date of the bill. **IT IS ALWAYS THE CUSTOMER'S RESPONSIBILITY TO PAY BILLS IN A TIMELY MANNER AND IN FULL UNLESS OTHERWISE AGREED.** The following procedures will be followed if the bill is not paid in full each month.

The customer will be notified by regular mail that he/she is delinquent. The customer will be given five (5) business days after the date of mailing to pay the amount owing.

If the customer does not respond to the delinquent notice he/she will receive a disconnection notice delivered by regular mail. The disconnection date will be scheduled for five (5) business days after the date of mailing the disconnection notice. If the disconnection notice is for a rental property, a copy of the notice will be sent to the landlord.

If the customer does not pay the amount due on the disconnection notice in full, or make payment arrangements by the disconnect date, their service will be disconnected.

The customer may request a payment arrangement which will allow him/her to pay their delinquent amount over a three (3) month period. Current charges will also have to be paid by the due date each month. **Customers failing to make scheduled payments or current charges can be disconnected immediately.**

Once a customer has been disconnected for non-payment or not complying with the payment arrangement, the service will not be reconnected until the customer pays all the account charges in full. This includes current charges and a deposit if one has not been paid previously or if the paid deposit is not sufficient. A reconnection fee will also have to be paid. During the hours of 7:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. the fee is \$50 and after 3:00 p.m. and on weekends and holidays, the fee is \$150.

Payment for accounts that are on the disconnection list each week must be made with cash, money order, or credit card. No checks will be accepted.

MEDICAL CONDITIONS

BPU shall not discontinue electric service if such action will aggravate an existing serious illness of any person who is a permanent resident of the premise where service is rendered **IF** the customer complies with the following requirements regarding such illness.

The illness must be certified to BPU by a registered physician on BPU's Physician's Certification of Illness form. The form must be filled out completely.

Initial certification by the physician may be made by telephone if the completed form is forwarded to the utility within five days.

Initial certification shall prohibit disconnection of service for thirty (30) days. Certification may be renewed by the customer for an additional thirty (30) days by providing another certificate to BPU. IT IS THE CUSTOMER'S RESPONSIBILITY TO PROVIDE A NEW CERTIFICATE EVERY 30 DAYS. FAILURE TO RENEW THE CERTIFICATE ENTITLES BPU TO START DISCONNECTION PROCEDURES.

The customer cannot use their illness as a way not to pay their utility bill. The customer will be required to make a payment arrangement to pay their past due bill and keep the current charges paid.

DISCONNECTION OF SERVICE WITHOUT NOTICE

BPU may disconnect service to any customer without further notice for the following reasons:

- In the event of unauthorized use, theft of power, and/or tampering (see Policy 2003-4) with BPU's equipment.
- In the event that a condition has been determined to be hazardous to the customer or other customers of BPU, BPU's equipment, or to the general public.
- When a customer is in violation of municipal, state, or national electric codes.
- When a customer has not complied with the requirements for application for service.