The Meter Setter 10
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Blast From the Past

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Ripley Would Have Liked This One

Customer satisfaction is important to Ford Meter Box, and our Quality Assurance Department takes care to analyze product quality complaints promptly and thoroughly. If we've made a mistake, it's corrected and steps are taken to ensure that the same problem will be less likely to occur in the future. However, some problems are beyond our control, such as the case of the "marbleized" ball valve.

One of our distributors in the Northeast returned a 1" ball valve which had a broken stem between the tee head and the ball. Usually, this kind of damage occurs when water inside the ball freezes, and an attempt is made to shut off the valve. The ice prevents the ball from moving and excessive force applied to the tee head snaps the stem. Quality Assurance assumed that this was the case with the returned valve.

However, when the valve was taken apart, a marble (just like the kind you played with as a kid) was found inside the brass ball. The marble was just large enough to prevent the ball from turning. We were fairly certain that the marble hadn't left the factory inside the valve as an unintended "option."

Some more investigation by our field service representative revealed that local contractors often insert marbles in the service line as a way of clearing debris out of the line during installation. Our Ball Valves are generally "full port" but this particular marble was just large enough to squeeze past the inlet gasket and small enough to spin around inside the ball when water flowed through the valve, rather than exit past the outlet gasket.

You probably have stories of maintenance problems more bizarre than "marbleized" ball valves. We'd enjoy hearing them and might even publish some of the most interesting in a future Meter Setter. Meanwhile, remember not to lose your marbles next time you clean debris out of service lines.

Top: This photo of the valve partially disassembled shows the marble lodged inside the ball. The marble, once in the Ball Valve, could not exit.

Above: With the valve completely dismantled the extent of the damage can be seen. While the marble did not block water flow it did obstruct the ball when the operator attempted to close the valve. The result was a broken valve stem and distorted stem slot in the ball.

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