



THE VIRGIN ISLANDS WATER & POWER AUTHORITY CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS NEWS RELEASE

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The Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority Commits to Enhancing Support for the Elderly

U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS - July 29, 2024 – The Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority (“WAPA” or the “Authority”) deeply regrets the recent disconnection of one of our elderly account holders. Although reconnection was promptly executed on the same day, we recognize the increased risks posed by the above-normal temperatures this summer.

We greatly value our elderly community members and their significant contributions to our society. To better support them, WAPA is collaborating with the VI Housing Authority and the Department of Human Services to educate customers with life-threatening medical needs about the importance of submitting a medical certificate to the Authority. Internally, we are reviewing our procedures to offer more substantial protections for senior customers, considering the impact of extreme heat and mobility issues, among others.

To minimize future incidents, WAPA is undertaking the following initiatives:

1. **Outreach Campaign:** Launching an outreach campaign to raise awareness about the necessity of submitting a medical certificate for eligible elderly customers.
2. **Face-to-Face Outreach:** Conducting face-to-face outreach with elderly customers and their representatives to promote the submission of the medical certificate, which provides additional time to address a delinquent account. The medical certificate acts as an indicator feature that prevents immediate disconnections for nonpayment of utility bills.
3. **Territory-wide Campaign:** Rolling out a Territory-wide campaign to educate all customers on the importance of a medical certificate for individuals in their care.

It is important to note that customers enrolled in assistance programs, such as the emergency rental assistance program, energy crisis assistance program, and low-income water assistance program, are not disconnected due to delayed payments from the responsible agency. However, customers are still responsible for paying their portion of the bill, and non-payment can lead to disconnection.

WAPA remains committed to ensuring the well-being of our elderly customers and will continue to take steps to protect and support them during these challenging times.

The Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority Communication’s department is committed to reaching, informing, and connecting with the youngest members of the community to the eldest, through meaningful, transparent and effective communication.

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About WAPA: The Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority is an autonomous agency of the Virgin Islands Government which produces and distributes electricity and drinking water to residential and commercial customers in the territory. WAPA was created by the Fifth Legislature of the Virgin Islands in 1964 through Act No. 1248. Today, WAPA generates electrical power at production plants on St. Thomas and St. Croix and distributes electrical service through smart grids to customers on St. Thomas, St. Croix, St. John, Hassel Island, and Water Island. Potable water is distributed to almost 13,000 customers through water lines and standpipes. WAPA also has the responsibility of installing and maintaining streetlights.