

From: David Lande, Alpine Energy [<mailto:alpineenergy@uwclub.net>]
Sent: 08 February 2011 16:37
To: Liz Chester
Subject: FW: Smart Meter - disconnections

Dear Liz

I have read with great interest some parts of your today's publication regarding *smart meters*.

In particular I am concerned about disconnections:

- In my opinion all consumers are vulnerable when it comes to the basic need of gas and electricity both in summer and winter.
- In my work as energy consultant I had many cases of erroneous billing, disconnection notices and legal actions with both domestic as well as non-domestic customers.
- Bills may arrive up-to 14 days after the invoice date, the customer may then just go away for 3 weeks or otherwise occupied and it will not need much for the customer to miss the 5 week time limit before disconnection.

I therefore suggest:


- No disconnections in less than 60 days from date of invoice
- Suppliers must ascertain that the responsible party has received both the invoice and disconnection notice
- On the day of the disconnection the supplier must make contact with the customer to ensure he/she is aware of the action and to offer a settlement arrangement.
- Disconnections must not happen *automatically*, i.e after the laps of a pre-programmed period during which the bill is still outstanding, rather it must be done manually by 2 senior officers.
- Suppliers must keep open a disconnection line 24/7 with no more than 10 minutes wait, where the customer can make payment arrangement and supply being restored immediately.
- There must be no disconnection in case of a disputed invoice until the customer has exhausted all options open to him/her.


I hope you find these notes useful and will be able to protect consumers adequately from being *left in the dark*.

Many Thanks

Best Regards


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