



MONTGOMERY COUNTY FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE
MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MD.

DIVISION OF OPERATIONS DIRECTIVE

May 11, 2006

NUMBER: 06- 03

TO: MCFRS Personnel

FROM: Operations Division Chief Philip Guercio *PG 5/15/06*

SUBJECT: Procedural Change: Non-Removal of Surface Mounted
Electrical Meters

Controlling utilities is important to ensure safe operations during emergency incidents. In order to improve safety during utility control, **Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service will no longer remove surface mounted electrical meters.** When safe firefighting tactics require removing power to an affected structure, take any of the actions below, as appropriate:

- De-energize the fire-affected area by removing fuses, or opening all circuit breakers and safety switches, as necessary.
- Open the main disconnects to de-energize the entire building.
- If the building is damaged to the extent that the service is no longer required, or if the main disconnects cannot be used to de-energize the structure, notify the local power company to interrupt the service.

Never pull an electric meter to de-energize the building. The basic reasons for not removing a meter are:

- Pulling a meter **may not** de-energize the electric service to a building.
- If explosive gases are present in the building, the service wire piping can act as a chimney. A small amount of gas may be present in the meter socket and pipe. When the meter is removed, a small arc will occur, possibly causing those gases to explode.
- If the meter glass is exposed to the heat of a fire, external stresses may build up, and will explode on contact.
- After an electric meter is removed, the energized contacts in the meter socket are left exposed, presenting an electrical hazard to anyone near the meter base.

For additional information, call Operations Division Chief Guercio at 240/777-2471.