

Meter Reader interview questions

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What to expect

Meter reader interviews focus on reliability, safety and accuracy rather than technical theory. Employers want to know you can work alone outdoors, follow a route and handle the public with patience.

- **Practical process questions:** These probe how you plan a route, manage drive time and handle the daily logistics of reading meters across a service area.
- **Scenario and judgement questions:** These put you at a property with an access problem, a fault or a safety risk and ask what you would do first.
- **Behavioural and customer service questions:** These ask for real examples of dealing with upset customers, staying calm and representing the utility at the door.
- **Safety and compliance questions:** These check your understanding of lone working, WHS and reporting faults or tampering.
- **Technical and tool questions:** These cover handheld terminals, meter reading systems such as Itron or Landis+Gyr, and GPS navigation.

Typically a short phone screen with a recruiter or team leader, followed by a face-to-face interview with a supervisor. Some employers include a practical component such as a short walk-through of how you would read a meter or use a handheld device. You may also be asked about your driving record, availability for early starts and comfort working outdoors in all weather.

1. Walk me through how you plan your day when you have a route of residential and commercial meters to read.

Why they ask

This is a process question that shows whether you can manage time, driving and the practical demands of the job.

How to structure your answer

A walk-through: start with how you review the route, then how you sequence stops, how you handle delays or access issues, and how you record completed work.

Example answer

"First thing I do is review the route list on my handheld terminal to see if there are any commercial properties with restricted access hours or known gate codes. I group nearby stops so I am not doubling back. I aim to hit residential streets before school pick-up if parking gets tight. If I hit a delay, like a locked gate, I note it, move to the next property and come back if time allows. At the end of the day I sync my readings and report any faults or access issues so the office has a clear record."

2. Tell me about a time you had to deal with a customer who was upset about their bill or a meter reading.

Why they ask

Meter readers are the face of the utility at the door, so this tests your customer service and calm under pressure.

How to structure your answer

STAR: describe the situation, the task you had, the action you took to listen and explain, and the result.

Example answer

"A customer once approached me while I was reading their gas meter and said their last bill was much higher than usual. I introduced myself, showed my identification, and listened without

interrupting. I explained that I only record the numbers and that billing queries go to the retailer, but I offered to double-check the reading on the spot. I showed them the meter dial and the figure I had logged, and suggested they call the number on their bill. They calmed down and thanked me for taking the time. I also reported a possible meter fault to my supervisor just in case."

3. You arrive at a property and the meter is behind a locked gate with a dog in the yard. What do you do?

Why they ask

This tests your judgement on safety, access and following procedure without taking unnecessary risks.

How to structure your answer

A judgement-under-pressure structure: assess safety first, try safe access, follow policy for no access, document and move on.

Example answer

"First I check for any safe access, like an unlocked side gate or a call button. I do not enter a yard with a dog, even if it looks friendly, because that is a safety risk I am not trained to manage. If there is no safe way in, I follow my company's no-access procedure, which usually means leaving a card and recording the attempt on my handheld terminal. I would also note the dog so the next reader knows. Then I move to the next property. I do not force access or put myself at risk."

4. How do you make sure the readings you enter into the handheld device are accurate?

Why they ask

Accuracy is the core of the role, so this checks your attention to detail and familiarity with the tools.

How to structure your answer

A technical walk-through: describe your reading routine, cross-checking, and how you handle unusual numbers or faulty displays.

Example answer

"I read the meter display carefully, paying attention to which dial or digital screen I am looking at, especially on older meters with multiple registers. I enter the numbers into the handheld terminal and then read them back on the screen to confirm. If a reading looks much lower or higher than the previous one, I check for a misread, a stuck dial, or a possible leak or tampering. If something seems off, I take a photo if the device allows and report it. I do not guess or estimate unless the meter is inaccessible and my supervisor has authorised it."

5. What does safe lone working mean to you in this job?

Why they ask

Meter readers work alone outdoors, so employers want to know you can manage risk without supervision.

How to structure your answer

A safety-focused structure: identify the main risks, describe your habits, and explain how you report and escalate.

Example answer

"For me, lone working means being responsible for my own safety because there is no one standing next to me. I do a vehicle pre-start check each morning, I park legally and safely, and I wear high-vis and sun protection. I am aware of my surroundings, especially near roads, dogs, or rough terrain. I keep my phone charged and share my route with the office. If I feel unsafe at a property, I leave and report it. I also know the procedure for reporting hazards, near misses, and tampering, because those are part of the job."

6. Why do you want to work as a meter reader, and how do you stay motivated doing repetitive outdoor work?

Why they ask

This checks whether you understand the reality of the job and can stick with it through weather and routine.

How to structure your answer

An honest motivation structure: connect your reasons to the role's real conditions, then show how you handle repetition and independence.

Example answer

"I like working outdoors and being on my own, but I also like having a clear list of tasks to get through each day. I have done delivery work before, so I know that repetition is part of the job, but I stay motivated by trying to beat my own accuracy and by noticing when something is wrong, like a fault or a leak. I also enjoy the brief interactions with customers. I know the weather can be tough, so I dress for it and pace myself. At the end of the day, I like knowing my readings help get bills right."