

## Water Meter Box Hazards

The Ramona Municipal Water District (RMWD) would like to remind customers and residents to use caution when opening water meter box lids, especially during spring and summer months.

Every year, RMWD field staff encounters potentially hazardous insects and reptiles in meter boxes while reading meters or performing routine maintenance, and this year has been no exception!

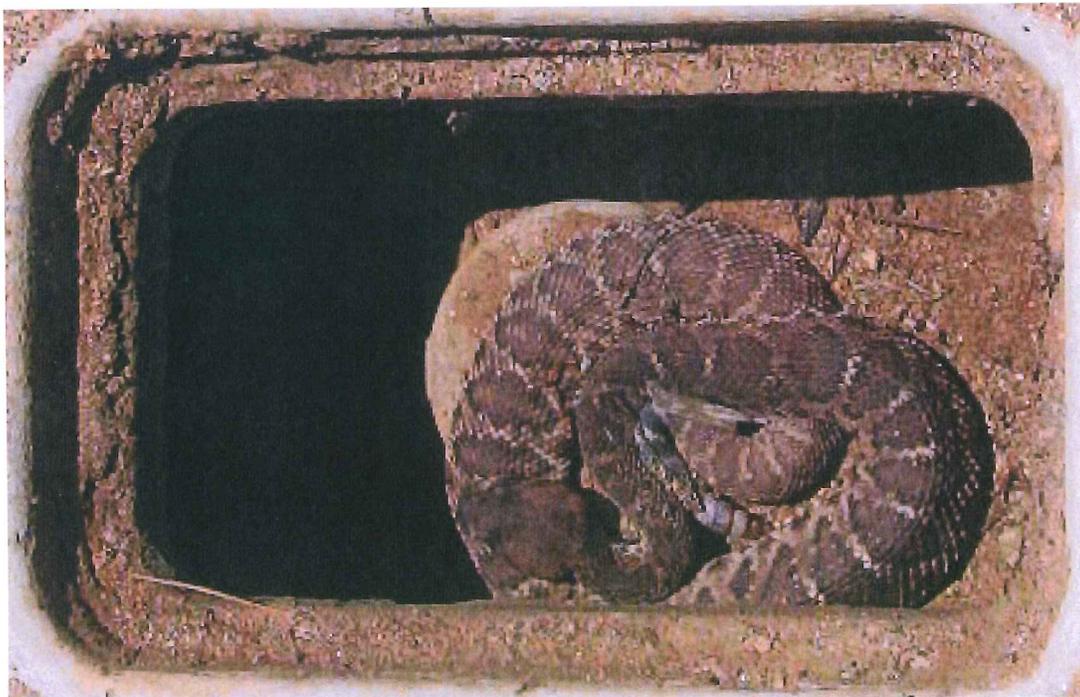
Of particular concern are rattlesnakes, such as one recently found by meter staff (see photo below). Snakes like to take refuge in cool, dark places, such as a meter box, as do a variety of other insects and reptiles including but not limited to spiders, lizards, scorpions, bees and ants.

Therefore, customers and residents are advised to use caution whenever removing a meter box lid, and may wish to observe the following safety procedures:

- Wear heavy gloves while lifting the lid;
- Open lid slowly so you don't startle inhabitants that may be in the meter box; and
- Consider using a tool if possible to lift the lid, and if one is not available, use a long reach and do not place face or body any closer than necessary.

If you encounter a non-poisonous snake, leave the lid off the meter box, walk away for a short period of time, and the snake will likely be gone when you return; however, if a rattlesnake is observed, you may wish to contact the local fire department for assistance in removing the snake from the property altogether (use 911 only if an emergency exists).

#



**Western Diamondback Rattlesnake, June 2011**