

## Man's Best Friend

On a daily basis, our dedicated meter readers are out reading anywhere from 100 to over 300 meters in a single day. On the surface, this would appear to be a very straight forward task. However, our meter readers are presented with challenges on a daily basis. Surprisingly, one of the most significant of these challenges is dogs. It is estimated that our meter readers will encounter a dog at 60% of households visited.

Routinely, our meter readers have encounters with 'man best friend' without incident. In most cases, a dog's demeanor is not aggressive and both the dog and the meter reader are familiar with each other (and in fact may even eagerly anticipate the arrival of the meter reader with their bag of treats). However, there are occasions or circumstances that can put our meter readers into an unexpected hazardous encounter with a dog (or other animal).

For the sake of our meter reader's safety, the District tries to maintain an accurate list of all locations with animals that may be encountered during a normal work day. However, the accuracy of that list is highly dependent upon our customers and dog owners to notify us if there may be any potential danger posed to our meter reader in the course of reading the electric or water meter. Please contact the District if you own a dog that might even remotely pose a risk to our meter readers, whether you are new in town or move to a new location. There are a couple of points to keep in mind when considering how much risk your pet may pose:

- Dogs are a part of your family, but they are also a pack animal. As such, from the standpoint of your pet, your family makes up the 'pack'. Some dogs may attack without provocation because of the introduction of a new 'member' to the pack or a perceived threat to the pack. When our meter readers hear '...don't worry, Fluffy won't bite, he never bites anyone...', they have been trained to take that as Fluffy won't bite the OWNER, but that doesn't automatically mean they won't bite an unfamiliar person like our meter readers. Please don't be disappointed if the meter readers remain a little skeptical with that comment.
- All dogs work on the "Fight or Flight" instinct. A large percentage of dogs are submissive to some extent and usually opt for the flight option (or feed me option, or roll over and pet my belly option). However, sometimes that instinct can change somewhat if the flight option is not available (as perceived by the dog). For example, if the dog is chained up or fenced in, then the dog may be more aggressive than usual.

So, please contact the District to let us know about any pets (specifically, dogs) that our meter readers could encounter during their daily tasks. It is imperative that the District maintain an accurate listing of pets in order to help keep our employees safe.