

Cable TV / Telephone Wires and Service

The Parkfairfax residential units were never made "cable-ready" either during the original construction (early 1940s) or as part of the condominium conversion (late 1970s). Soon after the conversion, however, Alexandria Cablevision (the cable TV provider at that time) installed a TV cable pedestal near each building from which coaxial cable could be installed at the request of a residential unit owner via a building crawl space and up a pipe chase (generally located alongside or between a kitchen and a bathroom) to the unit. During the condominium conversion, the telephone company (then Bell Atlantic) installed new underground telephone wiring to all the buildings, a new distribution box at each building and ran telephone wiring from the boxes through the crawlspace and up the pipe chases (or via whatever conduit was available) to each unit.

In the early 1980s both the phone company (Verizon then as now) and cable TV company (now Comcast) abandoned all regular maintenance and upkeep of the cable and wires running through the crawlspaces due to each company's policy on employee exposure to asbestos insulation. Parkfairfax soon developed procedures to aid each utility company with that portion of installation work that must be done in a crawlspace. See below for a few simple explanations of what Parkfairfax staff can and cannot do.

1. Parkfairfax maintenance staff cannot diagnose cable or telephone problems or run wiring to locations in your unit. The unit owner is a customer of the respective utility and all complaints or questions must be made to the respective utility company.
2. With advanced notice, the Parkfairfax Service Coordinators will schedule Parkfairfax maintenance staff to meet a cable/phone service technician at a building to assist the technician when work must be done in a crawlspace. Keep the following caveats in mind:
 - Parkfairfax limits assistance to one (1) cable/wire assist per day. This assistance work is assigned to the plumbing crew as a priority call, but unscheduled emergency responses such as broken water pipes, sewer back ups, etc., will always take priority with the Parkfairfax staff. This assistance work must be scheduled Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. or 1:00 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. The Association receives no portion of the cable/phone company's installation or service fee and the Association does not charge for this assistance service.
 - The resident (or cable service technician) must call the Parkfairfax Maintenance Office at (t) 703-578-3427 when the technician arrives on site as scheduled; a Parkfairfax plumber will respond promptly but will not wait for a technician and will not provide access to the respective residential unit (access to the unit must thus be worked out between the resident and the technician).
 - ***For residential units situated directly over the crawlspace.*** A Parkfairfax plumber will pass the new cable to the service technician utilizing existing openings into the unit. A plumber will not drill new holes through the building's floors or walls or spend an inordinate amount of time trying to "fish" a new wire through the pipe chase or existing conduits into the unit. A plumber is usually more successful when he can attach a new wire to an existing abandoned wire, thus allowing the utility technician to pull the entire length of old and new wiring into the unit.
 - ***For residential units situated directly over a laundry/storage room.*** A utility service technician may neatly run a new cable through the laundry/storage room and into the unit above. The color of the cable must be white and must be neatly installed and secured to minimize its visibility. Where this method of installation is an option, Parkfairfax staff need not be involved, thus allowing for the possibility of a weekend or after-hours service calls by the utility.
 - ***For all other residential units.*** A service technician may run a cable/wire from a respective utility box near the building along the rear perimeter of the building (burying it a minimum of 4 inches) and alongside a downspout to the residential unit above. Every effort must be taken to minimize the visibility of the cable/wire by choosing an appropriate color, by neatly tucking it behind the downspout, and by drilling an entry hole into the unit within three to four inches (3"-4") of the downspout; any disturbance to the grounds or plantings must be restored by the utility. The access point must be neatly caulked to keep water out. This method of installation is always available to the utility contractor and does not involve Parkfairfax staff, thus allowing service calls during weekends and after-hours.