



Regulation Managers
Distribution and Supply

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Dear Colleague

URGENT METERING SERVICES

As you will be aware, in November 2001 the Review of Electricity Metering Arrangements (REMA) project was established to facilitate the introduction of electricity industry procedures and agreements to make possible the split of meter operation into meter asset provision and meter asset maintenance, as required by distributors' standard licence condition 36B.

The REMA project has been overseen by a Steering Group chaired by Ofgem and including representatives from electricity supply companies (one ex-PES and one independent), distribution companies, meter operators (one distribution and one independent) and Gemserv, who provide the secretariat. Through a separate consultation exercise, the industry-wide Metering Competition Focus Group (MCFG) endorsed the scope of the Project and its specific terms of reference, details of which are available from the Ofgem metering website.¹

In July this year the Steering Group agreed to establish a REMA emergency services expert group (ESEG) to consider, in particular, how the emergency services presently operated by Distribution Network Operators (DNOs) may be affected by the development of competition in electricity metering services. Again Ofgem chaired the group that included two DNO representatives, two supply representatives and two meter operator representatives.

The ESEG was tasked with agreeing a common set of services, service levels and procedures with respect to emergency services that each DNO may provide where they are not the MAM and/or MAP. The output of their work is a document entitled "*Urgent Metering Services (UMetS)*". A copy of the latest draft is attached for your consideration.

The UMetS document is based on the following key principles: -.

¹www.ofgem.gov.uk/metering/rema_project_details.htm.

- The service should be based on the principle of a “*single visit*”, i.e. fix first time and don’t leave the customer off supply. As such, where a distributor attends a site, following a call to their Safety and Faults Information Centre (SFIC), expecting to find a fault with the distribution equipment and upon arrival identifies the issue to be a metering fault the DNO should, on a reasonable endeavours basis, repair the meter fault.
- DNOs should attend a site where it is not possible for their SFIC to identify the nature of the fault.
- DNOs should attend a site with a suspected meter fault if they have identified a safety issue or extenuating circumstances, where the supplier’s MAM (if different) is not available out of hours. However, it is anticipated that suppliers will not “*cherry pick*” the activities they take from the DNO and will therefore endeavour to obtain a 24/7 service where they choose to take MAM services from an independent provider.
- DNOs should use reasonable endeavours to replace a credit meter on a “*like for like*” basis, i.e. a single rate for single rate or two rate for two rate. Where this is not possible the DNO should replace the meter with a basic credit meter, thereby restoring the customer’s supply in a single visit.
- DNOs should use reasonable endeavours to replace a prepayment meter on a “*like for like*” basis, i.e. token for token or key for key. Where this is not possible the DNO should replace the prepayment meter with a basic credit meter, thereby restoring the customer’s supply in a single visit.
- A separate schedule covering this service could be included in the Distribution Use of System Agreement and Statement.
- If a supplier requires a service over and above the basic service described here this should be arranged commercially between the supplier and their service provider, which may be the DNO if they chose to do so.

In addition, the issue of accreditation has been raised. Page 21 of the UMetS document details Elexon’s view regarding accreditation; they have said that from a settlements point of view there seems to be no requirement for the DNO to be separately accredited as long as a small number of requirements are placed on the DNO. However, the majority of meter operators consider that DNOs should have some form of accreditation. Therefore, industry views are requested regarding whether DNOs should be required to have some form of accreditation for the service illustrated in this letter.

In producing these draft proposals, the ESEG acknowledged that clarity is still required regarding DNO’s obligations under Standard Condition 36B of their distribution licence in the context of a competitive metering market. Ofgem are considering this issue as a matter of urgency. Although this particular issue is still to be determined, the REMA steering group considered that it would still be useful to circulate the draft UMetS document to the industry for comment. It is important that comments from industry are received on the service illustrated in this letter and in the document before the document itself is baselined.

I would be grateful therefore if you could provide comments direct to me by no later than **15 January 2002**. If possible they should be in a form that can be placed on Ofgem's metering website. In the meantime, please contact me should you have any queries.

Yours faithfully

Claire Edmunds
Chair REMA Emergency Services Expert Group