



Preparing for Winter Power Outages

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JAN / FEB
2026



You Asked, We Answered: Why Do Public Water Systems Issue Boil Water Advisories?

Why Advisories Are Issued

Boil water advisories are issued when there is a potential risk of contamination in the drinking water system. These situations are uncommon, but they can occur when something disrupts normal system conditions, such as:

- A large, uncontrolled water main break
- Low or negative pressure in part of the system
- A failure in water treatment processes
- A situation that could allow non-drinking water to enter the system
- A major power outage affecting a pumping station

Not every pressure loss leads to an advisory. RPU follows strict state guidelines and issues advisories only when necessary to protect public health. In many cases, advisories are precautionary. They allow us to act quickly and keep customers safe even before any contaminant is confirmed.

How Water Quality Is Verified

After an advisory is issued, RPU collects water samples and conducts

verification testing in our water quality laboratory. These tests look for potential bacterial contaminants and require a 24-hour incubation period. The advisory remains in place until results confirm the water meets all state health standards.

What To Do During a Boil Water Advisory

If a boil water advisory is issued, customers should bring water to a rolling boil for one minute before using it for:

- Drinking
- Preparing food
- Brushing teeth
- Washing dishes

You may also choose to use bottled water for these activities. Boiling is one of the most effective ways to destroy bacteria and other organisms that may be present.

When the Advisory Is Lifted

Once water quality is confirmed, RPU lifts the advisory and provides clear instructions to customers. This often includes flushing household faucets, ice makers, and internal plumbing to refresh the water inside your home or business.



Accountability in Action at RPU

At Rochester Public Utilities, our commitment to you is grounded in reliability, responsibility, and service. This fall, that commitment was put to the test in an unexpected way.

In September, a USPS trailer traveling down Highway 52 caught fire, damaging thousands of pieces of mail, including approximately 2,600 RPU bills on their way to customers. What could have remained a minor mailing issue quickly became a matter of urgency as the end of the billing cycle approached and customers began calling about missing bills.

Our Customer Care team noticed the pattern early and raised the concern. From there, the Customer Care, Finance, and Information Technology departments worked together to identify the scope of the issue and act quickly to protect affected customers. Using RPU's internal data, billing systems, and business intelligence tools, teams verified account information, ensured customers would not incur late fees or credit impacts, and worked to recover nearly half a million dollars in payments.

Our team's proactive response reflects the accountability we strive for across the organization. No one waited for direction. Instead, staff took ownership, collaborated, and delivered solutions, turning a potential setback into a strong example of reliability and customer service.

This incident also highlighted the value of electronic billing. More than 40% of RPU customers receive their bills electronically, which reduces costs, improves security, and helps avoid situations like this. With the launch of our new customer portal, RPU Connect, this is an ideal time for customers to enroll. E-billing lowers paper use, supports environmental stewardship, and provides a faster, more reliable billing experience.

Thank you for trusting us to deliver safe, reliable, and responsible service. Moments like this remind us that our promise to you extends far beyond infrastructure. It is powered by people who care about serving our community well.



Tim McCollough
General Manager,
Rochester Public Utilities

How to Ensure You Receive Alerts

A common question we hear is, "Why did my neighbor get notified but I did not?" In nearly every case, the reason is outdated contact information. Having accurate phone numbers and email addresses on file allows us to notify you quickly during a major water system incident.

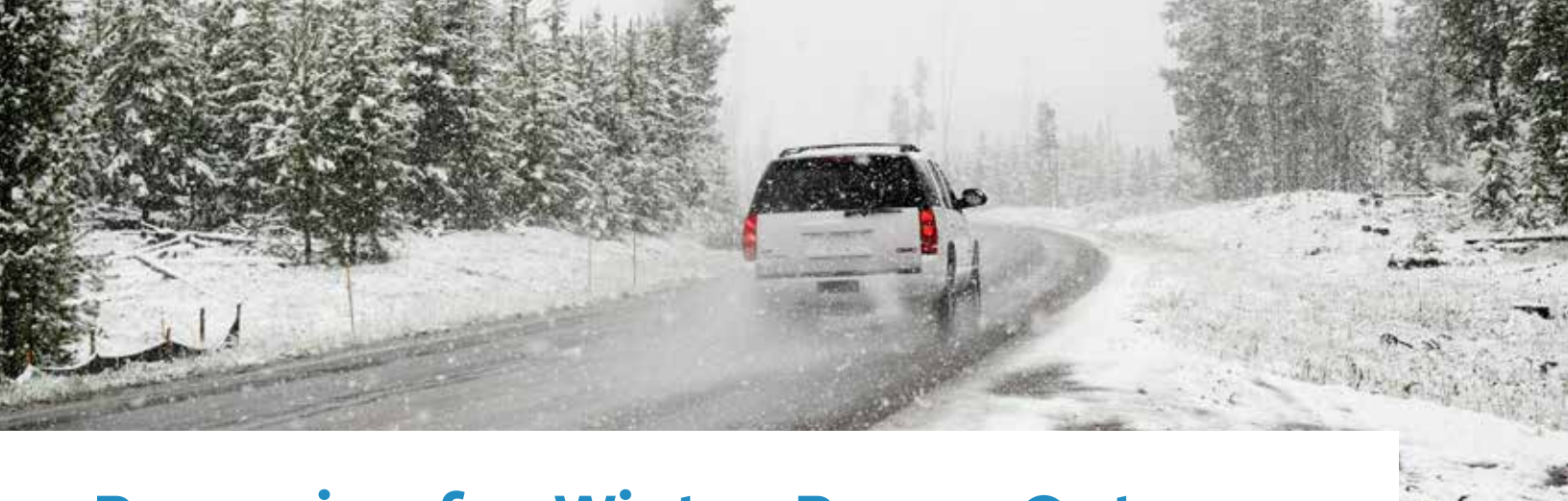
To update your contact information, log into RPU Connect at my.rpu.org.

- Go to **User Profile** to review or update the email address on file
- Go to **View/Pay Bill** (Utility/Service Requests) to update your phone number
- Go to **Alerts** to manage your communication preferences.

If you need assistance, our Customer Care team is here to help at **507-280-1500**.

Our Commitment to You

Boil water advisories can be inconvenient, but they are one of the most important tools we have to protect public health. At RPU, your safety and confidence in the water system guide every decision we make. Thank you for working with us to keep our community safe and informed.



Preparing for Winter Power Outages

Minnesota winters bring snow, ice, and extreme cold, and that combination can sometimes lead to power outages. RPU crews work year-round to maintain system reliability, but severe winter storms can create hazardous conditions that cause temporary service interruptions. Many customers have asked what they can do to stay ready and safe if the lights go out.

Here's what you need to know:

How do I report an outage?

If your power goes out, report it right away by calling **507-280-9191**.

How can I protect my home and appliances?

- Disconnect appliances and electronics or use surge protectors to prevent damage when power is restored.
- Keep your refrigerator and freezer doors closed to help food stay cold longer.
- Store flashlights and extra batteries where you can find them quickly.

What winter-specific steps should I take?

Winter storms bring additional challenges. Keep these cold-weather safety tips in mind:



Stay warm safely.

Dress in layers, use extra blankets, and never use ovens or grills for heat. If you use a generator, keep it outdoors and away from windows to prevent carbon monoxide buildup.



Prevent frozen pipes.

If temperatures drop significantly during an outage, turn faucets on to a slow drip and open cabinet doors around plumbing to allow warm air to circulate.



Plan for medical needs.

If someone in your home relies on electrically powered medical equipment, make a backup plan now. Know where you can go for shelter or charging if needed.



Charge devices early.

Before a storm hits, fully charge phones, laptops, and battery packs so you can stay informed with weather alerts and restoration updates.



Prepare an emergency kit.

Include blankets, hand warmers, non-perishable food, bottled water, medications, a first-aid kit, and supplies for pets.

What about refrigerated medications or equipment?

Some medicines and medical devices require power or cold storage. Talk with your healthcare provider about how long items can remain safely refrigerated and create a plan for temporary storage during an outage.





Customer Spotlight: City Council Member Patrick Keane on Saving with RPU's Time-of-Use Rate

Rochester City Council Member Patrick Keane, who also serves on the RPU Board of Directors, has firsthand experience with how Rochester Public Utilities' Residential Time-of-Use (TOU) Rate can benefit customers who shift electricity use to off-peak hours.

As an electric vehicle (EV) owner, Keane typically charges his Mustang Mach-E overnight during the lowest cost energy period in RPU's TOU structure. That simple change paid off. Over the past year, he saved a total of \$46.29 compared to what he would have paid on the standard residential rate. His average monthly savings were \$3.86, with his highest month reaching \$13.35.

Keane says the experience has been both easy and worthwhile.

"I did not overhaul my lifestyle. I just scheduled my EV to charge overnight. Small changes can make a noticeable difference."

For Keane, the benefit is clear. By charging during off-peak hours, he was able to power a roughly 300-mile EV range for about \$6.75. Though mileage will vary depending on vehicle and driving habits, Keane has been happy with his setup.



Patrick Keane and his wife, Lori, with their Mustang Mach-E electric vehicle.

RPU's TOU Rate rewards customers who can move some electricity use to off-peak hours, such as running major appliances later in the evening, doing laundry on weekends, or charging EVs overnight. Off-peak prices are significantly lower than on-peak and super-peak prices. This supports both customer savings and more efficient use of the electric system.

"For anyone interested in reducing their annual energy costs, I think it is worth considering," Keane added. "If your routine allows you to shift even a portion of your usage to off-peak times, you will likely see some benefit."

To learn more about RPU's Residential TOU Rate, visit: [rpu.org/my-account/residential-time-of-use-rate.php](https://www.rpu.org/my-account/residential-time-of-use-rate.php)



Neighborhood Energy Challenge

Learn more: www.rpu.org/education-opportunities



**Attend one of our FREE
Energy Efficiency Workshops and
Qualify for a \$75 Home Energy Audit.**

Saturday, January 24 –OR– Saturday, March 7

Both dates: 10:00-11:00 a.m.

Free Childcare Provided

Call to register: 888-734-6365

One of our **CONSERVE & \$AVE™** programs.



New Customer Portal User Guide

Your step-by-step guide to managing your RPU account online.

RPU Connect has been redesigned to give you a more intuitive and convenient way to manage your utility account. The updated portal and mobile app feature improved navigation, easier access to billing and usage information, and streamlined tools for updating your account or reporting an outage.

Registration Steps

1. Go to the RPU Customer portal at **my.rpu.org** or via the mobile app.
2. Select "Create an Account" to start your online registration.
3. Enter the following information exactly as it appears on your RPU bill:
 - **Primary Phone Number:** Use the phone number you provided to RPU. Do not include hyphens or special characters (example: 5072801500). If your phone number has changed, please contact RPU at **507-280-1500** to update it.
 - **Name on Account:** Enter the name exactly as shown on your RPU bill, including any middle initials.
 - **Account Number:** Enter your 7-digit RPU account number.
4. Email Address: Provide a valid email address. This email will be used for payment receipts, outage notifications, and bill-ready notifications.
5. Create a Password: Follow the on-screen instructions.
6. Create a Secret Question and Answer for added account protection.
7. Click Create Account to complete your registration.

Once registered, you can log in anytime to view and manage your RPU account.

Mobile App

Manage your account anytime, anywhere:

- View and pay your bill
- Track electric and water usage
- Receive outage notifications
- Start, stop, or transfer service
- Update your profile and payment preferences. *Available for iOS and Android.*

Download the app:



Usage Dashboard

View and compare electric and water usage over 1–2 years, toggle between chart or heat-map views, and use weather overlays to understand how temperature and conditions affect your usage.

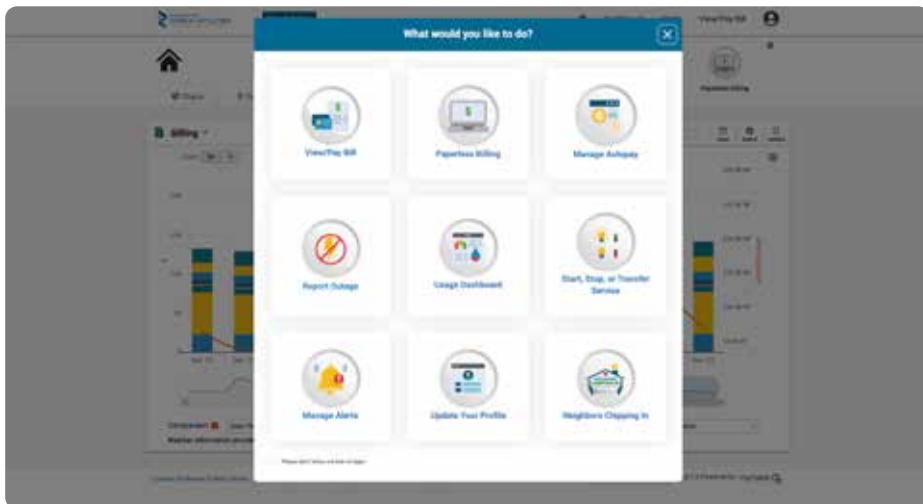
For questions or help getting started, contact RPU Customer Care at **507-280-1500**.





Dashboard Overview

- **View/Pay Bill:** Manage your accounts, set up or update autopay/e-billing, and view bills and payment history.
- **Paperless Billing:** Receive bill notifications by email instead of mail.
- **Manage Autopay:** Set up or change automatic payments (bank withdrawals: no fee; credit/debit: convenience fee applies). *Fees effective Feb 1, 2026: \$2.95 residential; \$15.95 commercial per account payment.*
- **Report an Outage:** Report service outages and receive restoration updates.
- **Usage Dashboard:** Track and compare your electric and water usage over time.
- **Start/Stop/Transfer Service:** Request new service, stop service, or move service online.
- **Manage Alerts:** Set your notification preferences for bills, usage, and service updates.
- **Update Your Profile:** Edit your contact information and account details.
- **Ways to Save:** Explore rebates, programs, and tips to reduce energy and water use.
- **Donation Program (NCI):** Donate to help RPU customers in need through the Neighbor's Chipping In program.



New Convenience Fee for Card Payments Beginning in February

Beginning in February, RPU will introduce a convenience fee for customers who choose to pay their bill with a credit or debit card. Residential customers will be charged \$2.95 per account payment, and commercial customers will be charged \$15.95 per account payment. RPU does not profit from this fee; it reflects the processing charges imposed by card companies.

Customers can avoid this fee by using any of RPU's no-fee payment options, including bank draft/ACH (autopay or one-time), check by mail or drop box, or in-person payments made with cash, check, or money order at the RPU Service Center. Digital wallet payments such as Apple Pay, Venmo, and Google Pay will also include the convenience fee, while Walmart Pay and PayPal are excluded.

For questions, contact RPU Customer Care at 507-280-1500 or customer care@rpu.org.



FREE Solar Energy Class

Learn more: www.rpu.org > Education Opportunities



SOLAR ENERGY FOR YOUR HOME OR BUSINESS

Date: Saturday, February 21, 2026

Time: 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Cost: FREE (registration required)

Register: Scan the QR code above or visit www.rpu.org to learn how





PRESORTED
STANDARD
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ROCHESTER, MN
PERMIT NO. 4

4000 East River Road NE
Rochester, MN 55906
507-280-1500
www.rpu.org



Neighborly

RPU Plugged In is designed
and printed locally in Rochester.



RPU Holiday Hours: Closed January 1 (New Years Day), January 19 (Martin Luther King Jr. Day) and February 16 (President's Day)

Social Media:

 @rochesterpublicutilities

 Rochester Public Utilities

 blog.rpu.org

 RPU TV

 Rochester Public Utilities

Mobile App:

RPU Connect



RPU Service Center Hours:
Monday - Friday (8am - 4:30pm)

Customer Care By Phone:
Monday - Friday (8am - 5pm)
507-280-1500

Electric Emergency:
507-280-9191 (24 hrs)

Water Emergency:
507-280-1500 (8am - 5pm)
507-280-9191 (5pm - 8am)



CONSERVE & SAVE™ Rebates

Learn more: www.rpu.org > Rebates & Programs



**HURRY!
ENDS
FRIDAY
JAN
30!**

FREE Holiday Light Recycling

Bring your old holiday string lights and decorations into the RPU Service Center lobby (4000 East River Road NE) and drop them in the designated bins.

NOT ACCEPTED:

- Appliance cords
- Battery packs
- CFL lights
- Cord adapters
- Electric cords
- Plastic rope lights
- Telephone cords



Ends Friday, January 30, 2026.