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Beware of Imposters Posing As "NYCDEP" Employees

Employees Carry Proper Identification and Customers Can Verify ID by Calling a DEP Number

The New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has issued a warning to New York City homeowners to beware of imposters posing as a "DEP" employee. DEP learned that in separate instances an individual posing as a DEP inspector gained access to local homes by claiming the homeowners were in arrears in water bill payments, needed to fix a broken meter or needed to have the meter read. Once allowed access by the homeowner, the imposter sought cash for payment of a past due bill or for performing a service. Customers can verify the employee's identification by asking the inspector for a DEP contact phone number to confirm the scheduled visit.

"Allowing unknown individuals into your home could be very dangerous," said DEP Commissioner Emily Lloyd. "Customers must keep in mind that a DEP employee must provide proper identification, if he/she needs to enter a property and our inspectors never ask for cash payments."

Any persons who identify themselves as being from DEP must either have made a previous appointment or be able to provide proper identification. DEP employees who are authorized to enter homes must carry and show photo I.D. cards and badges and are in uniform. Since imposters, or others seeking access may have some form of identification, it is important to make sure that the I.D. card is from the New York City Department of Environmental Protection. Con Edison workers, who read water meters for DEP in all five boroughs, also wear uniforms and carry Con Edison identification badges.

DEP has hired Contract Callers Inc. (CCI) to obtain reads for meters that have a history of being Hard-To-Access or Frequently Estimated. DEP has jurisdiction over water meters in New York City and CCI is authorized to inspect such meters on behalf of DEP as a condition of providing water and sewer service. At any time, if customers are unsure of whether or not a person requesting access to inspect their water meter is in fact authorized by DEP, customers may call the DEP's Call Center at (718) 595-

MORE INFORMATION

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7000 for verification.

IMPORTANT FACTS FOR HOMEOWNERS TO PROTECT THEMSELVES FROM IMPOSTERS:

- ▶ Most water meters are read remotely from outside the home. DEP water use inspectors, however, may seek access without appointments for certain assignments, such as meter reading (if there is no remote or it does not work) and inspecting installations or repairs performed by DEP contractors.
- ▶ DEP water use inspectors wear uniforms and carry photo I.D. cards.
- ▶ Contractors installing water meters usually, but not always, make appointments in advance, wear uniforms, carry photo I.D cards, and drive trucks bearing company identification. DEP air and noise inspectors and water quality investigators do not wear uniforms, but they must carry and present photo I.D. cards and DEP inspector badges. When doing tests in buildings and homes at the request of citizens, they normally make appointments in advance.
- ▶ DEP employees who respond to emergency situations, such as hazardous material spills or leaks in water and sewer systems may need to gain access to buildings or homes to determine the source of a leak. They do not wear uniforms, but must carry and present photo I.D. cards whenever requesting access to a residence or building.
- ▶ No DEP employee is ever authorized to ask for cash to perform any service or for payment of past due bills.

IF CITIZENS BELIEVE THAT PERSONS ARE MISREPRESENTING THEMSELVES AS DEP EMPLOYEES, THEY SHOULD PHONE THE LOCAL POLICE PRECINCT OR 311.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT THE DEP WEBSITE AT [WWW.NYC.GOV/DEP](http://www.nyc.gov/dep) CALL (718-595-7000)