

# Watt's News

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Official Newsletter of Brainerd Public Utilities, PO Box 373, Brainerd, MN 56401

## Checking for Water Leaks

### Assuming there are no leaks in your house can cost you money!

Brainerd Public Utilities would like to offer the following tips and encourage all customers to monitor their homes for possible water leaks. Leaks not only waste water; they cost you money!

### First Sign

One of the first indications of a water leak is an unexplained increase in the usage amount and dollar amount on your monthly utility bill. If there is an increase in usage that cannot be explained (extra people in the house, lawn watering, faucet left on, etc) there is a possibility that a toilet is leaking, a faucet is dripping, or there is a break in the water line between the meter and the house. Other sources of leaks can be the sprinkler system, the water softener, or the automatic fill on the swimming pool.

### Monitor Your Meter

To identify leaks, we suggest that you monitor your meter. You will need to conduct the monitoring during a time period when you will not be using water. Monitoring while no one is home is ideal. First, turn off all water inside and outside the house. Write down the reading on the meter and the position of the sweep hand. Do not use any water for at least two hours. At the end of the monitoring period, read the meter a second time. If the second reading is different from the first, water flowed through the meter, indicating there may be a leak.

### Check Toilets First

If a leak is detected, we recommend that you check your toilet(s) first. Our experience shows that most leaks occur in the toilet. A leaking toilet tank can waste up to 200 gallons

**Watt's Weather**

**Total Precipitation**  
February 200 8"  
February 2008 5.5"

**Average Temperatures**  
February 2009 Hi 26 Lo 1.0  
February 2008 Hi 8 Lo -5.0

of water per day and cost you 31 cents per day, \$ 9.30 per month approximately!

A toilet flapper hung partially open can waste up to 7,200 gallons of water per day!

To check for a leaking toilet you will need some food coloring (any color). Flush the toilet. Then put enough coloring in the tank to color the water. Do not flush the toilet for at least an hour. If the water in the bowl of the toilet becomes colored there is a leak that will need to be repaired.

If you do have a leak, there are a number of possible causes. If you remove the tank lid and can easily identify the cause, correct the problem and try your leak test again. Consider that "fixes" such as bending the float back to shape, or adjusting how the rubber flapper falls, often end up failing soon afterward. In most cases, you will simply want to replace the toilet flapper (the rubber piece at the bottom of the tank that keeps water in the tank) and/or filling mechanism. These are available at hardware stores and home centers for about \$10 each.

### Water Faucets

Water faucets, inside and outside of the house, can also be leaking. 100 drips per minute can waste up to 33 gallons per day. That's 5 cents per day, \$1.50 per month, and \$18.00 per year!

In most cases, a leaking faucet is caused by a worn washer or "O" ring.

If there is a leak in the water line there will be a spot in the yard that never dries up. This could indicate that the water line below needs to be replaced.

Remember, it is your responsibility to make sure all leaks are repaired in a timely manner. Brainerd Public Utilities is responsible for the main water line and the meter itself. Leaks on the BPU's line do not affect the charges on your water bill.

## NOTICE FOR PLUMBING CONTRACTORS

**Beginning April 1, 2009 the fee for a new water service (from the main to curb stop) will be increased from \$200 to \$1,500. This is the first increase since 1965.**

**The Brainerd Public Utilities (BPU) Commission approved this increase at the January 24, 2009 commission meeting.**

**If you have any questions, please give Darwin Cole, BPU Water Supervisor, a call at 825-3218.**

## Frozen and/or Broken Water Meters

It is BPU Policy if a water meter freezes and breaks, BPU will replace it the first time.

If it happens again, the customer is responsible and will be billed the cost of a new meter.

**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.

**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

**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.



# BRAINERD PUBLIC UTILITIES

## POLICY 2008-15

Adopted 12/30/08

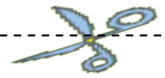
### NON-SUFFICIENT FUND CHECKS AND ACH PAYMENTS

If a check made payable to Brainerd Public Utilities (BPU) is returned for non-sufficient funds (NSF) or the account has been closed, or if a customer has their utility bill paid by ACH, and notification is sent for non-sufficient funds or the account has been closed, the following procedures will take place.

- BPU will send a notice, by regular mail, to the check issuer when a check or ACH is returned for NSF from a financial institution. The notice shall contain language of MN Statute 609.535 pertaining to issuance of dishonored checks.
- Restitution has to be made within five (5) business days and must be paid by money order or cash. There will also be an additional \$30 service charge. There are no arrangements allowed when a NSF check is received.
- If restitution is not made within the required time, the electric service will be disconnected at the service address where the check was issued. Before the service will be reconnected, the NSF check, \$30 service charge, entire balance of account, a deposit, if one has not been previously paid, and a reconnect fee will have to be paid.
- If more than two (2) checks or ACHs are returned to BPU within a twelve (12) month period, all future utility payments will have to be paid by money order or cash. However, if a customer signs up for the automatic bill payment plan in lieu of paying the required utility deposit, and an ACH or recurring credit card is returned to BPU within the first twelve (12) months of service, the customer will automatically be taken off bank pay and will have to pay the required utility deposit, along with the other required charges.

## Direct Payment Plan

An option for a different due date would be a Direct Payment Plan. You authorize regularly scheduled payments to be made from your checking or savings account. If the first two digits of your BPU account number are between 01-10, your automatic payment date will be the 25<sup>th</sup> of each month. If the first two digits are between 11-18, your automatic payment date will be the 10<sup>th</sup> of each month. You will still receive your monthly utility billing statement and proof of payment will appear on your monthly bank statement.



### AUTHORIZATION FOR DIRECT PAYMENT

I authorize **Brainerd Public Utilities** & the financial institution named below to initiate entries to my checking/savings account once each month in the amount of my current billing beginning \_\_\_/\_\_\_/2009. **This authority will remain in effect until I notify BPU in writing to cancel it in such time as to afford the financial institution a reasonable opportunity to act on it.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Name of Financial Institution)                      (Branch)                      (Address)                      (City)                      (State/Zip)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Bank Account Number)                      Checking or Savings (circle one)                      \_\_\_\_\_  
(Name, as it appears at the Bank-Please Print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Service Address)                      \_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_-\_\_\_\_\_-\_\_\_\_\_  
(BPU Account No.)                      (\_\_\_\_\_)\_\_\_\_\_-\_\_\_\_\_  
(Home Phone No.)                      \_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/2009  
Date

**To take advantage of this service, complete this authorization form and return it to us with a voided check.**