

Smart metering installation code of practice

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1. Scope of the code

Among many legal obligations in respect of developing and maintaining an efficient, economical and safe system of electricity supply, Manx Utilities has a duty to keep all meters “in proper order”. In discharging this duty, Manx Utilities is replacing all legacy electricity meters with new generation advanced meters.

The smart metering installation code of practice (SMICOP, the code) specifies the minimum standards for Manx Utilities to follow in relation to customer-facing aspects of the installation of a smart metering system.

It aims to explain what will take place during the smart meter installation, to ensure a positive customer experience of the installation process, to guarantee customers’ safety during and post installations, and to support the delivery of programme benefits including, but not limited to, long term customer behavioural changes.

The code describes specific activities in the period running up to an installation visit, the installation itself, and post installation.

It is applicable to both domestic and business customers, except where it explicitly states the terms apply to one or the other category.

2. Glossary of terms

Business customer - a non-domestic customer;

Customer - the person(s) occupying the premises where the smart meter is to be installed, a representative of theirs or a responsible adult with suitable authority to allow access to the premises;

Domestic customer - a customer at premises where a supply of electricity is taken wholly or mainly for a domestic purpose; domestic premises is to be interpreted accordingly;

Energy efficiency guidance - information on ways to save energy, which is tailored for a domestic customer, and for a business customer, is tailored to the extent that it is reasonably possible and practicable to do in the relevant circumstances;

Home area network (HAN) – a network created by the meter for use inside the home and used to provide monitoring and control of energy usage;

In-home display (IHD) – a device which connects to the smart meter and shows the customer's current energy consumption;

Installation appointment - a time agreed with the customer for the purpose of installing a smart meter;

Installation visit - a visit to customer's premises for the purpose of installing, or completing the installation of, a smart meter system or any part thereof;

Installer - an individual trained and authorised by Manx Utilities for the purposes of installing a smart meter;

Staff - employees of Manx Utilities;

Post installation - the period after the installation visit, up to the customer receiving the first bill using advanced meter data for credit meters, or the first vend for PAYG meters;

Pay As You Go (PAYG) – the pre-payment for energy is made in advance of use;

Pre-installation - the activities associated with the installation of a smart meter which take place prior to the installation visit;

Programme - Manx Utilities' programme for the delivery of smart metering in the Isle of Man. The programme is responsible for overseeing the development and implementation of policy, including establishing the framework to facilitate the roll-out;

Representative - someone who speaks or does something on behalf of another person or group of people;

Vulnerable customer - a domestic customer who may require priority services or additional support due to personal characteristics or vulnerability circumstances, including, for instance, age, chronic illness, long-term medical condition, disability, having a visual, auditory, literacy, mobility or other impairment, or severe financial insecurity.

3. Pre-installation

Manx Utilities shall ensure that communication material regarding smart meter installations and services:

- i. complement previously provided consumer engagement material;
- ii. are clear, concise and so drafted that it is reasonably expected they will be understood by the customer;
- iii. are made available to the customer in a variety of media and in a format appropriate to, or tailored for, groups with specific needs – such as the visually or hearing impaired, and those with low levels of literacy;
- iv. are suitable for vulnerable customers;
- v. alert the customer to the benefits smart metering can bring, e.g. the provision of bills based upon actual consumption rather than estimated, and how smart metering can be used to improve energy efficiency. They should also detail the availability and range of energy efficiency goods and services available;
- vi. direct the customer to sources from which they may obtain additional and impartial information about, or assistance in, energy saving;
- vii. are issued regularly and in a timely way;
- viii. provide information about relevant data collection and make the customer aware of Manx Utilities' data protection commitments prior to the installation visit.

Where reasonable, Manx Utilities shall endeavour to allay any concerns that customers may have in respect of smart metering.

All interactions with the customer in relation to the installation (verbal or written) shall follow the principles as set out in this section and shall complement the principles of the code.

A pre-installation site survey may be undertaken for domestic premises and depending on the outcome, remedial actions may be required. Any such work will be scheduled at the customer's convenience, and Manx Utilities reserves the right to charge for missed appointments at a rate of £69.24 + VAT (or £97.45 + VAT out of hours) per visit.

If there are proposed changes with regards to meter location or configuration, staff will discuss with the customer where the meter and associated equipment can be installed. Work shall not commence without the customer's agreement.

In some cases, a customer's electric installation may not meet requirements or a purpose-built meter box not provided by Manx Utilities may not allow enough access or space to install the equipment; if this is the case or the customer wishes to have the smart meter installed in a different location, MU shall advise what remedial work is to be undertaken, some of which may have to be completed at the customer's expense.

Meters should not be located:

- where they are exposed to water including rain
- in a bathroom, wet area or shower room
- in a cellar
- in close proximity to a gas meter;
- where there is a flammable environment or an explosive atmosphere;
- near a car jet washing facility that is not adequately separated;
- in close proximity to machinery, making it unsafe to work on the service;
- where the structure to which the service is attached is in danger of collapse;
- in buildings that are not secure against third-party access, e.g. abandoned/empty properties.

An external meter box offers the benefit of providing easy access for inspections and maintenance works being carried out with little or no inconvenience to the customer; therefore, Manx Utilities will look to accommodate and cover the cost of reasonable requests for relocation of the meter position.

4. Training and accreditation

Manx Utilities staff shall receive appropriate training and will hold appropriate authorisations so they are able to safely and competently deliver the requirements of the smart metering programme.

At levels appropriate to their role, staff shall be:

- able to safely install the necessary equipment;
- competent in addressing customer queries and/or referring them to an appropriate contact;
- able to provide energy efficiency guidance that is appropriate to the customers' needs;
- have a basic knowledge and understanding of data protection and privacy;
- cognisant of the definition of vulnerability, able to identify potential cases of vulnerability and to offer guidance responsive to the needs of vulnerable customers.

5. Scheduling visits

Manx Utilities shall:

- at least four weeks prior to the installation visit, notify the customer that their meter is due to be replaced with a smart meter, and when it is anticipated that this will happen;
- at least two weeks before the installation visit, send the customer an installation appointment confirming the date and time slot (morning or afternoon);
- send via SMS text an appointment reminder to the customer 48 hours before the installation;
- provide the customer with contact details so they may re-arrange an installation visit if needed;

- v. advise the customer that in the absence of an attempt to reschedule, the appointment will be considered confirmed;
- vi. advise the customer that if the meter is accessible, it will be replaced on the scheduled date;
- vii. advise the customer that if MU does not have access to the meter and two appointments are missed, additional appointments will be made and charged at £69.24 + VAT (or £97.45 + VAT out of hours) per visit, and missed appointments may be retrospectively charged at the same rate;
- viii. in communications regarding the installation visit, clearly explain to the customer what the installation visit entails, the need, if any, for the customer to be at the premises, an indication as to how long a typical installation takes, that safe working conditions and access will be required, and that the electricity supply will be shut off;
- ix. exercise its legal obligation to keep all meters in proper order. In discharging this duty, Manx Utilities will replace all its legacy electricity meters with new generation advanced meters;
- x. where the customer refuses to accept the replacement of their unsupported legacy meter with a smart meter, at Manx Utilities' sole discretion and on a case-by-case basis, look to accommodate the installation of an advanced meter with the communications module removed. In addition to all existing unit and standing charges, these customers will be charged at £36.75 + VAT per quarter to offset the cost of the design, implementation and maintenance of a manual workaround process, the sole purpose of which is to accommodate the wishes of a very limited number of customers;
- xi. engage with the customers and clearly explain that any officer authorised by the Authority may at all reasonable times enter any premises to which a supply of electricity is being given for the purpose of removing, inspecting or re-installing any electricity meter or installing any substitute meter. If admission is refused or refusal of admission is apprehended, Manx Utilities will seek authorisation to enter from a justice of the peace;
- xii. reasonably endeavour to establish and accommodate any specific needs due to customer vulnerabilities;
- xiii. upon request, accommodate reasonable customer requirements arising, for instance, from specific cultural traditions or religious beliefs;
- xiv. where reasonable, endeavour to accommodate the operational needs of a business customer;
- xv. for sheltered accommodation, arrange installation visits with the agreement of the person in authority.

6. Installation visit

Manx Utilities shall ensure that:

- i. when attending customers' premises, staff are presentable, courteous and professional;

- ii. upon arrival at the customer's premises, staff identify themselves with a valid identity card, and state the purpose of the visit. The validity of the identity card can be checked by contacting Manx Utilities on 687687;
- iii. when more than one member of staff attend the installation visit, all staff present a valid identity card and each person's role is clearly explained to the customer;
- iv. a record is maintained of which staff visited the customer;
- v. ahead of work starting, if the proposed meter location or configuration are different from the existing one, staff discuss with the customer where the meter and associated equipment can be installed. Work shall not commence without the customer's agreement;
- vi. abortive or no-access installation visits are being managed. The customer shall be made aware that the installation visit has failed, as well as the reasons for the failure, what happens next, and what action(s) they can take;
- vii. where the meter is accessible, and no attempt has been made to cancel or reschedule the installation appointment, the appointment is deemed confirmed and the installation is undertaken;
- viii. in sheltered housing, approval is obtained from the person in authority before the installation commences;
- ix. if the customer has requested or requires a carer or another representative of theirs to be present and they are not, no aspect of the smart meter installation is undertaken;
- x. where potential cases of vulnerability are identified, they are reported to the appropriate Manx Utilities staff and recorded;
- xi. information on helplines for post-installation support and query resolution, or to provide feedback, is provided;
- xii. information on any additional impartial sources of help and information, including government sources, centrally coordinated consumer engagement programme or non-profit organisations is provided;
- xiii. customers' premises are left in the same state as found as far as is reasonably possible.

7. Testing the system

Manx Utilities shall take any necessary steps to ensure the smart meter system is fully operational, including HAN and IHD (if provided).

8. Demonstrating the smart meter to the customer

Instructions in written, or other suitable format, on how to use the smart metering system and all its components shall be left with, or sent to the customer ahead of the installation visit.

Manx Utilities shall also provide additional information on smart meters, the PAYG service, app and IHD on the Smarter Living section of the website.

Where the smart meter is to be operated in PAYG mode, the customer shall be provided with specific details relating to PAYG functions including, where appropriate, tariff detail, debt screens, emergency credit and re-enabling supply, as well as guidance on obtaining credit and the topping up process.

Manx Utilities is collaborating with 3rd-sector organisations to ensure that any information provided, if required, will be available in a variety of media and in formats appropriate to, or tailored for, groups with specific needs – such as the visually or hearing-impaired, or those with vulnerabilities or low levels of literacy.

9. Provision of energy efficiency guidance

Energy efficiency guidance is available for domestic and business customers on Manx Utilities' website.

The energy efficiency guidance provides information and advice about the smart meters' application in making our homes more energy efficient, reducing carbon emissions and lowering energy bills. Energy efficiency guidance offered to the customer shall complement any Isle of Man government campaigns.

Energy efficiency materials are available in a format that meets the demands of the customer with specific needs.

10. Incomplete installations

For an installation that cannot be commenced or completed during the installation visit, Manx Utilities shall ensure that the customer is made aware of the reason(s) the installation could not be completed, for example, when the site inspection highlighted areas of concern.

The site shall be left in a safe state before departure, and the customer shall be informed of the processes in place for:

- re-arranging an installation visit if required, and
- notification of the smart meter installation completion.

11. Fault resolution

If during the installation visit a fault is identified with the smart metering system, the customer shall be made aware of the problem, what the resolution is likely to be, who will be resolving the fault and approximate timescales of the resolution.

It shall be made clear to the customer that they will not be charged for rectifying the smart metering system fault.

The customer shall be provided with contact details so they may check progress or ask for additional information.

12. Post installation

Customers will be able to provide feedback about their experience of the installation visit – via Manx Utilities website, verbally or via other means.

Feedback shall be taken into account for future installation visits and, where appropriate, adjustments shall be made to Manx Utilities' policies and processes.

A certain number of installations will undergo an audit check in order to ensure the quality and safety of meter installations. Where access is required, Manx Utilities shall notify the customer in advance of any such quality audit visits.

Customers shall be informed about helplines for post-installation support and queries.

13. Customer surveys

Manx Utilities shall undertake customer surveys to monitor compliance against this code and the quality of the smart meter installations. These may be carried out by independent suitably qualified persons or organisations, or by members of the AMI programme team.

All completed installations shall be in scope for the purposes of the installation surveys.

14. Complaint resolution

Complaint handling and redress procedures are in place and operational arrangements exist so that complaints are addressed in a timely manner and customer concerns are investigated and resolved.

Manx Utilities' Customer Charter published on the website lays out our service standards, and how to contact us to raise a query or a complaint.

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