

DCUSA CONSULTATION DOCUMENT	
DCUSA ISSUE	De-energisation by Non-Industry Parties (DCP038)
DATE OF ISSUE	12 October 2009
ISSUED TO	DCUSA Contract Managers Association of Meter Operators Consumer Focus Electricity Safety Council ELEXON Energy Networks Association HSE MOCOPA MRASCo N.A.P.I.T NICEIC Ofgem SELECT (Electrical Contractors Association of Scotland) Independent Electricians
RETURN DEADLINE	02 November 2009 (15 WD consultation period)

1 SUMMARY OF ISSUE

- 1.1 The Distribution Connection and Use of System Agreement (DCUSA) is a multi-party contract between electricity Distributors and electricity Suppliers/retailers. It governs the main relationship between people who sell electricity and the owners of the networks that transport it.
- 1.2 Since 1990 the electricity supply market has been open to competition. As part of the arrangements, electricity Suppliers are responsible for the energisation status of premises.
- 1.3 Meter Operators (acting on behalf of an electricity Supplier) change the energisation status of premises and work on the Distributor's termination equipment i.e. remove and replace fuses.
- 1.4 Distributors and Meter Operators have legal obligations under the 2002 Electricity, Safety, Quality and Continuity Regulations (ESQCR) for their equipment on customer's premises but not under the control of the customer. These must be designed, installed and maintained to ensure safety and continuity of supply. There are also obligations on Suppliers, Distributors and Meter Operators regarding revenue protection.
- 1.5 When undertaking work at premises, electricians may require those premises to be de-energised (i.e. to stop electricity flowing). Electricians are not permitted by the Distributor to undertake the de-energisation work themselves.
- 1.6 In order to have premises de-energised electricians must therefore identify who the electricity Supplier is, contact them and ask them to arrange for a Meter Operator agent to visit the premises to perform the work. There may be lead times associated with arranging for the work to be completed. Metering work is subject to the Electricity (Standards of Performance) Regulations which require the Supplier to be able to agree a "timed appointment" within a two hour band. Where multi-premise projects such as rewiring of blocks of flats are involved, there may be more than one Supplier involved and so the electrician could have to liaise with a number of parties.
- 1.7 Suppliers may charge the customer for attending to perform a temporary de-energisation/re-energisation. Many suppliers also offer a service where their Meter Operators will attend to fit a double-pole isolator switch, the electrician can then use this to safely isolate the supply.
- 1.8 Anecdotal evidence suggests that work may be being carried out while the electrical circuit is live, or de-energisations are carried out by unauthorised persons. In these cases the Cut Out seals, which are designed to act as a deterrent to tampering, are broken. This impacts the Distributor's equipment, the customers installation connected to it and the intermediate metering system, which could adversely affect the safety of the buildings and occupants.

2 WORKING GROUP FINDINGS

- 2.1 Recognising that it is dangerous for work to be performed live and that it is unsatisfactory for seals to be broken by unauthorised persons, the parties to

the DCUSA established a Working Group to seek to understand what practices are happening and why and to recommended solutions for addressing the issue.

- 2.2 The Working Group carried out a consultation in March 2009 and has met 5 times to consider the responses. Comments received indicated a clear desire from electricians to carry out de-energisation and re-energisation activity. However few Suppliers and DNOs supported this activity and that the Working Group has therefore considered the root causes of the issues and alternative solutions as a means of developing a solution.
- 2.3 The Working Group has developed 3 potential solutions, set out as Options 1, 2 and 3 below, which it hopes could facilitate necessary work being done by authorised persons in a timely manner.

3 PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

- 3.1 The Working Group is seeking feedback on the following 3 solutions. When assessing the options please consider the following points:
 - What do you consider to be the issue?
 - Will the proposal address the issue you have identified?
 - How could the proposal be implemented?
 - What are the impacts of failing to implement the proposal?
 - What are the likely costs of the proposal?
 - What are the likely cost savings of the proposal?
 - What are the benefits of the proposal?
 - What are the drawbacks of the proposal?
 - What changes would you need to make to implement the proposal?
- 3.2 **Option 1 – Approved Accreditation Scheme:** This proposal would require the industry to develop a scheme whereby permission is granted by relevant parties to allow them to de-energise sites to work on a customers equipment (typically the consumer unit). The scheme would need to be managed by an agreed body and provide a robust governance framework and possibly training scheme. Any scheme developed would sit outside the DCUSA.
- 3.3 **Option 2 – Fit Double Pole Isolators:** This proposal would mandate the fitting of Double Pole Isolators on all new connections. In addition to this, suppliers would have to fit DPIs as part of any site visit to carry out metering works. Under this proposal the customer would be deemed to have ownership of the DPI once fitted.
- 3.4 **Option 3 – Improve existing supplier and agent processes:** This proposal would require all parties to look at their in-house processes to make it easier for electricians to make appointments and ensure that they conform to the existing Electricity Standards of Performance Regulations. Under this proposal the key processes around communication (identifying the right person and call handling) and timescales (speed of appointments) would need to be addressed. The governance of this proposal would also need to be determined – e.g. through a voluntary / mandatory Code of Practice. The proposal could be implemented either on its own or in conjunction with Option 1 or 2.

4 CONSULTATION

- 4.1 Parties are asked to complete the consultation questions attached as Appendix A. Responses should be submitted to dcusa@electralink.co.uk no later than 02 November 2009.

5 NEXT STEPS

- 5.1 Following the end of the consultation period the Working Group will consider all responses before submitting a final recommendations report to the DCUSA Panel.
- 5.2 If you have any questions about this paper or the DCUSA Change Process please contact the DCUSA Help Desk by email to dcusa@electralink.co.uk or telephone 020 7432 3017.

APPENDICES

- Appendix A – Consultation Response Form.