

SkyVision Solutions ... Raising Public Awareness and Finding Solutions to Smart Grid, Smart Meter, and Radiofrequency (RF) Radiation Concerns

Concerns: Health, Privacy, Cybersecurity, Safety, Economics, Societal Impacts, Environmental Impacts, Consumer Choice and Rights

Smart Meter “Malfunction” Causes Pennsylvania Apartment Building Fire

Posted on [February 14, 2014](#)

Original Story:

A fast-moving apartment building fire occurred on Thursday, February 6, 2014, in Bensalem, Pennsylvania when at least one **smart meter** exploded and caught fire. Thirty (30) residents were displaced by the ensuing blaze at Bensalem’s Thunder Hollow apartments. Sixteen (16) apartments were affected. One firefighter was injured. According to the *Bucks County Courier Times*, the Bensalem Battalion Chief Robert Sponheimer said the **fire started in a utility meter in an outside shed** that housed electrical meters. He also said “*residents reported hearing a loud bang, then losing power Thursday evening. Within minutes they saw smoke pouring out of the shed. The fire then spread to the building and its roof.*”



Dramatic camera footage exists taken soon after the fire started, during the fire fighting activities, and during the recovery efforts, making you feel as if you are “on-the-scene” as it happens. *In the first video where you see the dramatic flames about 25 to 30 seconds into the video, they are emanating from an outdoor shed containing smart meters.*

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Reporting from most news sources indicated that the cause of the fire remains under investigation. However, on-scene reports indicate that the fire was electrical in nature and was started by a fire in “a utility electric meter.” These apartments are known to be equipped with smart meters. ... SkyVision Solutions finds it curious that the term “**smart meter**” was not used in original reporting of the fire since that would be a natural question to have asked and have reported to the public.

Updated Information:

One resident lives just a few feet from two sheds where individual smart meters are housed. “I heard this boom and it sounded like a shotgun going off,” said the resident.

In the figure shown to the right, an officer as part of an investigation is shining a flashlight toward the two upper smart meters located on the right side of the outdoor shed. The upper most smart meter looks completely deformed (despite the somewhat poor resolution of this photo). There appears to be melted plastic drooping down from what would be the normal meter location. There is also blackened area at the top, where smoke, sparks, and fire previously billowed outward and upward. Clicking on the photo will provide a somewhat better view. From a curiosity perspective, it would nice to have a close-up photo view of the affected smart meter to better examine how bad it really looks, but there is little doubt on what actually happened at this point.



Based upon a report in the *Bucks County Courier Times*, Battalion Chief Robert Sponheimer plans to meet with PECO Energy and township code officials to continue an investigation into a “**meter malfunction.**” The fire has also reportedly been ruled an “accident.” This determination is actually important in that it means the fire has been determined not to be the work of arson or meter tampering.

SkyVision Solutions has sufficiently reviewed the details surrounding the fire to confidently conclude and report that the cause of the fire was indeed a “smart meter.” It would appear that officials just don’t want to advertise this important detail concerning the fire.

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Bottom line ... smart meters do cause fires.

The video provided below will not specifically discuss smart meters but does help demonstrate the damage, havoc, injury, and potential loss of life that can be caused by smart meters.



[The above video is presented in the public's interest and contains material used pursuant to the Fair Use Doctrine under 17 U.S.C.]

Bensalem Battalion Chief Robert Sponheimer is no stranger to the topic of smart meter fires. He seems to have been trying to do the right thing. Look at what he said back in September 2012. At one point he says, “we were lucky so far,” based upon the limited damage resulting from the smart meter-related fires.



[The above video contains material used pursuant to Fair Use Doctrine under 17 U.S.C.]

One source of information for this blog posting: http://www.buckscountycouriertimes.com/news/local/electric-meter-blamed-for-bensalem-apartment-fire/article_93cf65bb-a298-5978-a88e-464c2f4451e1.html

Commentary:

Follow-up reporting by one news outlet (the *Bucks County Courier Times*) that an electric meter was responsible for an apartment building fire brought to light the fact that a smart meter caused the events described in this blog

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posting. One wonders how many other fires have been caused by smart meters but were never reported as such. In fact, in many cases, fire investigation is basically done to rule out arson and the average investigator is not trained or qualified to determine conclusive origin and cause of electrical fires.

Many laypersons don't know what smart meters are, and during the first video above, it could be heard in the background that a woman was calling for help because a “transformer blew,” not knowing that what was housed in the outdoor shed were smart meters, not transformers.

Social Media Reports:

A review of social media in the Bensalem, PA area during the timeframe of the fire and subsequent to the fire reveals reporting by both the fire department and from residents. High praise was given to the firefighters.

From Fire Department:

Company has been transmitted to Thunder Hollow Apartments for an apartment fire. ... Heavy smoke showing, going in service.

... Last night's fire at Thunder Hollow displaced 14 families; 5 apartments had fire damage while 11 apartments had smoke and water damage. 1 FF suffered a minor injury on the fireground. All crews did a great job as did Bensalem EMS, Bensalem Police and Bensalem Fire Police.



From Resident:

One building away. Hearing electrical [as cause] but no body is sure. ... Thank you [firefighters] for making the Thunder Hollow Fire much less than it could have been.

From One Local Celebrity (as posted on Facebook page):

Hey everyone, I have something important to share: You may have heard about this big fire which caused 30 of my neighbors to lose their homes ... <http://abclocal.go.com/wpvi/story?section=news%2Flocal&id=9422638> The cause of this and many other fires around the world is related to the new electrical “Smart Meter”. These new meters, typically if installed in older homes with older wiring can cause problems. So please, everybody, check the meters at your house or apartment, no matter where you live, and if you do have a “Smart Meter”, ask for a professional inspection. Share this with as many of your friends and let's get the word out.

Comments on Newspaper Reports:

I thought they changed all those bad meters.

... My thoughts exactly. ... I would like to know if these were the upgraded meters. My fear is peco putting my old house at risk; it would burn up fast.

Editor's Update on Fire Aftermath, May 7, 2014:



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Officially, this smart meter-related fire is still under investigation. The company involved with insuring the Bensalem apartment buildings reportedly requested an independent evaluation of all smart meters installed for the burned building. Current smart meters were removed/ replaced for such an evaluation. It is hoped that another update can be provided at future date as to the results of the independent evaluation and any actions taken as a result of the Bensalem apartment building fire. [It is possible, however, that the

results will not be made public.]

Also, as a matter of public record, there was a Pennsylvania Legislative House Policy [meeting](#) held on April 14, 2014 on the subject of “Security in Installation of Smart Meters.” Presentation materials for that meeting indicate: ***“The meter itself is the cause of the Bensalem fire, not arcing and not the wires, per the Bensalem Fire Marshal.”***

Testimony presented at the above mentioned meeting indicates that the ***“fire was definitely started by the Landis Smart Meter. The smart meter was located in the utility shed. Not sure where it started in the meter, but it definitely started inside the meter.”***

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About SkyVision Solutions

Raising public awareness and finding solutions for smart grid concerns related to invasions of privacy, data security, health and societal impacts, as well as the potential hazards related to radiofrequency (RF) radiation emissions from all wireless devices, including smart meters.

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Norm says:

February 17, 2014 at 13:46

There appears to be many issues in regard to the so called smart meters including costs, health, privacy and fires. One suggestion I can offer in regard to the fire potential is to place the back of your hand on the meter box and test for heat. There should not be any! If there is, contact the hydro supplier. Take note of the time and day. If they do not respond, call the fire department.

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SkyVision Solutions says:

February 17, 2014 at 15:30

The problem is that smart meters can likely fail at any time without warning. Possibly there will be a build up in temperature which might be felt or could more likely be sensed through thermographic type equipment. ... According to fire officials, however, as shown in the video below, "don't touch your meter." ... What have we come to that we have to consider surveillance systems and techniques to monitor the "temperature" of our smart meter to help assure our house doesn't burn down?



[Reply](#)



bcfreedom says:

February 16, 2014 at 12:12

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[Reply](#)



ivimana1 says:

February 14, 2014 at 16:23

For everybody's sakes,

In Pennsylvania and in the rest of America and in Canada do get rid of the dopy Electrical so-called Smart Meters. Please demand that these Greedy Electric Power Companies [be] forced to reinstall the Safe and Passive Analog Electric Meters you once had. This must be done at the entire expense to the Electric Power Companies who stole and took the Safe Analog Electric Meters from you, then installed these now proving to be far from Smart Electric Meters which are proving to be INCENDIARY Electric Meters, as well as human and animal sickness making dopy smart meters.

Here in Victoria Australia we have a fast growing number of Electric Power Customers, me included which is now well over 220,000 of us, who refuse to allow the Safe and Passive Analog Electric Meters to be taken from our Private Electric Meter Boxes as we have securely padlocked our Electric Meter Boxes and gotten our Legal Commonwealth of Australia \$167,0000 Dollar Fine Notices erected on our Electric Meter Boxes and on our front fences.

I have also sent as have many of us the \$1.1 Million Dollar A.C.C.C NOTICE OF PROHIBITION OF UNDUE HARASSMENT OR COERCION FOR SMART METER INSTALLATION. from our Canberra Head of the Australian Government to the Chief Executive Officer = C.E.O of Powercor Australia Ltd, to stop them stealing my Safe and Passive Analog Electric Meter from my property. Here is the Notice below. You should have something like it to protect your peoples' Safe and Passive Analog Electric Meters in Pennsylvania and the rest of America as well as it's equivalent in Canada.....

(DATE)

(INSERT OWN NAME)

(ADDRESS)

(Insert name and
Address of Power Distributor)

NOTICE OF PROHIBITION OF UNDUE HARASSMENT OR COERCION FOR SMART METER INSTALLATION

This notice is provided to _____ and any persons, entities,

(Insert Power distributor name and ACN no off letter you received)

Employees, associates, corporations, sub-contractors and agents of the fore mentioned (herein referred to as Your Company).

Notice to agent is notice to principal.

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Note: This notice is provided in addition and following a NOTICE OF PROHIBITION FOR SMART METER INSTALLATION (date of your first letter) and NOTICE Your Company’s INTENTION TO DISHONOUR AND VIOLATE PROHIBITION FOR SMART METER INSTALLATION NOTICE (date of your letter received from Power Distributor after) served on Your Company.

Your Company is prohibited and forbidden from communication in any manner, with the intent to solicit for the installation of a “smart meter” or meter containing wireless communication function(s) at the following (service) address: (Insert your address). Such an act is herein referred to as a PROHIBITED ACT.

I have lawful and legal standing and claim of right to make such a demand.

Any PROHIBITED ACT will be considered an act of undue harassment or coercion with the supply or possible supply of goods or services as defined by the Competition and Consumer Act 2010 (CTH) Vol. 3, Ch. 4, PT> 4-1, Div. 5 Sec. 168; such an offence carries a penalty of \$1.1,000,000:00 One point one Million Dollars. If Your Company is in any way directed by the Government (State of Victoria) and State of Victoria Corporation to perform such an offence, the Government and individual members are liable under tort may in addition be held vicariously liable.

Any PROHIBITED ACT remains prohibited unless I provide a NOTICE OF CESSATION OF PROHIBITION explicitly annulling this notice, or following a sale of property and change of property title holder for the property in question.

A copy of this notice will also be provided for their records to (via regular mail):

1. Customer Relations, DPI,
2. Minister Nicholas Kotsiras, Government in the State of Victoria.

If a response to this notice containing any dispute of facts or CLAIM OF RIGHT based on lawful claim of right is not received within fourteen days from Your Company, it shall be fact that you accept as fact this notice and facts contained within, and will honour this notice; such requiring no further action on your behalf.

Sincerely

(Your SIGNATURE) (Witness to your Signature) Print Witnesses name)

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