

DNO Access to Meter Terminals

There are a number of reasons why a DNO may wish to access the terminal connection on metering equipment. These are detailed in the table below:

| Requirement | Scenario | Comments |
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| Access to meter terminals | <p>Call out from customer (no supply, flickering lights, and smell of burning) due to slack meter tail connection in the meter or cut out.</p> <p><u>Emergency situation</u></p> | <p>DNO's are usually the first point of contact for these types of issues and will normally dispatch staff to resolve/ repair the issue if it cannot be determined what equipment is causing the issue.</p> <p>If DNO's are not allowed access to the meter terminals they will not be able to resolve the issue. They will make safe by isolating the supply, leaving the customer off supply and advising the supplier* of the issue.</p> |
| | <p>Issue with DNO service termination where the DNO needs to remove the outgoing meter tails, e.g. to enable DNO polarity testing.</p> <p><u>Emergency or routine situation</u></p> | <p>After reinstating the tails into the cut out it will be necessary to check the meter tails for tightness at both ends.</p> <p>If DNO's are not allowed access to the meter terminals they will not be able check the meter tails for tightness.</p> <p>They will make safe by isolating the supply, leaving the customer off supply and advising the supplier* of the issue.</p> <p><i>If there are security blocks fitted then the operative will have no choice but to remove the meter to isolate the security block from the cut out</i></p> |
| | <p>Change of cut out - includes emergency work and planned modernisation programmes such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UG service modernisation programme • Rising mains • Cut out replacement programme <p><u>Emergency or routine situation</u></p> | <p>As above.</p> |
| | <p>Connection of generator to enable prompt supply restoration during fault conditions.</p> <p><u>Emergency situation</u></p> | <p>This is usually a temporary arrangement. The existing meter tails would be removed from the cut out and re-terminated in a suitable connector (usually a new cut out in a different location into which the generator cables are also terminated)</p> <p>On reinstatement of supply the above</p> |

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| | | scenarios apply. |
| | <p>Connection of temporary 'looped supply' to enable prompt supply restoration during fault conditions (principally where there is a fault on the service cable or service breeches joint)</p> <p><u>Emergency situation</u></p> | <p>This is usually a temporary arrangement. The existing meter tails would be removed from the cut out and re-terminated in a new cut out in a different location into which the 'looped supply' cable is terminated)</p> <p>On reinstatement of supply the above scenarios apply.</p> |
| | <p>Re attaching a "loose" cut out to the meter board following a report from the MOp, data collector or upon direct discovery.</p> <p><u>Emergency or routine situation</u></p> | <p>After re-fixing the cut out to the meter board it will be necessary to check the meter tails for tightness at both ends.</p> <p>If DNO's are not allowed access to the meter terminals they will not be able check the meter tails for tightness.</p> <p>They will make safe by isolating the supply, leaving the customer off supply and advising the supplier* of the issue.</p> |
| | <p>DNO installation of isolator switches.</p> <p><u>Emergency or routine situation</u></p> | <p>DNOs may install isolation switches between the meter and the consumer's equipment and may need access to the meter terminals in order to undertake polarity tests and/or check the tightness of terminals.</p> <p>If DNO's are not allowed access to the meter terminals they will not be able to safely restore supply to the customer. They will leave the installation in a safe condition by isolating the supply, leaving the customer off supply and advising the supplier* of the issue.</p> |
| <p>In all of the above scenarios there is a risk that manipulation of existing meter tails by DNO staff may cause them to become loose in the meter terminals.</p> | | |
| Change meter** tails | <p>Call out from customer (no supply, flickering lights, and smell of burning) due a problem with the meter tail.</p> <p><u>Emergency situation</u></p> | <p>DNO's are usually the first point of contact for these types of issues and will normally dispatch staff to resolve/ repair the issue if it cannot be determined what equipment is causing the issue.</p> <p>If DNO's are not allowed access to the meter terminals they will not be able to resolve the issue. They will make safe by isolating the supply, leaving the customer off supply and advising the supplier* of the issue.</p> |
| | <p>Upon inspection by DNO staff the meter tail is damaged and there are exposed live conductors.</p> | <p>As above.</p> |

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| | <u>Emergency or routine situation</u> | Could also include situations where the cut out has been changed by the DNO and the meter tails are in poor condition. |
| | <p>Meter tails are too short</p> <p><u>Emergency or routine situation</u></p> | <p>DNO may change or alter their service equipment including the cut out leaving the existing tails too short to reconnect into the existing meter.</p> <p>In these circumstances it would be necessary to replace the meter tails. If DNO's are not permitted to undertake this work the customer would be left off supply, isolated at the cut out until the supplier* could arrange for their MOp to attend.</p> |
| | <p>Meter tails are incorrectly sized for new DNO equipment</p> <p><u>Emergency or routine situation</u></p> | <p>Following replacement of DNO service termination equipment the existing meter tails may be too small to terminate correctly into the new cut out or the size may not be compatible with the fuse rating.</p> <p>In these circumstances it would be necessary to replace the meter tails. If DNO's are not permitted to undertake this work the customer would be left off supply, isolated at the cut out until the supplier* could arrange for their MOp to attend.</p> |
| Access to meter terminals or change meter tails** | <p>Revenue protection activities - Interference /damage by third party e.g. cannabis farm</p> <p><u>Emergency or routine situation</u></p> | <p>DNO will likely be called by authorities attending site to isolate/ make safe. This would normally include contact with the supplier who may also be in attendance.</p> <p>It may be necessary to reinstate the supply once the investigation has concluded. If the meter is not affected the DNO may wish to check tails for tightness or replace the meter tails. If DNO's are not permitted to undertake this work the customer would be left off supply, isolated at the cut out until the supplier* could arrange for their MOp to attend.</p> |
| Install new meter tails** | <p>Existing service termination connects directly into the meter.</p> <p><u>Emergency or routine situation</u></p> | <p>In some instances the DNO will replace equipment where the existing service terminates directly into the meter.</p> <p>In these instances the DNO will likely install isolation (cut out or red link unit) adjacent to the meter. Meter tails will need to be installed between the new service</p> |

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| | | <p>termination and the meter.</p> <p>If DNO's are not permitted to undertake this work the customer would be left off supply, isolated at the new cut out until the supplier* could arrange for their MOp to attend.</p> |
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*Currently not all suppliers operate contact centres on a 24/7 365 day per year basis.

** It needs to be made clear that DNO's have no enduring responsibility/ accountability for meter tails. The responsibility for the operation and management of meter tails remains with the Supplier/ Meter Operator. It is however reasonable for DNOs to replace meter tails after they have changed or altered their service equipment (including where the existing service terminates directly into the meter) and find that the existing tails are too short to reconnect into the existing meter because this issue has arisen solely as a result of the DNO work. Generally it is not reasonable for DNOs to cover the cost of replacing damaged, decayed or undersized meter tails, i.e. regulatory opinion is that DNOs should not be using their DUOS income to maintain, repair or replace third party owned assets.

The DCP253 Working Group may wish to consider the impact that gas first communications hubs may have on this change proposal given that they are likely to be connected to the meter tails, i.e. between the meter and the cut out.

It should be noted that this issue only arises for whole current metering. For CT/ large power metering installations the customer's connection is normally made directly into the DNO equipment.