



4 November 2010

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Dear Mr Rudd

Smart Metering Design Requirements

I am aware of the imminent roll out of the government's smart metering project and the Ofgem E-Serve consultation on design requirements of the smart metering systems.

As secretary of SELECT's electrotechnical committee I would be grateful if you would consider, within the scope of your proposed design of smart electricity meters the inclusion of a manually operated switch device to facilitate isolation of the incoming electricity supply to a property.

In our view the inclusion of such a facility would be of huge benefit to electrical contractors generally for safety reasons when undertaking work within the consumer's electrical installation. Also it could be of significant cost benefit to the distributors' and suppliers' organisations.

For instance, where work such as replacement of a consumer unit or distribution board is undertaken it is common for an electrical contractor to have to liaise with the distributor/supplier to have a switch disconnecter device installed at a significant cost to the consumer or, alternatively, to liaise with the distributor/supplier to organise for a suitably authorised person to attend site at an appointed time to break seals to enable temporary de-energisation.

SELECT's electrotechnical committee has for many years, along with other electrical contracting organisations such as the ECA and NICEIC and consumer safety organisations such as the Electrical Safety Council, been working to promote to distributors organisations such as the ENA the benefits of a UK wide scheme to enable electrical contractors to become suitably trained and authorised to enable them to carry out temporary de-energisations as we believe this will greatly enhance safe working practice in the industry; however, to date there has been very little progress on this objective.

The inclusion of a suitable isolation switch within the smart metering specification could effectively remove the need for this. It could also remove the significant costs associated with installing and maintaining a switch disconnector (which, it could be argued, is an unnecessary additional connection in the metering tails that could ultimately result in future problems if connections become loose due to persons moving or adjusting meter tails) or the often difficult and stressful exercise of co-ordinating site work with the distributor/suppliers representatives to obtain de-energisation appointments.

I hope that you will give full consideration to the above proposal however should you require clarification SELECT will be delighted to discuss the matter further along with our other industry partners.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

