



Pipeline Express

Provide high-quality water and exceptional services to the people and communities we support.

Immigration Enforcement in the Area What to Know

By Racquel Vaske

SPRWS is aware of increased federal immigration enforcement activity in our service area, and we recognize that this is a difficult and concerning time for many in our community and among our staff. We appreciate and thank our employees for continuing to show professionalism, care, and commitment to serving our residents during challenging circumstances. Our top priority remains the safety and well-being of our staff. The guidance below outlines immediate operational changes, employee expectations, and available resources to support safe, consistent, and lawful responses. There were also additional updates from the Mayor's Office sent via email regarding city policies and information.

Priority: **Staff Safety & Immediate Operational Changes**

To reduce risk and ensure staff safety: Field Work & Customer Interactions

All unscheduled interactions with customers and private property are being minimized.

Door knocking should be limited to emergency reasons only, and solely to leave a placard or notice.

A second employee must be present for any emergency door-knocking activity.

Supervisors have full authority to pause work, remove staff from an area, or cancel assignments if conditions feel unsafe.

Identification & Visibility

All staff who will be out in the field are required to wear a SPRWS logo high-visibility vest at all times. This includes non-construction sites/employees such as meter techs, water quality, etc.

Employees must travel in clearly marked SPRWS vehicles, and carry their SPRWS employee badge.

These measures ensure customers and authorities can clearly identify employees as official SPRWS staff.

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Temporary Service Adjustments

All shutoffs are suspended for:

Meter Violations (Stopped Meter) -
Exception: unaddressed significant leaks

RPZ-related shutoffs

Employees should continue outreach to schedule customer interactions but we will reduce unplanned encounters.

Situational Awareness & Reporting

Notify your division manager immediately if:

ICE or federal law enforcement is present near a job site,

ICE approaches you, a colleague, or a member of the public while you are working.

Q&A: What To Do in Common Situations

If ICE or Federal Law Enforcement Confronts You

Stay calm and professional.

Ask officers to wait to speak with your director or supervisor.

Immediately contact your division manager and senior leadership (if needed)

You may say: "Please wait until my supervisor arrives."

If ICE Is Confronting a Member of the Public

Do not obstruct (making false statements or assisting individuals in escaping).

Move to a safe location if needed.

If comfortable, record the situation.

Contact your division manager to report the situation.

If ICE Confronts a Colleague

Do not obstruct.

If comfortable, record the situation.

Notify your division manager and senior leadership immediately.

Core Principles

SPRWS Does Not Enforce Federal Immigration Law

City of Saint Paul's Separation Ordinance (Chapter 44) prohibits city employees from enforcing federal immigration policy. SPRWS employees must not:

ask about immigration status,

collect or record immigration information, or

assist with immigration enforcement activities.

Routine service delivery should never include immigration-related questions.

Legal Requests & Access to Facilities

Do not allow access to non-public areas without a judicial warrant.

Do not provide documents or records unless legally required.

Always contact SPRWS management or legal counsel before responding.

Employee Rights & Support

You have the right to remain silent.

You are not required to answer questions.

Employees are not expected to interfere or obstruct law enforcement.

Additional Guidance

It is recommended (not required) that employees carry government-issued identification, such as a passport or other federally issued ID, if they have one.

Please feel free to call the general manager's cell directly if you have questions or need support:

Racquel Vaske: 612-704-3759



SPRWS Hosts Job Fair: WUWI and Trainees Sought



Sandy Kimbrough talks with a prospective job applicant for the water utility worker I and the water utility trainee position at an open house on January 22. The utility welcomed 45 job applicants to the event.

The water utility is hiring new water utility workers and utility trainees to start with the upcoming construction season. There are multiple positions to be hired in each job title.

To promote the positions, the utility hosted a job fair on Thursday, January 22 at the water utility.

In addition, the utility posted a YouTube video at <https://tinyurl.com/4kkfpt8z> featuring SPRWS staff including Ty Vidal, Jamal Evans, Maddy Tusler, Chris Cullen, Jordan Skender, Rich Rowland and Racquel Vaske. Thank you to all of these employees for promoting our open positions.

These jobs are both posted online at stpaul.gov/jobs and must be applied for online by the end of the day on February 2. Please share this information with others who you feel would be a good fit for these roles in our workplace.

Meet the New Engineering Interns: Josue and Ahmed

Please welcome our two new interns joining our engineering division!

Ahmed Mohamed is working with Renee Huset's team in our GIS area. He is currently a senior at the University of Minnesota majoring in geographic information science.

Josue Fuentes is working with Brent Marsolek's team in our Lead Free SPRWS program. He is in his second year at Augsburg College studying biochemistry.



Josue Fuentes



Ahmed Mohamed

Tax Certifications for 2025

WaterWorks Gets an Increase in Funding

By Derek Olson

In January 2024, the Board of Water Commissioners voted to suspend the water shutoff process indefinitely for delinquent accounts. That policy remains in effect and continues to shape how Saint Paul Regional Water Services (SPRWS) manages unpaid water bills while maintaining uninterrupted water service for customers.

The decision to suspend shutoffs was based on a cost-benefit analysis comparing the shutoff process with tax certification. The analysis showed that certifying delinquent water charges to property taxes is the most cost-effective method for recovering overdue balances. In addition, the Board determined that water shutoffs can create significant social and public health impacts, particularly for vulnerable populations such as children, older adults, and low-income households, that are inconsistent with SPRWS's commitment to providing reliable, safe water service to all customers.

As a result of this policy, the Customer Service Department completed its annual tax certification process at the end of 2025. This process is a critical financial function that allows the utility to recover unpaid charges while avoiding service interruptions for customers.

For 2025, unpaid water charges certified to property taxes in Ramsey County—

which includes Saint Paul, Falcon Heights, Lauderdale, and Maplewood—totaled \$4,761,340.00 and were applied to the property taxes of 5,660 homeowners. In Dakota County, which includes West Saint Paul and Mendota Heights, \$388,786.00 in unpaid water charges were certified to the property taxes of 460 homeowners.

While tax certification is an effective and reliable collection tool, both customers and the utility benefit when delinquency is avoided. Certified balances can result in additional fees and long-term financial impacts for property owners, particularly when renters are unable to resolve overdue bills before certification.

To help address the rising volume of certified accounts, SPRWS increased funding for the WaterWorks assistance program in 2025. In 2025, it was budgeted at \$368,900.

For 2026, we budgeted \$375,000 for the Waterworks program, which is an increase of \$6,100.

The additional funding allows customers experiencing economic hardship to receive help paying their water bills, reducing the risk of delinquency and preventing additional costs associated with the tax certification process. This investment reflects SPRWS's continued focus on balancing financial sustainability with customer well-being and equitable access to essential water services.

New to the City?

The City is excited to invite Team Saint Paul's newest employees to the Welcome to Saint Paul orientation. Your success and confidence in your new role are important to the City of Saint Paul, both in how we operate and serve our community. Therefore, attendance at this event is mandatory for all new employees, including temporary ones. Please seek supervisor approval before registering for the orientation.

The next orientation is scheduled for Thursday, February 5 from 8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. *Virtual*

Orientation Objectives

Greet, welcome, and celebrate your employment with the City of Saint Paul.

Discuss what it means to be a public servant, providing quality customer service, and fostering a respectful workplace.

Learn about the City of Saint Paul, its mission, vision, and values, as well as our accomplishments.

Orientation is for new or recent hires. If you attended a past orientation, you do not need to attend again.

For more information, visit Welcome to Saint Paul page at <https://tinyurl.com/yukn9mkp>. The virtual orientation will be recorded and made available to new employees who are unable to attend. Visit Welcome to Saint Paul to watch the most recent recorded orientation. You can sign up for the orientation on the Welcome to Saint Paul website. Other dates are available.

Contact Anita Vue at 651-266-6523 with questions.