

Gas Meters – Disputed Meter Accuracy

Analysis of Findings of Gas Meters Disputed Between 1 February 2003 and 1 January 2004.

May 2004

123/04

Table of Contents

1. Background.....	1
2. Disputed gas meter findings – key points.....	2
3. Prescribed Limits of Accuracy	3
4. Domestic Meters.....	4
5. Commercial Mechanical (Diaphragm) Meters.....	5
6. All Industrial (Other than Diaphragm) Meters	6
7. Conclusions	7

1. Background

- 1.1. This report details the accuracy findings of gas meters submitted for disputed accuracy testing between 1st February 2003 to 1st January 2004.
- 1.2. All gas meters in Great Britain (GB) have to be approved¹ and verified² by Ofgem, or another European Member State, before they can be used for billing purposes. Meters must conform to prescribed accuracy limits for the operating life of the instrument.
- 1.3. There are obligations under the Gas Act 1986 for the owners of meters to be 'keep all meters in proper order for correctly registering the quantity of gas supplied'. As such meter owners have a duty to ensure meters are accurate for billing purposes and should make arrangements to monitor their populations of meters and, if required, take action if meters no longer perform to the accuracy limits.
- 1.4. In parallel, Ofgem provides a service to test and certify the accuracy of gas meters when either a consumer or supplier disputes the meter reading. This work is undertaken, under contract, by Ofgem appointed meter examiners employed by SGS (UK).

¹ laboratory testing of a meter, often a prototype, to ensure it operates accurately in all working conditions

² The checking of meters (either singularly or in batches), often at the premises of the manufacturer or repairer, to ensure they are the same as the type approved and are accurate.

2. Disputed Gas Meter Findings – Key Points

2.1. This information within this report is not intended to represent the overall accuracy of gas meters in Great Britain. The following points should be considered in this context:

- the meters tested were initiated by the consumer or the supplier in circumstances where it suspected that the meter is measuring erroneously – the sample is not representative of the whole meter population;
- only a relatively small sample of 1509 meters, manufactured by nine manufacturers, was tested. This needs to be considered against the overall population of gas meters in GB that is in excess of 22 million; and
- this report includes the results of meter tests of types already identified for policy replacement where residual action to remove populations, of the same type, is ongoing.

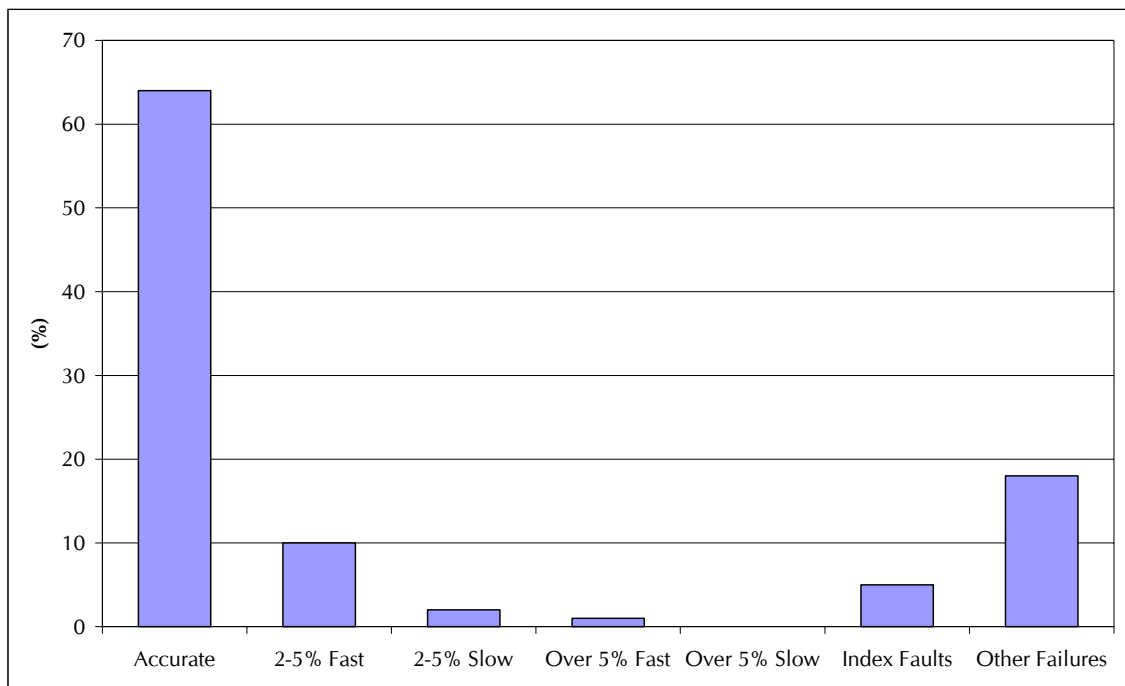
3. Prescribed Limits of Accuracy

3.1. Limits of meter accuracy for meters used in GB are prescribed under The Gas (Meters) Regulations 1983 (SI 684:1983) or The Measuring Instruments (EEC Requirements) (Gas Volume Meters) (Amendment) 1996 (SI 319:1996). Unlike most other countries, there is no additional tolerance for meters operating in-service and are required to meet the same limits of accuracy as when new.

3.2. Gas meters are accurate if they meet the following performance requirements:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Domestic Mechanical: 	±2% at both maximum flow rate; and
	±2% at 20% of maximum flow rate.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Domestic Electronic: 	±2% at both maximum flow rate; and
	±2% at 20% of maximum flow rate; and
	±3% at the minimum flow rate.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commercial Mechanical (Diaphragm): 	±2% at both maximum flow rate; and
	±2% at 20% of maximum flow rate.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Industrial (other than Diaphragm): 	±1% at 20% of maximum flow rate; and
	±2% at the minimum flow rate.

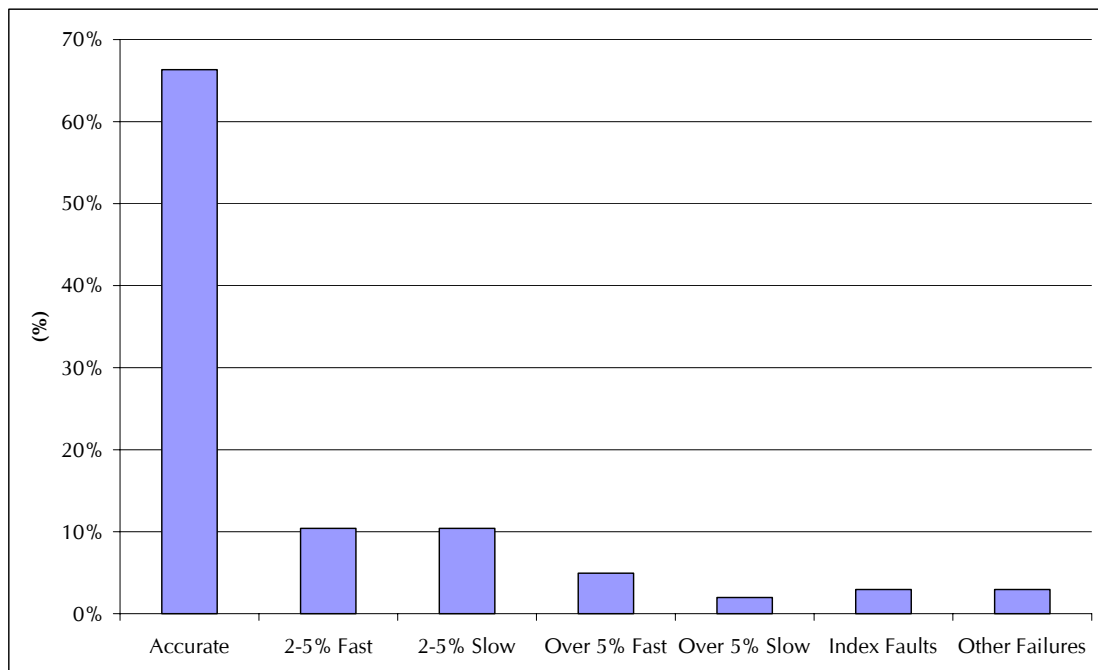
4. Domestic Meters



4.1. Summary

- 1276 meters disputed.
- 64% of disputed meters were found to be accurate.
- Other failures – includes meters not registering, not passing gas, excessive leakage, operational problems/events, diagnostic resets, incrementing in a no flow state, and battery failures. These faults prevented meter accuracy from being gained.

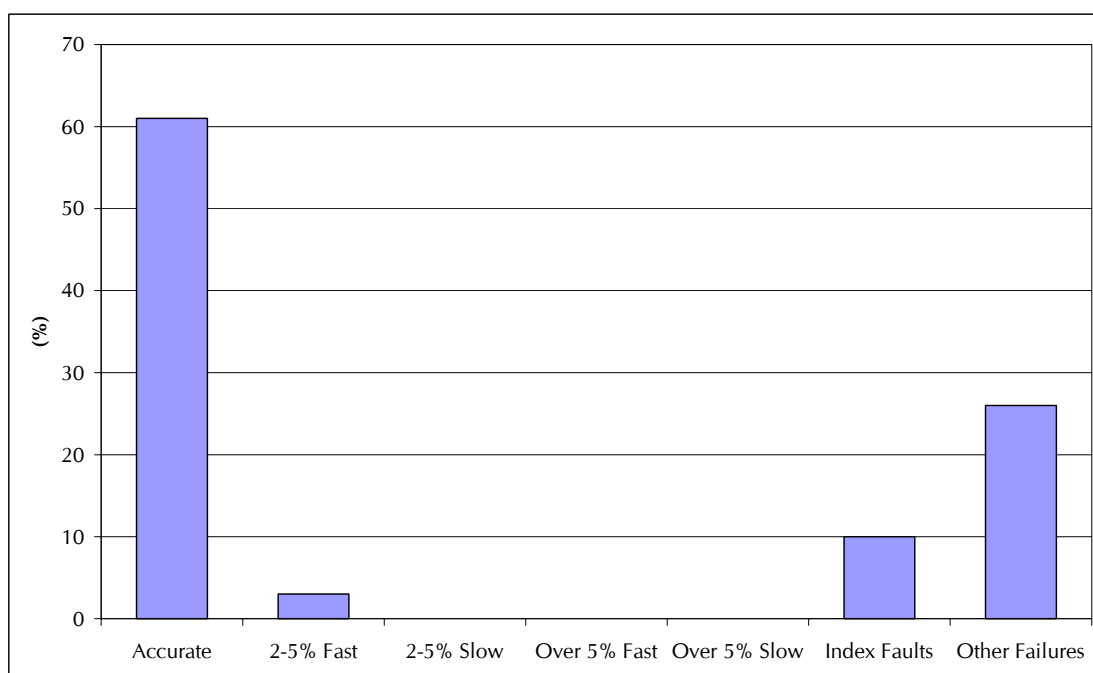
5. Commercial Mechanical (Diaphragm) Meters



5.1. Summary:

- 202 meters tested.
- 66% of disputed meters were found to be accurate.
- Other failures – includes meters not registering, not passing gas, excessive leakage, operational problems/events, diagnostic resets, incrementing in a no flow state, and battery failures. These faults prevented meter accuracy from being gained.

6. All Industrial (Other than Diaphragm) Meters



6.1. Summary:

- 31 meters disputed.
- 61% of disputed meters were found to be accurate.
- Other failures – includes meters not registering, not passing gas, excessive leakage, operational problems/events, diagnostic resets, incrementing in a no flow state, and battery failures. These faults prevented meter accuracy from being gained.

7. Conclusions

- 7.1. Ofgem does not use this data for any other formal purposes other than to initiate action with meter manufacturers and owners when meter examiners identify systematic faults with certain meter types. This report includes the results of meter tests of types already identified for policy replacement where residual action to remove populations, of the same type, is ongoing. It is important that these factors are considered in context with the information provided.
- 7.2. As the gas metering market moves into a fully competitive environment Ofgem will be working with all players, with metering responsibility, to ensure that this important aspect is appropriately covered. Before competition this obligation was fulfilled by National Grid Transco – who owned nearly all gas meters in GB – through ongoing monitoring of the accuracy of meter types and taking action when problems occurred. Ofgem will ensure that a proactive approach continues as the competitive market evolves.
- 7.3. Ofgem will be urging meter owners to publish the findings from their own formal in-service testing schemes and follow this example. The information from structured and targeted processes will be on an improved statistical basis than published within this report and should stand scrutiny. Ofgem believes that publishing this information will demonstrate that appropriate governance is in place and that responsible groups are fulfilling their obligations.
- 7.4. Moving forward, Ofgem intends to publish the findings of meter dispute testing on an annual basis covering the same parameters as reported in this document.
- 7.5. Any enquiries regarding this document should be addressed to:

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