
Subject: Dog and meter issue

From: SCMarkoff@aol.com [mailto:SCMarkoff@aol.com]
Sent: Thursday, September 03, 2015 8:31 PM
To: [M.M.]
Subject: Dog and meter issue

Dear [M.M.],

Thank you for your thoughtful email.

1. You seem to write that this is an issue for the meter reader to solve with, while I think this is a DWP policy problem, and that the DWP has put their own meter readers in an impossible situation. If the meter reader doesn't read the meters, the reader has a problem with his/her employer. If the reader goes on certain property in certain circumstances, the reader then must protect him or herself from a situation the person shouldn't have been put in. I like your comment that "This is a tough situation because now you have two conflicting parties being forced to be in the same place at the same time and one of them has no understanding or reasoning capacity as to why the other is there."

2. 1% of 1.6 million customers is a big number, but DWP is a huge company with great resources. I agree that appointments would be inefficient, for at least the reasons you point out and that the answer to posted and locked properties is technological.

It's sad that the DWP has that technology now (they quickly installed that technology on our meter after I raised the Ralph mugging issues) and I'll bet that other than the cost of the reporting technology, the lower cost of receiving the usage information via the reporting technology, and getting the usage information right (with out human error or fudging) should be a big offset to the costs of the reporting technology...if not cover completely cover all the costs of the reporting technology. The other profound benefit would be that DWP employees would no longer be in the catch-22 situation you so well set out, and DWP employees wouldn't have to go around clubbing dogs...dogs that were just trying to do their jobs.

3. In sum, I believe that with a recognition of the issues, the DWP's employees and their customers animals would be safer...and I wouldn't be surprised if that change resulted in not only less issues but with less net expenses for collecting the usage data. Unfortunately, instead of having a real discussion about the issues and solving them, the DWP has handled the Ralph beating and the policy issue the way many poorly run organization deal with problems...they bluff, stonewall, circle their wagons and hope the complainer and the issue goes away.

If you would like to give me your name or initials, I'll add our communications to www.dwpmuggedourdog.com. Note I'll be revamping the web site in a few days to add information to it and to make it easier for folks to read and understand.

Best,

SM

In a message dated 9/1/2015 1:40:26 P.M. Pacific Daylight Time, [M.M.] writes:

Hi Mr. Markoff, I just recently heard a short piece of your talk on KFI and was compelled to check out your website and a little more about the issue with ingress and egress for meter reading. I'm somewhat familiar with this issue as I have been working for a water company for almost 40 years. I have read meters and I am aware of the continuing dilemma of what to do when you can't get the necessary reads month to month. I have also supervised for the major portion of these years and we have had many similar issues. First of all, the best way to deal with this is the use of the new technology which gets meter read information directly to the company without the need for first hand onsite meter reading. Nobody wants their dog to be hit, nor do I, but every meter reader that needs to enter property is violating a dog's private domain and dogs don't have the capacity to see and understand a meter reader is not an intruder, therefore, it is his job to defend the area. This is a tough situation

because now you have two conflicting parties being forced to be in the same place at the same time and one of them has no understanding or reasoning capacity as to why the other is there.

To a meter reader, there are signs from a dog that they are friendly just as there are those signs that they are not. How does he do his job, he is expected to get a meter reading? Set an appointment; well maybe, but that takes manpower to set appointments and responsible people that remember they have to put the dog away at the appointed time. And with 1.6 million customers, if only 1% of them needs appointments, that's a very large number. And all of them making and keeping that appointment, very unlikely. Okay, we have 16,000 appointments; if you get 90% of them, that leaves 1600 unread meters. Can you see the impact this has on the utility? This is an everyday issue and the manpower to make all these appointments is overwhelming.

I know how hard it is for people to be responsible and pay their bills much less, manage their animals for a meter reader. Appointments won't work because it is not efficient time wise. All other customers would be paying for services and manpower required by only a selected portion of the customer base. How about this; all customers with animals pay an extra fee for their added impact to the water utility? Of course you don't like that, now it costs you, not the company. I am not saying this because I think you are wrong, I'm not sure there is a good answer, but appointments is out, not a workable idea. How about being trained to read your meter by a short video on the utility website?

As for having ingress, egress rights to read utility meters, under the current status quo, there is no better way unless meters are outside of fences and available for meter readers to see them, which generally would mean that ingress, egress is not an issue. But as it stands, with meters being where they are, dogs and meter readers will collide, and generally on a daily basis. I don't like animals being hit or sprayed, but look at it from a little different perspective than the homeowner; say your the meter reader and you need to read the meter. I am aware as you are likely as well, many people have animals that are not friendly nor are they intended to be. They want them for home protection and the dogs act as such. How are you going to get a meter read? How is the water company going to get what they have a right to get? Is it their responsibility to find another way? Is it your responsibility to make it accessible for them to perform what it necessary? I'm sure that you would agree that it is not acceptable to park your car over the meter because you are making it inaccessible; well a dog, as it relates to this meter reader is nothing different, except that he can try to do his job and ward off the dog where he can't move a car. Some dogs are not aggressive, I'll tempered or dangerous, but many are and meter readers are confronted with this everyday. I'm sorry your dog was struck by this employee and his comment about, "dogs learn" shows ill intent and that isn't acceptable at all. It's too bad that your matter has come to this because as I see it, there is no good resolution except that we do see light at the end of the tunnel with technological advances reducing the need for specific meter accessibility. I understand your unhappiness with the meter reader hitting your dog and that should be addressed by the company. You should not be unhappy with the water company trying to get what they have a right to have reasonable access to. And you shouldn't fight a battle that you can't win if you want the procedure changed. Remote access reading is going to be the answer, until then, you as a property owner have a n obligation and responsibility to make an effort for this meter to be read. Not doing so, is your lack of consideration for the health of your dog. Not that they should hit him, but if he acts in an aggressive manner, the meter reader will have every considerable reason to acts as needed for his own protection. And signs about private property have no enforcement over ingress, egress I don't believe and for any reasonable person, they shouldn't. Be reasonable, not angry. Good luck. I hope your dog is okay, he looks like a great dog.

Sent from my iPad=