Utility Meter Reader Examination, 2012
Candidate Information Guide

Test Date: December, 13 2012

The Personnel Board of
Jefferson County
Alabama
# Table of Contents

- **Overview** .................................................................................................................. 3
- **The Utility Meter Reader Job** .................................................................................... 3
  - Is the job right for you? .............................................................................................. 3
  - Job Location ............................................................................................................... 3
  - Hours .............................................................................................................................. 3
  - Starting Pay .................................................................................................................... 3
  - Job Duties ....................................................................................................................... 4
  - Working Conditions ....................................................................................................... 4

- **The Utility Meter Reader Examination** ................................................................. 5
  - Why an Examination? .................................................................................................. 5
  - The Examination ......................................................................................................... 5
    - Check-in ....................................................................................................................... 5
    - Examination ............................................................................................................... 5
  - How to Prepare for the Examination ........................................................................... 6
  - General Test Taking Tips ............................................................................................ 7
  - Examination Sign-Up Process ...................................................................................... 7
  - Location of the Examination ....................................................................................... 8
  - Parking ............................................................................................................................ 8
  - When to Arrive at the Examination ............................................................................. 9
  - Test Security ................................................................................................................ 9
  - What to Bring (and what not to bring) ...................................................................... 9
  - Notification of Test Scores .......................................................................................... 10

- **Contact Information** ............................................................................................... 11
- **Reasonable Accommodation** ............................................................................... 11
- **Information Sheet: How to Read an Electric Utility Meter** ................................. 12
Utility Meter Reader Candidate Information Guide

Overview

This guide provides information about the Utility Meter Reader job and the examination that will be held on Thursday, December 13, 2012.

The first section is an overview of the Utility Meter Reader job, including the location, hours, starting pay, duties, and working conditions.

The second section tells you where to go, when to arrive, explains the examination process, and how to prepare for the examination.

At the end of this guide is an information sheet entitled, “How to Read an Electric Utility Meter,” which will also be explained during the examination.

⇒ It is critical that you read all sections of this guide in order to be well informed about the examination and testing process.

The Utility Meter Reader Job

Are you a good fit for this job?
The examination will help us determine if you can perform the duties required of the Utility Meter Reader job, but only you can decide if the job is right for you. This information is provided to help you make that decision.

Job Location
The current job openings for Utility Meter Readers are at Bessemer Utilities only. When you completed the on-line job application, you were asked to select the jurisdictions in which you are willing to work. If you did not select Bessemer as one of your preferred jurisdictions, you will not be considered for the current openings.

Hours
The regular work hours for Utility Meter Readers at Bessemer Utilities are Monday through Friday, 7 AM to 3:30 PM, and 6 AM to 2:30 PM in the summer. Currently, Utility Meter Readers work an average of one hour of paid overtime three days per week.

Starting Pay
The current starting salary for Utility Meter Readers at Bessemer Utilities is $26,020.80 annually or $12.51 hourly.
**Job Duties**

Utility Meter Readers walk assigned routes to read water and electric meters at residences and businesses, and enter the readings into a hand-held computer.

Other duties include calculating utility usage, reviewing daily readings in order to identify possible misreads or meter problems, and talking to customers about their meters or utility service. Utility Meter Readers generally work by themselves, but all work is assigned and closely reviewed for accuracy.

“All information including job duties, working conditions, hours, and starting pay was accurate at the time the job was announced, but is subject to change.”

**Working Conditions**

*Meter reading is physical work…*

- Utility Meter Readers read an average of 350 meters per day. This requires walking as much as 10 miles in a single shift!
- Meter reading also involves repeatedly bending to lift heavy meter box lids and stooping to read water meters below ground level.

*The meters must be read…*

- Utility Meter Readers have to complete their routes every day regardless of the weather – heat and humidity, cold, and rain.
- Utility Meter Readers frequently encounter rodents, snakes, and insects in meter boxes and other areas.
- Utility Meter Readers frequently encounter dangerous dogs on private property that prevent access to meters.

*Professional and courteous…*

- As representatives of Bessemer Utilities, Utility Meter Readers have to always remain professional and courteous, even when dealing with angry customers.

If you think you can meet the challenges of being a Utility Meter Reader, continue on to read about the examination.
The Utility Meter Reader Examination

Why an Examination?
Utility Meter Readers must have specific knowledge and abilities to perform the job. The Utility Meter Reader examination will determine who is most qualified to perform the job by measuring each applicant's level of knowledge and abilities.

The knowledge and abilities assessed by the Utility Meter Reader examination are:

- The ability to listen to and understand information and ideas presented through spoken words and sentences.
- Ability to perform basic mathematical operations (e.g., add, subtract, multiply, and divide).
- The ability to mentally store and retrieve work-related information for use at a later time.
- The ability to read and understand information and ideas presented in writing.
- Knowledge of English language, grammar, punctuation, syntax, word usage, and sentence structure.
- The ability to attend to information presented verbally and actively ask questions to fill identified areas of missing or unclear information.
- The ability to work without close supervision or significant amounts of direction/guidance.
- The ability to pay close attention to detail in order to ensure the completeness and accuracy of work.

The Examination
The Utility Meter Reader examination will consist of two phases:

**PHASE 1: Check-in**
- **You will be required to show your valid driver's license.** You will NOT be permitted to take the test if you do not have this document with you.
- You will be asked to read and sign a confidentiality statement.
- You may have to wait for a period of time before you begin the examination process.

**PHASE 2: Examination**
The Utility Meter Reader examination has two sections.
- The first section measures your ability to learn basic electric utility meter reading.
- The second section will test your knowledge of basic address systems, ability to perform simple math and ability to accurately compare numbers.

You will be taken into a group testing room where you will be given instructions from a video monitor for completing the examination.
For the first section of the examination, you will be given instructions on how to properly read an electric utility meter. Next, for each question, you will be shown a series of photographs of actual electric meters in your test packet. You will then be asked to select the correct meter and reading from the options presented on your Scantron sheet. The video narration will guide you through each of the 20 questions and your response times. The last page of this guide ("How to Read an Electric Utility Meter") contains the information that will be provided during the examination, so reviewing the information prior to the test is critical.

In the second section of the examination, you will be asked to respond to questions by choosing the best answer from the choices provided in multiple-choice format. These questions will be based on your understanding of address systems, basic math and comparing numbers. You will use a Scantron sheet to record your answers. You will be given one hour to complete all the questions in this section of the examination. Once you have finished the exam, you will be allowed to check out and are free to leave.

**How to Prepare for the Examination**
The knowledge and abilities needed for this examination are ones most people have already, so there is nothing specific you will need to study ahead of time. All instructions for completing the exercises will be provided to you, and you may refer to them during the examination. However, you should study the information at the end of this guide ("How to Read an Electric Utility Meter") because knowing it ahead of time may help your examination performance.
General Test-Taking Tips

- Have a positive attitude
  Approach the examination as you would approach a difficult task. It might be tough, but you can do it! A positive attitude goes a long way toward success. Remind yourself that you are well prepared and are going to do well.

- Read the Candidate Information Guide thoroughly
  This guide has been provided to help you prepare as much as possible for the Utility Meter Reader Examination.

- Get plenty of rest
  Be sure to get plenty of sleep the night before the examination. Remember, your brain and body need sleep to function well, so do not stay up late!

- Eat breakfast
  You will have more energy and think more clearly if you have eaten, so do not skip breakfast the morning of the test.

- Dress Comfortably
  Be sure to dress comfortably when you come to the examination. There is no job interview during the examination, and you will not be judged on your appearance.

- Arrive early for your scheduled check-in time
  Allow adequate time for parking at the test facility because Candidates who arrive late for their check-in time will NOT be permitted to take the test.

- Listen to and read all instructions
  Listen to all instructions from the test administrators and read all test instructions carefully. If you cannot hear or understand the instructions, ask one of the administrators to clarify or repeat the information.

Examination Sign-up

You are responsible for going on-line to sign up for the test. Instructions for test sign-up are included in your letter of eligibility. You must register for a test time by December 4, 2012 at 4:00 pm. Once you have completed this sign-up, you will be e-mailed a letter confirming the time and exact location of the test.

⇒ If you do not have internet access, you may register for a test time by calling one of the following PBJC staff members no later than 4:00pm on December 4, 2012:

- Becky Lopez – (205) 279-3562
- Peter Luke –(205)-279-3568
- Marty Alber – (205) 279-3595
**Location of the Examination**

The Utility Meter Reader Test is scheduled to be held at the Personnel Board of Jefferson County (second floor) which is located at 2121 Rev. Abraham Woods, Jr. Blvd in Downtown Birmingham. Please note that the section of 8th Avenue North on which the Personnel Board is located has recently been renamed to Rev. Abraham Woods Jr. Blvd.

**Parking**

Parking is available at the BJCC parking deck across from the Sheraton Hotel. The cost is $1 per hour or a maximum of $7 per day. You are responsible for paying for your own parking. There are 10 hour parking meters available underneath the interstate. If you choose to park at a two hour meter, you will NOT have an opportunity to go out and refill the meter. You will NOT be permitted to leave the test once you have checked in. You may wish to arrive to the test site early in order to park and walk to the facility.

- If you arrive after your scheduled check in time, you will NOT be permitted to enter the facility and take the test!
- Please note that the 22nd Street lot (between 7th and 8th Avenue North) is a private lot and violators will be towed.
- The Personnel Board is NOT responsible for any parking fines, violations, or tickets incurred by you during the exam.
When to Arrive at the Examination

- You are to report to the second floor at your assigned time for check-in.
- The examination will be administered on Thursday, December 13, 2012.
- You must arrive at or before your scheduled check-in time indicated in your confirmation letter. Be sure to allow plenty of time to park and walk to the facility.

➔ If you arrive at the Candidate Check-In Room more than 15 minutes after your designated check-in time, you will NOT be permitted to take the test!

Test Security
The Personnel Board is required to follow strict rules regarding test security and confidentiality.

- To ensure test security, you will NOT be allowed to leave the test site for any reason once you arrive at Check-In unless you voluntarily withdraw from testing.
- It is important that you do not discuss the examination with anyone. Discussing the contents of the examination or revealing information about the examination could result in your disqualification from the process.
- The Personnel Board has a strict “no cheating” rule. If you are caught cheating during the examination, you will be disqualified and be barred from taking any future merit system examinations (Rule 9.14).

What to Bring with you to the test

➔ You must bring your valid drivers license. You will NOT be permitted to take the test without your driver’s license!
- Since you may be at the test facility for a while, you are allowed to bring food and beverages. We ask that you be careful to avoid spills, and be respectful of the other test takers.

What to leave at home

➔ Do NOT bring any communication devices (e.g., cell phones, laptops, tablets, etc.). If you bring a cell phone or other electronic device, you will be asked to return it to your car. We will not confiscate them. Using any communication device after you have checked in to the test site will be considered cheating, and you will receive a zero on the test.
- You must comply with this rule in order to be admitted and you will still be subject to the check-in time deadline.
- Do not bring this guide with you. All information needed for the examination, including the meter reading instructions at the end of this guide, will be provided to you at the examination.
Notification of Test Scores

You will be notified of your score by e-mail. When you receive your score, keep the following points in mind.

- Your score will include your final score on the exam as well as your preliminary rank on the register.
- This rank may change if there are any changes to candidates’ scores during the appeal period.
- If you have a change of address or phone number, you should go to www.jobsquest.org and LOGIN to your account in the Personnel Board application system and go to EDIT APPLICATION and change your contact information. You can also edit your contact information by calling our interactive phone system at 205-279-3400 and selecting option number 5.

If you pass the examination, your name will be added to an eligible register of candidates. Your name will be placed on the list, in rank order, according to your score on the examination.

Approximately three weeks after receipt of your test score notice, you may call our Interactive Voice Response system at (205) 279-3400 to determine your final rank on the eligible register.

The jurisdictions that have openings for Utility Meter Readers may conduct background checks, criminal record checks, or further selection procedures to review candidates. After the eligible register has been released to these jurisdictions, you must contact them for further information about your status in the selection process.
Contact Information

- If you do not have access to the internet or would like to change your test time, you may call Becky Lopez (205) 279-3562.
- If you have questions or concerns regarding this guide or the testing process, please call Pete Luke at (205) 279-3568. Personnel Board employees are not allowed to reveal specific information about the content of the exam. Questions should be limited to the administrative aspects of the examination.
- If you change any of your contact information (i.e., address, phone number, email address), you should update that information by logging into your application account and selecting Edit Application from the menu. You can also edit your contact information by calling our interactive phone system at 205-279-3400 and selecting option number 5.

Reasonable Accommodation

If you require special conditions to accommodate a disability in the examination process, must notify the PBJC in writing by Friday, November 29, 2012. The accommodation request can be completed online at http://www.jobsquest.org/ada.aspx or sent via email to: parkerc@pbjcal.org or by mail or hand-delivery to:

Personnel Board of Jefferson County
Attn: Cynthia Parker
2121 Building, Suite 100
2121 Rev. Abraham Woods, Jr., Blvd.
Birmingham, AL 35203
Information Sheet: How to Read an Electric Utility Meter

(This information is provided to let you become familiar with the task of reading electric meters before the examination. This information will also be provided during the examination, and you will have it available to you as you complete the meter reading exercises.)

A standard type of electric meter has five dials that look like this:

The meter reading is obtained by reading the individual dials.

But the pointers don’t always point directly to a number, so you have to follow two important rules:

**Rule:** If the pointer is between two numbers, the reading is the lower number.
The reading for the dial on the right is 2.

**Rule:** If the pointer is between 9 and 0, the reading is 9.
The reading for the dial on the right is 9.

**Example:** Here are five dials from an electric meter with the reading for each dial written beneath it.

The reading for this meter is 99701.