

METER READING

The City of Medicine Hat currently bills over 78,000 meters servicing electric, gas and water customers in the City of Medicine Hat, the Town of Redcliff, the Hamlet of Dunmore as well as the rural areas adjacent to the City.

Estimating:

Most residential customers can expect to have their meters read on a regular basis. During inclement weather or staffing issues, some estimating can be expected.

Meter Reading Cards:

If the Meter Reader is not able to safely access the meter, they will leave a card. On the card is a reason code specifying why the card was left. Instructions for providing readings are also on the card. There may be times in inclement weather that a card will not be left.

Meter Access:

Bylaw 2489 (Gas Utility Bylaw) states: **“Unobstructed access must be provided to the regulating and metering equipment at all times for maintenance and reading.”** Electric and Water Bylaws contain similar provisions. These provisions are not written solely for reading meters. They also address safety concerns related to the services they meter.

How you can help us:

First, know where your meters are. Walk around the house and make sure that the meters are not **obstructed**. Keep in mind that your Meter Reader is reading in excess of 500 meters per day. What might seem like a simple matter for a single meter can become a significant problem over the course of a day. Remember also that ‘seeing’ the meter does not necessarily mean the meter can be ‘read’ accurately.

Common access/visibility problems are:

- **Foliage:** Trees and bushes planted in front of a meter can grow to obstruct the meter. Meter Readers have been stung, bitten, scratched and whipped trying to read meters through bushes.
- **Dirty Windows:** A number of meters are read through basement windows. Dark screens, dirty windows and window coverings can interfere with an accurate, actual meter reading.
- **Storage:** Many meters, especially inside water meters, get blocked by ‘stuff’.
- **Difficult Gates:** Over time, many gates become difficult to open. Meter Readers are reluctant to force a gate open and risk causing property damage. In the event a meter is obstructed, your meter reader will leave a card explaining why they were unable to read your meter(s).

Inside Meters:

Many meters must be read from the inside of the house. Meter Readers do not remove their footwear when they go into a house. Given the nature of their job, even a minor foot injury can impair a Meter Reader’s ability to do his job. The Meter Readers will practice reasonable diligence in keeping their footwear clean and/or informing you of dirty footwear. You do have the option of getting the reading for the Meter Reader. You also have the option of “requesting a card.” Many customers who do not want to be disturbed (i.e. shift workers) have asked the Meter Reader to leave a card instead of knocking or ringing the doorbell to gain access. For water meters, remote reading devices are available from the Environmental Utilities Department. A water remote is a device that allows the Meter Reader to read the water meter without having to come inside your house. The cost to the customer for a remote is outlined in the [Water Bylaw #2379](#). Arrangements to have a remote installed can be made through Environmental Utilities at 529-8176.

Dogs:

Aggressive dogs pose the most significant safety threat to Meter Readers. As a group, we typically experience 30 dog-related incidents each month; at least one of these results in a bite. Meter readers have a great deal of experience with dogs and will not put themselves at risk with any dog.

But my dog doesn’t bite?

Our experience has shown that dogs will behave differently when their owners are not present.

But my dog wasn't home?

The Meter Reader didn't know it was safe to go into the yard. Before entering a yard, the Meter Reader must be comfortable that it is safe to do so. We also have relief Meter Readers who, not being familiar with a route, will not risk going into a yard if they suspect a dog is there.

But my dog was in the house?

Because a dog is not visible from outside the yard does not mean that it is safe to enter the yard.

Should I inform you of my dog?

When you sign on to utilities, you will be asked if you have a dog. Please answer honestly. If you obtain a dog that is vicious or is of a breed known to be vicious, you have a responsibility to let us know. This also applies if your dog begins to show any signs of aggressive behavior. If a Meter Reader is injured or threatened by a dog due to misleading or omitted information regarding a dog, a report is forwarded to Bylaw Enforcement. Further action may follow, depending on the situation. You should let us know even if your dog is friendly. By being aware of your dog, your dog and your Meter Reader are less likely to get off on the wrong foot. The Meter Reader will take extra precautions to ensure that the dog does not get out of the yard. Any information you may wish to provide regarding your dog will be passed on to the Meter Readers.

**If you have any questions about
Meter Reading or wish to provide information:**

Phone: (403) 529-8111 or (403) 502-8743

Fax: (403) 502-8552

Visit: Customer Service Counter
Main Floor, City Hall

Online: www.medicinehat.ca

E-mail: meter_reads@medicinehat.ca