

Office of the People's Counsel for the District of Columbia

Seniors Resource Guide



Office of the People's Counsel

1133 15th Street, NW, Suite 500 | Washington, DC 20005

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www.opc-dc.gov | email: ccceo@opc-dc.gov

About OPC's Seniors Resource Guide

Seniors are a vital part of the District of Columbia's diverse population. The Office of the People's Counsel's "Seniors Resource Guide" is a quick reference resource for District seniors to help them find important telephone numbers and the locations for services and assistance they may need. Included in the Resource Guide are utility company phone numbers, highlights to help understand utility bills, home energy efficiency tips and social service agencies contact information.



How to File a Utility Complaint with OPC

As the statutory representative of the District's utility consumers, a consumer can file an individual complaint with OPC.

Below is a brief description of OPC's consumer complaint process:

1. OPC staff receives utility consumer complaints by phone, email, fax, walk-in visits or online.
2. OPC staff interviews you to obtain information and provides you with an overview of the complaint resolution process and time frame for follow up with you.
3. OPC staff then forwards a detailed description of the complaint to the utility company. If the complaint involves billing or question of meter accuracy, a referee meter test can be performed. This test measures the accuracy of the meter serving your home. It is conducted on the consumer's premises by a utility company representative and witnessed by a representative of the PSC at the consumer's request.
4. When OPC receives the utility company's report, a staff member will contact you to review the report and discuss proposed next steps;
5. The next steps may include:
 - Requesting additional information from the utility company or you;
 - Negotiating further with the utility company to resolve the complaint;
 - If negotiations are unsuccessful, then seeking an informal hearing before the PSC;
 - Or closing your file.
 - When your complaint file is closed, a "close out" letter is sent to the consumer. The "close out" letter provides a summary of actions taken by OPC staff during the informal resolution phase, the complainant's statements and the utility's response. The "close out" letter also outlines any decision reached during the informal resolution and the consumer's right to request a hearing before the PSC.

For further information or to file a complaint, contact OPC at 202.727.3071.

Understanding Your Electricity Charges

Distribution charges are regulated by the D.C. Public Service Commission.

Account Details

Services for May 5, 2009 to Jun 5, 2009:

Summer rates in effect

Distribution Services:

Customer Charge		2.00
Energy Charge	290 KWH x 0.0094500	2.74
Energy Assistance Trust Fund	at 0.0004000 per KWH	0.12
Sustainable Energy Trust Fund	at 0.0011000 per KWH	0.32
Public Space Occupancy Surcharge	at 0.0022600 per KWH	0.66
Delivery Tax	at 0.0070000 per KWH	2.03
Administrative Credit	at 0.0012362 per KWH	0.36 CR
Residential Aid Discount Surcharge	at 0.0000500 per KWH	0.01
Total Charges - Distribution		7.52

Generation Services:

Minimum Charge	Includes First 30 KWH	3.26
Energy Charge	Next 260 KWH x 0.1123600	28.26
Procurement Cost Adjustment	at 0.0005660 per KWH	0.16 CR
Total Charges - Generation		31.36

Transmission Services:

Minimum Charge	Includes First 30 KWH	0.12
	Next 260 KWH x 0.0033200	0.86
Total Charges - Transmission		0.98

CURRENT CHARGES THIS PERIOD

\$39.86

Distribution is the service provide by the energy utility to deliver electricity safely and reliably to your electric meter. Distribution rates pay for the power poles, lines, meters, linemen and customer service representatives who serve you. You pay Pepco for distribution. This portion is regulated by the D.C. Public Service Commission.

Generation is the cost of producing power. You may obtain these services from the energy supplier of your choice.

Transmission refers to the cost of transmitting electricity from power plants outside the District over high-voltage lines to Pepco's distribution system. While Pepco owns some transmission facilities, all transmission in the region is operated by a regional transmission operator (RTO). This portion of your bill is regulated by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.

Understanding Your Electricity Charges

Energy Usage History tracks monthly energy usage for comparison.

Monthly Usage make sure you read your bill to ensure it's an actual reading instead of an estimated reading.

Energy Usage History

Price To Compare (Generation and Transmission Services)
Based on actual monthly usage

11.16 cents per kwh

	Jun 08	Jul 08	Aug 08	Sep 08	Oct 08	Nov 08	Dec 08	Jan 09	Feb 09	Mar 09	Apr 09	May 09	Jun 09
DAYS	31	30	30	32	30	31	32	33	30	28	31	29	31
KWH	210	330	390	210	220	160	200	190	190	160	170	160	290

*** An Asterisk denotes an estimated, not actual, meter reading.**

Surcharges refer to the taxes and other charges that Pepco is required to include on customers' bills. Those funds are paid to the appropriate government agency. Examples include the Gross Receipt Tax, Environmental Surcharge and Delivery Tax.

Meter Summary includes your monthly meter reading information: number of kilowatt-hours (KWH) used during the billing period, your rate classification, date of your next scheduled meter reading and whether your current bill is actual or estimated.

Price to Compare is the average cost per kilowatt-hour for generation and transmission service, based on your rate classification. Use this to compare your Pepco costs with offers you may receive from other electricity suppliers. This figure will fluctuate monthly depending on your usage and rates.

Understanding Your Natural Gas Charges

ACCOUNT INFORMATION

Service Address:		Gas Use	Reading	Date	Method
Mailed	01/15/09	Current Reading	2699	01/12/09	READ BY CO.
Account Number	0315095026	Previous Reading	- 2481	12/11/08	READ BY CO.
Meter ID No.	881168	CCF of Gas Used	218		
Rate Class	RESIDENTIAL HEAT/COOL	Unmetered Gas Light (CCF)	+ _____		
Level	1	Total CCF of Gas Used	218		
Next Meter Reading Date	02/12/09	Conversion Factor	X 1.028		
Days in This Billing Period	32	Total Therms (TH) Used	224.1		

Days in This Billing Period pay close attention to this section because it affects the amount of your total bill.

CCF of Gas Used is the unit of measurement on your meter of the amount of natural gas used. One CCF is equal to 100 cubic feet of gas. There is a conversion factor for the heating value of the fuel and a converted usage figure, which is Total Therms.

Purchased Gas Charge includes the cost of the natural gas and transporting the gas to the Washington Gas system.

Understanding Your Natural Gas Charges

Charges: look at this section to ensure your previous month's payment has been correctly posted to your account.

12-MONTH ENERGY USE HISTORY						GAS USAGE DETAIL		CHARGES	
Mo/Yr	HDD	Th	Mo/Yr	HDD	Th				
12/08	761	193	06/08	69	17	TOTAL THERMS USED	224.1	PREVIOUS BILL AMOUNT	39.73
11/08	246	62	05/08	126	30	DISTRIBUTION SERVICE		PAYMENTS RECEIVED	84.73
10/08	21	11	04/08	415	103	DISTRIBUTION CHARGE		CHARGES THIS PERIOD	
09/08	0	10	03/08	693	189	224.1 TH @ \$.3278	73.46	BUDGET INSTALLMENT	144.00
08/08	0	11	02/08	775	238	CUSTOMER CHARGE	7.95	OVERPAYMENT	-45.00
07/08	0	12	01/08	664	213	DC RIGHTS-OF-WAY FEE	7.15	TOTAL THIS PERIOD	99.00
Total TH						1,089		TOTAL DUE	\$ 99.00
BUDGET PLAN INFORMATION						NATURAL GAS SUPPLY SERVICE		TO AVOID LATE PAYMENT CHARGES, FULL PAYMENT MUST BE RECEIVED BY 02/04/09.	
Monthly Installment						PGC @ \$1.0702	239.83		
Used to Date						SUSTAINABLE ENERGY TRUST FUND	2.47		
Installments Billed to Date						ENERGY ASSISTANCE TRUST FUND	1.34		
Paid to Date						STATE & LOCAL DELIVERY TAX @ .070700	15.84		
						TOTAL GAS CHARGES	\$ 348.04		

12-Month Energy Use History tracks monthly energy use patterns.

Distribution Charges are the cost of delivering the natural gas through Washington Gas' system to your residence.

System Charges cover some costs of providing your service, including depreciation, taxes, maintenance and repair of gas lines, along with customer-related expenses, such as meter reading and billing.

Taxes are imposed by your federal and District governments, and are collected and remitted to the appropriate taxing authorities.

Understanding Your Telephone Charges

Breakdown of Charges

Aug 23 – Sep 22

Voice Services

Residence DialTone & Local Usq Monthly Flat Svc	12.78
Total Voice Services	\$12.78

Change in Service and Partial Month

Residence DialTone & Local Usq Monthly Flat Svc	10.65
Economy II Senior Upgrade Service	-.83
Total Change in Service and Partial Month	\$9.82

Taxes, Fees & Other Charges

Voice

DC Universal Service Trust Fund	.39
DC Public Rights-of-Way Use Fee	2.27
DC Gross Receipts Tax Surcharge	2.26
DC E911/311 Fee	.76
DC Federal Universal Service Fund Surcharge	.53
Federal Excise Tax	.90
Federal Subscriber Line Charge	3.87
Total Taxes, Fees & Other Charges	\$10.98

Voice Services make sure that these are the features that you have approved and use regularly or often.

Taxes, Fees and Other Charges are approved by Federal government and D.C. City Council.

Bundled Services allow you to receive telephone, cable television, and internet services provided by one company. Please note: Only local telephone service is regulated by the DC Public Service Commission and falls under the jurisdiction of OPC.

DC Universal Service Fund is a surcharge used to pay for Economy II and Telecommunications Relay Service (telephone service for deaf consumers).

Federal Excise Tax is mandated by Congress and is imposed on all telecommunications services. This charge appears on local and long distance bills.

Federal Subscriber Line Charge is required by federal law and assists with providing telecommunication services to low-income and rural consumers, as well as eligible schools and libraries.

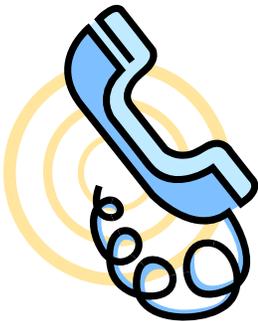
Gross Receipts Tax Surcharge is required of all District public utilities. They are required to pay this tax to the District government.

Lifeline/Link-Up Program

To qualify for any of the discounts below, utility bills must be in the applicant's name and they must meet the income guidelines established by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Economy II Telephone Service (ECON II)

The Economy II program offers discounted local Verizon telephone service to qualified District residents age 64 years and under for \$3.00 a month. Economy II customers will be provided with unlimited calling in the Washington metropolitan area. Seniors age 65 and older will receive a monthly discounted rate of \$1.00 with unlimited calling in the Washington metropolitan area. With the Economy II program, Verizon offers a free blocking option for long distance calls. If a customer chooses this blocking option voluntarily, no security deposit will be required. Other Verizon services such as call waiting, return call and three-way calling are available at the normal rates. You must be a Verizon or NationsLine customer to participate in the Economy II service. Customers must recertify each year.



Link-Up America

Link-Up America is for District residents who are eligible for social service assistance. They may qualify for a 50 percent reduction in service connection charges associated with installing a single phone line in their homes. Link-Up America applies only to service connection charges.

How Do Residents Apply?

Call the District Department of the Environment's Energy Office Hotline at 311 between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday to make an appointment.

What Do You Need To Apply?

You **MUST** bring all of the following: Identification that shows social security number, picture ID, proof of household income, recent utility bills, proof of age if applying for Verizon phone bill discounts, and a copy of your lease agreement and/or rent receipt if your heat is included in your rent.

Quick Facts about Energy Efficiency

- **Set your water heater temperature** at 120°F which can reduce your water bill by 10%. Water heating can account for 14% to 25% of the energy consumed in your home.
- **Insulate your electric water heater** which can reduce heat loss by an appreciable 25% to 40%, representing a savings of around 9% on your annual water heating costs.



- **Seal tiny cracks and gaps** around doors, windows and baseboards to prevent air from leaking into your home. Sealing these areas can save you up to 10% on your utility bill

- **Tape a heavy-duty, clear plastic sheet** to the inside of your window frames during the cold winter months to stop leaks. Remember, the plastic must be sealed tightly to the frame

to help reduce infiltration.

- **Install exterior or interior storm windows** which can reduce heat loss through windows by 25% to 50%. Storm windows should have weatherstripping at all movable joints, be made of strong durable materials and have interlocking or overlapping joints.
- **Use controls such as timers and photo cells** to save electricity by turning off lights when they are not in use. Dimmers can also save electricity when used to lower light levels.
- **Use Compact Fluorescent Lightbulbs (CFL)** which will save about \$30 over their lifetime. CFLs use 75 percent less energy and last about 10 times longer than an incandescent bulb.
- **Install a programmable thermostat** which can save you about \$180 a year in energy costs.
- **Purchase multi-function electronic devices** that combine several capabilities. All In One Printers (print, fax, copy, scan), computers, and TV/DVD combinations save energy and reduce clutter.



- **Buy ENERGY STAR** electronics which use 70% less electricity than electronics without this designation. They spend a large portion of time in low-power mode which not only saves energy, but helps equipment run cooler and last longer.



- **Avoid the Phantom** load that many appliances continue to draw when switched off. These “phantom” loads occur in most appliances that use electricity, such as televisions, stereos, and items with a digital display. Phantom loads can be avoided by unplugging the electronics or using a power strip to cut them off.



- **Repair leaky faucets promptly** because they waste gallons of water in a short period or time.

- **Use rechargeable batteries** for products like cordless phones and PDAs. They are more cost effective than throwaway batteries. If you must use throwaways, check with your trash removal company about safe disposal options.

Source: U.S. Department of Energy, Office of Energy Efficiency & Renewable Energy

The District of Columbia Department of the Environment Energy Office (DDOE) has a variety of programs that can assist you with your utility costs and help make your home more energy efficient. For example, DDOE offers energy audits to single-family homeowners. DDOE’s **Home Energy Rating System** (HERS) program identifies a home’s energy deficiencies and provides homeowners with cost-effective, energy improvement recommendations. There are no income requirements for the HERS program.

Seniors can apply for DDOE’s **Low Income Home Energy Assistance** (LIHEAP) and **Utility Discount Programs** (UDP) to assist with reducing electricity, natural gas water and sewer services and basic telephone services. DDOE also manages a variety of weatherization programs which include energy audits, heating system repairs and installation on energy saving measures for qualified applicants. For more information, please contact **DDOE at (202) 535-2600** or online at **www.green.dc.gov**.

See page 18 for additional DDOE information.

Phone Numbers and Contacts For You . . .

Pepco

Pepco Customer Service Centers:

701 9th Street, NW, 8:30 a.m. to 5:15 p.m., Monday - Friday

2306 Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue, S.E., 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday - Friday

By Telephone:

(202) 833-7500 – Customer Service

(202) 872-2369 - TTY/TDD

(202) 872-4641 - Habla Español

(202) 872-3432 – Pepco Safety Emergency, to report down wires

(877) 737-2662 – 24-hour outage report hotline

(202) 872-2126 – Meter Reading Department

(202) 872-2445 – Pepco Claims Office

By Web:

Website: www.pepco.com

Email: correspondence@pepco.com

Washington Gas

Washington Gas Customer Service Centers:

1100 H Street, NW, First Floor

Hours: 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday - Friday.

***The center is closed on Saturday and Sunday.*

3101 Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue, SE,

Hours: 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Monday - Friday.

***The center is closed on Saturday and Sunday.*

By Telephone:

(703) 750-1000 - Customer Service

(703) 750-7975 - TTY/TDD

(703) 750-1000 - Habla Español

(703) 750-1400 - Gas leaks or emergencies

By Web:

Website: www.washgas.com

Email: custsrv@washgas.com

What to Do If Your Power Goes Out

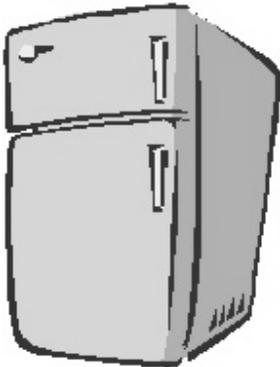
Assess the Situation

- Check to see if neighbors have power.
- Stay away from fallen power lines and trees.



Take Precautionary Steps

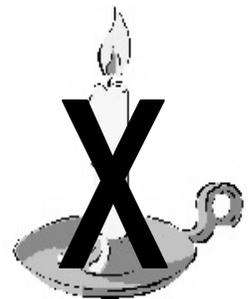
- Turn off all appliances to prevent an overload when the power returns.
- Keep freezer and refrigerator doors closed. Without power, a closed refrigerator can keep food cold for a day or two.



- Have a communication plan. The plan should include checking on neighbors and having neighbors check on you.
- Have a plan to store medicines that require refrigeration.

During the Outage

- Eat foods that spoil quickly first.
- Do not refreeze seafood, poultry or dairy products.
- During the winter, have everyone stay in one well-lit room during the day and wear layers of clothing.
- Use battery-operated flashlights and radios.
- Avoid using candles and kerosene. Instead, use battery powered flashlights and lanterns.
- Place generators or other fuel-powered machines **OUTSIDE** the home. Carbon monoxide (CO) fumes are odorless and can quickly overwhelm you indoors.



Phone Numbers and Contacts For You . . .

Verizon

By Telephone:

Customer Service - (202) 954-6263

Business Customers - (800) 599-0193

Verizon Center for Customers with Disabilities (Voice and TTY) - (800) 974-6006

Repair Services – (800) 275-2355

Centro Hispano de Verizon - (202) 954-6250

Español - (202) 954-6700

Spanish Relay Center (TTY/TDD/PC) – (800) 546-7111

Spanish Relay Center (Voice Only) – (800) 546-5111

Administrative Offices - (202) 392-9900

By Web:

www.verizondc.com

DC Public Service Commission

1333 H Street, NW, Suite 200, West Tower

Washington, DC 20005

By Telephone:

(202) 626-5100

By Fax:

(202) 393-1389

By Web:

www.dcpssc.org

The mission of the District of Columbia Public Service Commission is to serve the public interest by ensuring that financially healthy electric, natural gas and telecommunications companies provide safe, reliable and quality utility services at reasonable rates for District of Columbia residential, business and government customers.

DC Water and Sewer Authority

5000 Overlook Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20032

By Telephone:

Customer Service - (202) 354-3600

8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday - Friday

Water and Sewer Emergency Number (24 hour) - 202-612-3400

Credit and Collections - 202-354-3750

Meter Operations - (202) 612-3485 (9 a.m. to 5 p.m.),

(202) 612-3487 (24 hours a day, 7 days a week)

Water Quality Division - (202) 612-3440

TDD-TYY Hearing Impaired - (202) 787-2339

By Web:

Website: www.dcwater.com

Email: info@dcwater.com

custserv@dcwater.com

By Mail:

District of Columbia Water and Sewer Authority - Customer Service Department

P.O. Box 97200

Washington, DC 20090

DC Office of Cable Television

Government of the District of Columbia
3007 Tilden Street, NW, Pod P
Washington, DC 20008

By Telephone:

(202) 671-0066

9:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., Monday - Friday,

By Fax:

(202) 332-7020

By Web:

Website: www.oct.dc.gov

Email: comments.OCT@dc.gov

DC Office of Cable Television administers the cable franchise contracts and is the cable customers advocate, holding cable companies to the highest levels of customer and technical service.

Phone Numbers and Contacts For You . . .

DC Office on Aging

500 K Street NE
Washington, DC 20002

By Telephone:

(202) 724-5622
Phone 2: (202) 724-5626
TTY - (202) 724-8925

By Fax:

(202) 727-4979

By Web:

Website: www.dcoa.dc.gov
Email: dcoa@dc.gov

Lead Agencies for Senior Services

“The Office on Aging funds ‘Lead Agencies’ throughout the eight wards of the city that provide a wide range of social and health services. These agencies act as community satellites that continually strengthen our link to older Washingtonians.

Wards 1

Terrific Inc.

1222 T Street, NW
Washington, DC 20011
Phone: (202) 234-4128
Website: www.terrificinc.org

Ward 2

Family Matters of Greater Washington

1509 16th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20036
Phone: (202) 289-1510
Website: www.familymattersdc.org

Wards 2 & 3 (Georgetown-Foggy Bottom)

IONA Senior Services

4125 Albermarle Street, NW
Washington, DC 20016
Phone: (202) 966-1055
Website: www.iona.org

Ward 4

Barney Neighborhood House

5656-A 3rd Street, NE
Washington, DC 20011
Phone: (202) 939-9030
Website: www.barneynh.org

Ward 5

Seabury Ward 5 Aging Services

2900 Newton Street, NE
Washington, DC 20018
Phone: (202) 529-8701
Website: www.seaburyresources.org

Ward 6

Family Matters Aging Services

900 G Street, NE, 4th Floor
Washington, DC 20002
Phone: (202) 547-7502

Ward 7

East River Family Strengthening Collaborative KEEN Seniors Program

3917 Minnesota Avenue, NE
Washington, DC 20019
Phone: (202) 534-4880
Website: www.erfsc.org

Ward 8

Family Matters of Greater Washington

4301 9th Street, SE
Washington, DC 20032
Phone: (202) 562-6860

AARP/Legal Counsel for the Elderly

601 E Street, NW
Washington DC 20049

By Telephone:

(202) 434-2120
Toll-Free Nationwide - (888)-687-2277
Toll-Free TTY - (877) 434-7589
Toll-Free Spanish - (877)-627-3350

By Web:

Website: www.aarp.org
Email: member@aarp.org

Phone Numbers and Contacts For You . . .

DC Department of the Environment

1200 First Street, NE, 5th Floor
Washington, DC 20002

Energy Assistance:

Serving Wards 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5

1207 Taylor Street, NW, First Floor Washington, DC 20011

Serving Wards 6, 7 and 8

2100 MLK Jr. Avenue, SE, Suite 404 Washington, DC 20020

By Telephone:

Main Line - (202) 535-2600

Energy Assistance - 311

8:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m., Monday - Friday

By Web:

Website: <http://ddoe.dc.gov>

Email: ddoe@dc.gov

DC Department of Transportation

2000 14th Street, NW, 6th Floor
Washington, DC 20009

By Telephone:

(202) 673-6813

By Fax:

(202) 671-0127

By Web:

Website: <http://ddot.dc.gov>

Email: ddot@dc.gov

To report fallen trees or request street/alley light repair, contact the Mayor's Citywide Center at 311 or complete a service request online at www.dc.gov.

DC Department of Human Services

Administrative Office:

64 New York Avenue NE, 6th Floor
Washington, DC 20002

To apply for benefits please visit:

645 H Street, NE
Washington, DC 20002

By Telephone:

Monday - Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.
(202) 671-4200 - Administration
(202) 698-4350 - Benefits

By Fax:

(202) 671-4325 - Administration
(202) 724-8964 - Benefits

By Web:

Website: <http://dhs.dc.gov>
Email: dhs@dc.gov

DC Department of Parks and Recreation

3149 16th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20010

Senior Services Division - DC Golden Olympics
Columbia Heights Community Center
1480 Girard Street, NW, Suite 420
Washington, DC 20009

By Telephone:

(202) 673-7647
(202) 664-7153 - Senior Division

By Fax:

(202) 673-2087
(202) 671-2596 - Senior Division

By Web:

Website: <http://dpr.dc.gov>
Email: dpr@dc.gov



The Office of the People's Counsel is the public advocate for natural gas, electric, and telecommunications ratepayers in the District of Columbia. By law, the Office represents D.C. utility ratepayers' interests before the Public Service Commission, FERC, FCC, other utility regulatory bodies and the courts. The Office is mandated to conduct consumer education and outreach and may represent individual consumers with complaints related to their utility service and bills.



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