

Helpful Apps For Residential Services

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(This is one of a series of articles provided by the Oakmont Technology Learning Center on the use of technology by seniors.)

This may seem like a mundane topic, but from posts seen on Nextdoor, there appear to be questions about Oakmont home utilities and services: gas/electricity, trash, water/sewer, and cable. Walks around Oakmont neighborhoods show leaking irrigation systems and overflowing trash bins with items in the incorrect bin. Information and help are on all these vendors' web sites.

PG&E - Most of us are only interested in PGE.com during a power outage or when the bill arrives for payment. There are more services on their web site than residential outage information. Paperless billing is an option, and they will take credit cards with an extra \$1.35 charge if you aren't comfortable with giving them a debit card with direct access to your bank account. Street light outages can be reported online. There is a section on safety and preparation for outages, along with outage maps. Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS) information is online as well as the ability to sign up for text or e-mail alerts. PG&E can also be followed on Facebook and Twitter. Baseline rate discounts are available for those who require power for medical equipment, such as a CPAP.

Water/Sewer -- The City of Santa Rosa provides online services at <https://www.srcity.org/water>. We are under a 20% mandatory water reduction in this years-long drought. Online billing and payment can be set up at <https://myutilities.srcity.org/>. They have a SewerSmart page on what should not be put down the drain, WaterSmart workshops on how to save water, how to be rain-ready, WaterSmart (a separate login) to look at a daily usage graph directly from your meter, Cash-For-Grass rebate (up to \$1,500), and more. If you're walking around Oakmont and see leaky or broken sprinklers, let the owners know. For water leaks in the streets, call the city immediately at 707-543-3150 or after hours at 707-543-3805.

Recology. Their web site is at <https://www.recology.com/recology-sonoma-marin/>. Electronic bill pay and paperless billing are available. Under Helpful Resources, there is a ton of information in their Sorting Guide, electronic/hazardous waste information, a calendar with street sweeping dates and pickup dates (with holiday changes), debris bin information, and a WhatBin search tool to tell you what can go in each bin. You can even sign up for e-mail reminders about pickup days or download their app. Large items can be picked up twice a year; you must call to get a pickup.

Comcast/Xfinity. While their service can be managed at xfinity.com, there is an Xfinity mobile app for both Android (from Google Play Store) and iPhone (from Apple online store) to manage your cable/Internet/phone services, including paperless billing and electronic payment. Go to xfinity.com/apps to check it out.

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