1. BACKGROUND

1.1 Domestic gas consumers may make arrangements for the ordinary reading of their meter.

1.2 From 1 January 2001, no gas supplier licensed to supply gas to domestic consumers may refuse to enter into a contract with a domestic gas consumer for the supply of gas, if that consumer makes their own meter reading arrangements, provided that those arrangements comply with the requirements set out in this document.

1.3 All gas consumers (whether domestic or non-domestic) may request that meter inspections are carried out by a person, company or organisation (the meter inspection agent) named by the consumer. A gas supplier may not refuse such a request if the meter inspection agent possesses the appropriate expertise and would accurately and efficiently carry out the tasks specified in section 4.2.3 of this document. Additionally the gas supplier must have reasonable cause to be satisfied that the meter inspection agent will comply with requirements set out in this document.

1.4 Gas Suppliers’ obligations and the supporting details may be obtained by looking at Standard Conditions 8 and 23 of the Gas Suppliers’ Licences. If consumers have any queries about the content of this document, they should contact their supplier in the first instance and if their query remains unresolved, they are requested to contact the Gas and Electricity Consumers’ Council.

2. PURPOSE

2.1 This document sets out the responsibilities of gas consumers who arrange for the provision of their own meter reading and/or meter inspection service. In particular, it sets out the requirements to secure the accurate reading of the meter and the prompt transmission of data in an appropriate form.

2.2 The rights in respect of meter reading apply to domestic consumers. Non-domestic consumers may wish to use this as a guide.

3 OPTIONS

3.1 METER READING

Gas consumers have the following options in respect of the ordinary reading of their meter. These are:

a) to make their own meter reading arrangements;

b) to do nothing, in which case their gas supplier will continue to make meter reading arrangements.

The gas supplier may not refuse to accept the meter reading arrangements of a domestic consumer, provided the arrangements comply with the requirements set out in this document.
3.2 METER INSPECTIONS

Gas consumers have the following options when deciding whether to carry out a meter inspection service. These are:

a) to choose a meter inspection agent and request that their supplier accepts the use of that agent;
b) do nothing, in which case their gas supplier will continue to carry out meter inspections.

It should be noted that option (a) does not imply that consumers, their relatives or any other person occupying the premises where the relevant gas meter is installed, may carry out their own meter inspections.

Gas suppliers may not refuse to accept the meter inspection agent nominated by any consumer, provided the agent possesses the appropriate expertise, can accurately and efficiently carry out the meter inspection and can comply with the requirements set out in this document.

4. CONSUMERS’ OBLIGATIONS AND DUTIES

4.1 METER READING

Where a domestic consumer makes their own arrangements for the ordinary reading of their meter, those arrangements shall comply with the requirements set out in this section.

4.1.1 Agreement

The consumer must have an agreement in place with their gas supplier to the effect that the consumer no longer requires the supplier to make arrangements for the ordinary reading of the consumer’s meter. From an agreed date, ordinary meter reading will be arranged by the consumer in accordance with the terms of the agreement with the supplier and the requirements set out in this document.

Suppliers of domestic consumers may not refuse to enter into an agreement provided that the consumer adheres to the requirements set out in this document.

4.1.2 Access

The person reading the meter must ensure that they have access to the meter(s) from which the consumer’s gas consumption is to be determined.

4.1.3 Meter Reading

Shall have the meaning given to it in the glossary to this code.

4.1.4 Notice Periods

Where domestic consumers decide to:

• make their own meter reading arrangements, or
• accept the meter reading service provided by their gas supplier, or
• change their current gas supplier to another supplier and that
supplier provides a meter reading service,

a reasonable notice period, before the preferred option takes effect, may be
required by their supplier and will be specified in the agreement with their
gas supplier.

4.1.5 Fraudulent Behaviour

The person reading the meter must not falsify the meter reading or any other
information provided.

4.1.6 Time-scales

Any meter reading taken must be provided to the gas supplier within the
period specified in the agreement between the consumer and the gas supplier.

The gas supplier may not specify an unreasonable period.

4.1.7 Transmission and Frequency of Meter Readings

The method, format and frequency by which meter readings are to be
transmitted should be in accordance with the agreement between the
domestic consumer and the gas supplier.

The gas supplier may not make unreasonable demands in terms of the
frequency of meter reading requirement and may not unreasonably refuse the
use of the transmission medium or format preferred by the consumer or
unreasonably withhold their agreement.

4.1.9 Supplier Rights

The gas supplier reserves the right to visit the domestic consumer’s meter at
any reasonable time (see glossary) regardless of any agreement that may exist
between the gas supplier and the consumer for the provision of meter
readings. If it is found that the consumer has not complied with the
obligations for meter reading set out in this section, the consumer:

(a) may be charged for meter readings obtained by the supplier
and/or
(b) may be in breach of the agreement with the gas supplier.

4.1.10 Queries

If a consumer has any queries regarding this document, the provision of their
meter reading service or the provision of a specific meter reading, they
should contact their gas supplier in the first instance.

4.1.11 Data Protection

Gas suppliers and their agents reserve the right to use the meter reading
information collected for other purposes than to ascertain the amount of the
consumer’s gas bill, including, but not limited to, the derivation of annual
consumption quantities and the calculation of transportation and gas shipper
invoices; and to pass that information on to other licence holders, e.g. Transco and their agents, for the sole purpose of the undertaking of reasonable activities.

4.2 METER INSPECTIONS

Gas suppliers have a legal duty to undertake an inspection of their customer’s meter and the associated installation at intervals of not more than two years.

All consumers (domestic and non-domestic) may request that their supplier agree that these inspections are carried out by a meter inspection agent chosen by the consumer. This request must be made in writing to the gas supplier and if the supplier and the public gas transporter agree to this request (and this may take up to 28 days) the meter inspection agent must carry out inspections as requested by the supplier.

A gas supplier or public gas transporter may not refuse such a request if the meter inspection agent possesses the appropriate expertise and would accurately and efficiently carry out the tasks specified in section 4.2.3 of this document. Additionally the gas supplier and public gas transporter must have reasonable cause to be satisfied that the meter inspection agent will comply with requirements set out in this document.

On completion of each inspection, the agent is required to submit a report to the supplier.

This section sets out the consumer’s obligations should they wish to choose a meter inspection agent.

4.2.1 Agreement

Consumers must have an agreement in place with their gas supplier to the effect that the consumer’s named meter inspection agent will carry out inspections of the meter and associated installation from a date agreed by the supplier.

Suppliers of gas to consumers may not refuse to enter into an agreement provided that the consumer agrees to adhere to the requirements set out in this document.

4.2.2 Before Carrying Out Meter Inspections

The consumer must choose a meter inspection agent who possesses the appropriate expertise and who will accurately and efficiently carry out the tasks specified within the definition of a meter inspection (see below).

The consumer should send a written request to their gas supplier stating that they wish to choose an agent to perform meter inspections. This request should include relevant information relating to the agent, as specified by the consumer’s gas supplier.

Once the gas supplier has agreed to the consumer’s request, the inspection agent must carry out meter inspections as set out below.
4.2.3 The Meter Inspection

The consumer shall ensure that his nominated meter inspection agent carries out a proper meter inspection, as defined in the glossary, by the time it falls to be carried out or within 28 days of receiving a request from the gas supplier whichever date occurs first. The consumer shall ensure that his nominated agent informs the consumer’s supplier to that effect.

4.2.4 After the Meter Inspection

The consumer shall ensure that his nominated meter inspection agent submits a report to the consumer’s gas supplier within a reasonable time of carrying out the inspection or, if the consumer’s gas supplier has expressly requested that an inspection is carried out, the report must be submitted within 35 days of that request.

If these obligations are not complied with, the consumer’s gas supplier reserves the right to undertake the meter inspection and withdraw the right to nominate a meter inspection agent.

4.2.5 Suppliers’ Rights

The gas supplier reserves the right to inspect the domestic consumer's meter at any reasonable time regardless of any agreement that may exist between the gas supplier and the consumer for the provision of meter installation reports. If it is found that the consumer has not complied with the obligations for meter installation inspections set out in this section, the consumer;

a) may be charged for meter inspections obtained by the supplier and/or
b) may be in breach of the agreement with the gas supplier.

5. GOVERNANCE OF THE CODE.

5.1 This document (“the Code”) has been compiled by the Gas Forum through the Suppliers Metering Forum (SMF), and has been duly designated by the Director General of Gas Supply, under Condition 8(2)(b) of the Standard Conditions of the Gas Suppliers’ Licence.

5.2 Responsibility for modification of the Code rests with the Gas Forum through the SMF.

5.3 Taking into account any representations received from Suppliers, customers or their representatives, and following such consultation as deemed appropriate, the SMF will submit any changes it wishes to make to the code to the Director for his approval; following his approval in writing, it shall revise the code accordingly.

5.4 As soon as practicable following the preparation of the code or any revision made to it, the SMF will send a copy of the code or any revision (in each case in the form approved by the Director) to the Director and to the Gas and Electricity Consumers' Committee.

5.5 No changes may be made to the code otherwise than in accordance with the foregoing procedures.
5.6 If for any reason the SMF ceases to exist, the Gas Forum (and if the Gas Forum itself ceases to exist, with a group or body which is equally representative of gas suppliers, at the discretion of the Director) shall consult with the Director in order to identify the appropriate body to carry out the change procedures specified above, and after such consultation shall confirm such appropriate body for this purpose.

5.7 The Supplier shall:

5.7.1 At least once in each year, draw the attention of those of its customers to whom this code applies, to the existence of the code and of any substantive revision of it and to the means by which they may inspect a copy of such code in its latest form, and;

5.7.2 give or send free of charge a copy of such code (as from time to time revised) to any person who requests it.

6. GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Agreement

Agreement shall mean the Meter Reading or Meter Inspection Service Transfer Agreement entered into between the consumer and the gas supplier, providing for the consumer to assume responsibility for their own meter reading and/or meter inspection service, prior to the transfer of responsibilities in accordance with section 4 of the ‘Gas Meter Reading and Meter Inspection Code’. This agreement may;

a) form part of the consumer’s supply contract
b) be an amendment to the consumer’s supply contract, or
c) be a stand alone document.

Day

For the purposes of this document, a day is as defined within the gas supply contract.

Domestic Gas Consumer

A person who is supplied by a gas supplier with gas conveyed to particular premises, wholly or mainly for domestic purposes.

Gas and Electricity Consumers’ Council

A corporate body, which represents the interests of all electricity consumers and gas consumers supplied through pipes pursuant to statute.

Gas Supplier

A person who supplies gas, which has been conveyed through pipes under a licence given under the Gas Act 1986 to premises in Great Britain.
**Meter Inspection**

Standard Condition 23 of the Gas Suppliers licence, requires that an inspection of the meter be carried out every 2 years. The inspection shall be carried out by a person of appropriate expertise and shall include the following tasks -

a) reading the meter;
b) inspecting the meter and associated installation for evidence of tampering;
c) inspecting the meter and that installation for any evidence that the meter has not continuously been in position for the purpose of measuring the quantity of gas supplied;
d) arranging for any information in respect of any gas leakage in the vicinity of the meter to be passed to the National Emergency Co-ordinator on 0800 111 999 or the consumer’s gas supplier;
e) inspecting the meter for any evidence of deterioration which might affect its due functioning or safety, and
f) where necessary and subject to the consent of the owner of the meter, changing any batteries in the meter.

**Meter Inspection Agent**

A person who possesses the appropriate expertise to accurately and efficiently carry out the tasks specified within the definition of a meter inspection.

**Meter Point Number**

A reference number or code assigned by the Public Gas Transporter for identifying the particular point at which gas conveyed to a site is metered.

Note: This number will stay with the premises, even if the meter is exchanged or there is a change of occupier.

**Meter Reading**

A meter reading is a record of the register on the consumer’s meter, which may display dials or numbers, accompanied by:

a) the consumer’s name;
b) the post code at the address of the meter;
c) the date that the reading is taken;
d) the meter serial number (as displayed on the meter);
e) the meter point reference number (this will be on the gas supplier’s invoice), and
f) whether the meter has been exchanged since the date of the last meter reading.

**Meter Serial Number**

An identification number printed or stamped on the front of your meter by the meter manufacturer. This number may not be unique to your meter and can include up to 14 digits made up of both alpha and numeric characters.

**Ordinary Reading**

Meter reading as required at intervals set by your gas supplier, such intervals normally reflecting gas suppliers’ billing practices associated with the gas supply contract.
National Emergency Co-ordinator

A body, currently Transco, which takes responsibility for the co-ordination and execution of necessary actions following a gas emergency.

Public Gas Transporter

The holder of a licence pursuant to the Gas Act 1986 for the conveyance of gas through pipes which are situated in their authorised area.

Reasonable Times For Meter Visit

The Ofgem published Guidance notes of best practice for the reading of gas meters give guidelines of the hours of reading. A meter reader shall only call at a gas user's premises or home during the hours of 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday to Saturday, except with the prior agreement of the Domestic Gas Consumer.

Register

The visual display (either digital or dials) on the meter, which is prima facie evidence of the volume of gas supplied.