

NPU you!



A community newsletter for the customers of

Norwich Public Utilities

NPU extends shut-off moratorium

Norwich Public Utilities (NPU) has extended its moratorium on utility shut-offs until September 9, 2020 providing residential and commercial customer with more time to catch up on past due bills.

During a presentation at the June Board meeting, NPU Commissioners were told that 19% of all customers – residential and commercial – were past-due on their accounts, representing nearly \$1.9 million.

“We understand that this is a very challenging time for a number of families and businesses in our community and we want to do whatever we can to be of assistance,” said Chris LaRose, General Manager of NPU. “We hope that by continuing to provide flexibility and time for our customers to catch up on their bills, we will all be able to get through this unprecedented situation.”

Prior to the June meeting, NPU had already met or exceeded the requirements established by the State’s Public Utility Regulatory Authority (PURA), although they do not have jurisdiction over NPU. Since March, NPU has not terminated any services for non-

payment, suspended the collection of security deposits and reduced late fees.

NPU has also established the Special Payment Arrangement (SPA) program to provide customers with up to 24 months to pay their past-due balances without penalty or interest accruing. To date, more than 525 customers have made SPA agreements with NPU, which could total approximately \$840,000 in payments.

The Pandemic has made a very significant impact on NPU’s finances, with revenue down by more than \$1 million a month. Commercial usage of natural gas, water, electric and wastewater utilities are down by approximately 32%.

NPU is reminding customers that the suspension of service terminations for nonpayment does not eliminate the need for customers to pay their entire utility bill when the moratorium ends in September. As many customers will have larger than normal balances, NPU strongly recommends working with the Customer Service Representatives to set up a payment plan.

NPU receives prestigious SOAR for operational excellence

The American Public Gas Association (APGA) presented NPU with the prestigious APGA System Operational Achievement Recognition (SOAR) for excellence in operating its natural gas utility. Public natural gas systems are entrusted by their customers to deliver clean and affordable natural gas through a safe and reliable distribution pipeline system. To accomplish this mission,



a forward-thinking natural gas utility constantly strives to improve its operating capabilities, overcome challenges and adapt to its changing environment. NPU was selected for SOAR level silver by its peers on the APGA Operations and Safety Committee. The selection was based on demonstrated excellence in the four areas of system integrity, system improvement, employee safety, and workforce development.

New social distancing procedures in place

Like most of the nation, in March NPU closed its facilities to the public, including the Customer Service Center to prevent the spread of the coronavirus.

Now that the State has moved into Phase 2 of its reopening plans, NPU is taking steps to reopen our facilities, while ensuring necessary health and safety measures are implemented.

Changes made to the Customer Service Center include temperature checks and limiting the number of customers allowed into the building, and installing markers

and signs to maintain six feet social distancing requirements.

To avoid potential delays caused by these new guidelines, customers are advised to utilize online bill payment, AutoPay, Pay-by-text or call NPU at 860-887-2555 to make payments over the phone. Customers can also deposit payments into the drop-box located on the outside of the Customer Service Center. For more information on payment options, please call 860-887-2555 or visit <https://norwichpublicutilities.com/residential/customer-service/>.

10 Tips to save energy this summer

1. **Set your thermostat as high as comfortably possible.** The smaller the difference between indoor and outdoor temperatures, the lower your overall cooling bill will be.
2. **Avoid setting your thermostat at a colder setting than normal when you turn on your air conditioner.** It will not cool your home any faster and could result in excessive cooling and unnecessary expense.
3. **Use a ceiling fan to increase cooling efficiency.** If you use air conditioning, a ceiling fan will allow you to raise the thermostat setting about 4° F with no reduction in comfort.
4. **Turn off fans when leaving the room.** Fans cool people, not rooms, by creating a wind chill effect.
5. **Avoid placing lamps or TVs near your room air conditioning thermostat.** The thermostat senses heat from these appliances, which causes the air conditioner to run longer than necessary.
6. **Don't heat up your home with appliances and lighting.** On hot days, avoid using the oven; use a microwave oven or grill outside.
7. **Take advantage of daylight instead of artificial lighting,** but avoid direct sunlight.
8. **Wash full loads of laundry and dishes** and consider air drying both.
9. **Lower your water heating costs.** Take short showers instead of baths and turn down the temperature of your water heater to a warm setting.
10. **Keep hot air from leaking into your home.** Seal cracks and openings to prevent warm air from leaking into your home.

Source: <https://energy.gov/energysaver/spring-and-summer-energy-saving-tips>



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A minute with the Mayor:

Norwich Police Department committed to working with the community



Mayor Peter Nystrom

Late in May, George Floyd was murdered in Minnesota by a man who wore a badge while three of his fellow officers just stood there and allowed him to die. All of these men are responsible for the death of an innocent man.

What happened that day, and too many similar incidents that have taken place all over the country for so many years is wrong. It goes against everything we, as a community, police force, and City stand for.

The relationship between a police department and the citizens they are sworn to protect has never been more important than it is today. And it is essential that both sides of this relationship – the police and the public – listen to and learn from each other. That is the only way we can improve the manner in which we all live and work together.

Cool off this summer with CHIPP

As the dog days of summer heat up, there has never been a better time to take advantage of CHIPP, Norwich Public Utilities' (NPU) Cooling & Heating Incentive Pilot Program. Residential and small commercial customers who install a qualifying cold climate heat pump (an all-in-one heating and air conditioning system) will receive a \$1,200 per ton rebate toward the purchase and installation. Customers can also receive rebates up to \$1,500 for installing integrated controls, and up to \$1,100 for installing a high-efficiency heat pump water heater.

For more information on this program, visit <https://norwichpublicutilities.com/residential/chipp/> or call Fawn Walker at 860-823-4153.



CHIPP
Cooling & Heating
Incentive
Pilot Program

For qualifying NPU electric customers

At this critical time in our country and in our city, it is important to understand the very clear standards and policies that were put into place by the Norwich Police Department in the recent past. In many important ways, our police force has already implemented many of the measures that are being discussed in other communities across the country.

The men and women of the Norwich Police Department remain committed to positive community relations and sound policies. Well before the tragedy in Minnesota, our police department adopted The 8 Can't Wait Initiative to reduce excessive force issues and provide standards for ethical police services.

The 8 Can't Wait Initiative of the Norwich Police Department is based on the following elements:

1. A ban chokeholds and strangleholds
2. Requires de-escalation, where officers have to communicate with subjects and maintain distance

3. Requires a warning before shooting
4. Officers must exhaust all other means of control before using their gun, which studies have shown can reduce police violence by 25%
5. Officers have a duty to intervene, which requires them to stop other officers from using excessive force, and to report on any incidents of excessive force
6. A ban on shooting at moving vehicles
7. Requires a use-of-force continuum, which limits the weapons or force that can be used depending on the situation. The use of non-deadly force shall be limited to defensive and control purposes
8. Require comprehensive reporting every time officers use force or threaten force against anyone at any time

The Norwich Police Department remains committed to our citizens and welcomes any reforms or improvements that may come as a result of community discussions following the tragic death of George Floyd.

Annual gas infrastructure safety inspection underway

In May NPU began its annual process of undertaking the federally mandated safety inspections of customer natural gas service lines and meters. The survey takes about four months to complete.

Precision Pipeline Solutions (PPS) was hired to complete this survey; all PPS employees will have an NPU placard on their vehicles along with NPU contractor identification.

The safety survey consists of a technician walking over the service line with instrumentation that detects any natural gas leaks and then visually inspecting the above-ground equipment on the exterior of a building.

Due to the health and safety requirements put in place by the State of Connecticut in response to COVID-19, the survey will only include outside service equipment at this time.

The PPS technician will not attempt to gain access into any buildings. The surveys typically take no longer than ten minutes to complete and require no interaction between a customer and the technician while COVID-19 precautions are in effect.

If you have any questions or concerns please contact NPU Customer Service at 860-887-2555.

Improvements continue at water treatment plant

In March, two dissolved air flotation (DAF) clarifier units were set in place at the Stony Brook water treatment plant. This is an important milestone in a two-year construction project which began in February, 2019.

The DAF will remove naturally occurring organics and algae more efficiently, improving water quality before entering the filtration phase of the purification process. By more effectively removing natural organics, there will be less matter to react with the chlorine disinfectant

thereby further reducing disinfection byproducts, which are a regulated compound.



HERE TO SERVE YOU

Visit our website for more information: norwichpublicutilities.com

Please call, fax or e-mail us your questions, comments and suggestions.

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