

Pennsylvania Association of Weights and Measures
P. O. Box 594
New Alexandria, PA 15670
Parking Meter Primer

Just what is this low tech device that manages to aggravate so many drivers, but gets no respect? A review of Pennsylvania laws and regulations clearly defines its official role in commerce.

First of all, the parking meter has been defined over the years as a “nickel and dime” device. It got attention only when there was some sort of outrage publicized for tickets being issued based on the times of uncertified meters. The change you feed the meter is really only a portion of the income derived from these devices. The fines generated across the state constitute millions of dollars and when combined with the parking fees, they can be a major source of income for a municipality. It was reported recently that New York City realizes over 500 million dollars a year from their parking meter program. A half a billion dollars is not nickel and dime stuff.

Under Pennsylvania Act #155 and PA Title 70 the parking meter is officially defined as a commercial weighing and measuring device and as such is mandated by law to meet the following requirements.

- (1) Parking meters must be “type approved” either by the National Type Evaluation Program (NTEP) or the PA General Services Laboratory in Harrisburg. It would be illegal to sell, install or operate in commerce a parking meter that lacks state or national type approval. (Act #155, Subchapter D)
- (2) Parking meters must be inspected and tested on a five (5) year schedule as defined in regulations promulgated pursuant to Section 4112 of Act # 155.
- (3) Parking meters must meet all of the specifications, tolerances and user requirements as outlined in NIST Handbook-44, Section 5.55.
- (4) Clear and appropriate information and instructions regarding rates, the number of coins a device might accept and the hours of operation should be posted on each device.

- (5) Parking meters may be sold, installed and serviced only by a registered device seller, installer or repair person, however, it should be noted that municipality staff may remove defective devices and replace them with certified ones.
- (6) The question of who may officially examine and certify a parking meter has been an area of confusion and misinterpretation for some time. PA laws and regulations are quite clear on this point. The only persons who may legally examine and seal parking meters are state and local weights and measures officials and certified municipality staff.
- (7) The testing of a meter's accuracy may be accomplished only by use of a state certified stopwatch as defined in NIST Handbook-44, Timing Device Code, Notes-N.1.

In addition to parking meters, the Timing Device Code of NIST Handbook-44 includes official requirements for all other types of timing devices, including hand car washes, coin operated vacuums, air dispensers and timing clocks in parking garages.

Got a question on any of this? Contact the Department of Agriculture at 717-787-9089 or toll free at 1-877-TEST-007.

PAWM

BRINGING EQUITY TO THE MARKETPLACE