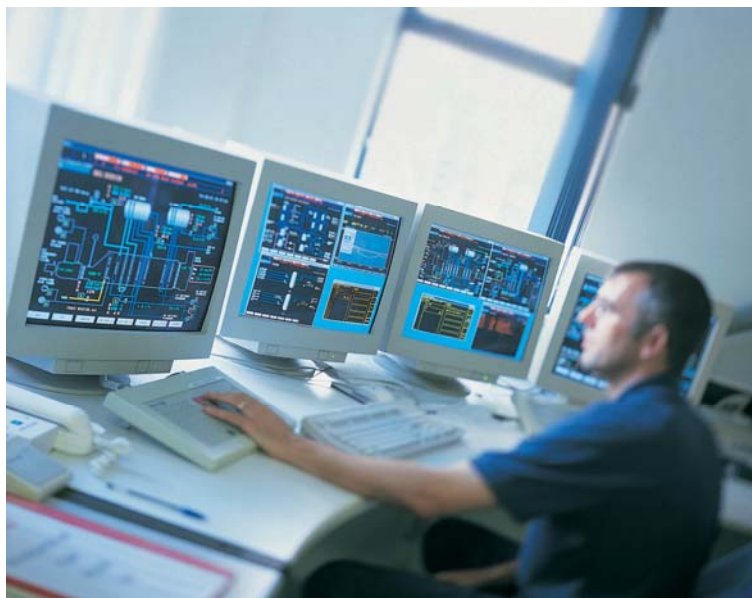




**Customer Code of Practice & Security of Supply
Standard Distribution Licence Conditions 8, 9 and 10
(Effective from 26th August 2004)**



This Code of Practice has been prepared in a form approved by Ofgem

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VERSION CONTROL

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1 Introduction

This Code of Practice has been prepared in a form approved by Ofgem.

ESP Electricity owns and operates electricity networks throughout the UK that provide a supply of electricity to customers' homes and business premises.

Licence Obligations

This statement sets out ESP Electricity's approach to Safety and Security of Supply Service (SLC 8), Access to Customer Premises (SLC 9) and Special Services (SLC 10). It is prepared in accordance with the requirements of ESP Electricity's electricity distribution licence issued under the Electricity Act 1989 (as amended by the Utilities Act 2000).

ESP Electricity has responsibilities to its customers for:-

- Safety and Security of Supply
- Contacting ESP Electricity
- Provision of Special Services for domestic customers who are blind or deaf, of pensionable age, disabled or chronically sick.
- Interruptions to Your Supply
- Entering Your Home
- Complaints and Customer Satisfaction

This Code of Practice sets out the way that ESP Electricity exercises the above responsibilities and the way that we provide the services that our customers are entitled to, when connected to an ESP Electricity network.

Whilst ESP Electricity are responsible for the electricity network that delivers electricity to customers' homes and business premises, your Electricity Supplier sends you a bill for your electricity and is responsible for your electricity meter.

Details of your Electricity Supplier can be found on your latest electricity bill.

This Code of Practice document explains in the next few pages how ESP Electricity puts the above responsibilities into practice.

Electronic copies of this Code of Practice are available from our website **FREE OF CHARGE** or by emailing your request to electricity@espipelines.com. One hard copy of the Code of Practice will be provided **FREE OF CHARGE** per request by contacting us on 01372 227560 or by post, fax or email (details of which are outlined in Section 3 below).

ESPE will review this statement annually to ensure that the document remains current with the latest licence conditions.

2 Description of the Safety and Security of Supply Service

This statement sets out the enquiry service that has been made available to any person for the purposes of receiving reports and offering information, guidance, or advice about any matter or incident that:

- affects or is likely to affect the maintenance of the security, availability and quality of service of the licensee's distribution system; or
- arises from or in connection with the operation of, or otherwise relates to, the licensee's distribution system and which causes danger or requires urgent attention or is likely to cause danger or require urgent attention.

ESP Electricity provides an emergency enquiry service which is continuously staffed and can be contacted 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Reports made by post or in person should be restricted to events of a non-urgent nature. The service is free at the point of use.

Service

All reports and enquires received in accordance with this statement, whether made by telephone, in writing, or in person, will be processed in a prompt and efficient manner and in accordance with any relevant guaranteed and overall standards of service set from time to time by the Authority.

Electricity Suppliers

If any electricity supplier chooses to provide its customers with an address and telephone number which differ from those given in Section 3 below for the reporting of such matters, that supplier will be responsible for ensuring that full details of all reports are passed promptly to us. In all such cases, the standards of service provided would be measured from the time at which reports are received by ESP Electricity.

Loss of Electricity Supply

In addition to receiving reports concerning the electricity distribution system, the service may be used by any person to enquire about the likely extent or duration of supply emergencies. Every effort will be made to provide precise and up-to-date information.

Urgent Information

If customers have information concerning the safety or security of their supply or of ESP Electricity cables, lines or substations, customers should telephone our emergency telephone number detailed in Section 3 below.

Enquiry Service Staff

ESP Electricity enquiry staff are trained to provide non-technical advice for the avoidance of danger from the distribution system and from loss of supply. They have the necessary skills in communication and customer contact, but may be assisted by other non-technical staff during widespread emergencies.

If technical advice or assistance is required, the enquiry will be passed to an appropriate specialist.

Non-discrimination

ESP Electricity will deal with all reports and enquiries strictly on their merits and will not discriminate in the provision of the service or use the contact to promote any electricity supply business.

Availability

The reporting arrangements set out above are also made available to other utilities, local authorities, and emergency services.

Change of Address or Telephone Number

If we have to change the address or telephone number of the service established in accordance with paragraph 1 above, we will take steps to inform each authorised electricity operator using the service as soon as is practicable, but in any event prior to such change becoming effective.

3 Contacting ESP Electricity

Making it clear how customers can contact us on matters associated with the electricity network and any other concerns about electricity

Our Emergency Service

We aim to provide a safe and reliable electricity supply but unfortunately sometimes faults do occur on our electricity network which causes interruptions to our customers' electricity supply.

In these circumstances, to report the loss of your electricity supply to us or any concern about the safety of the meter, or of our electricity overhead lines or underground cables, at any time of the day or night 365 days of the year, please telephone us **FREE OF CHARGE** on:-

EMERGENCY TELEPHONE NUMBER: 0800 731 6945

Our Normal Hours Service

To enquire by telephone about any of the services we provide, or if you wish to make a complaint, please telephone us between 8am and 6pm on:-

01372 227560

Customers who are deaf or who have difficulty hearing

If you are deaf or you have difficulty hearing, you may write, email or fax ESP Electricity using the contact details outlined below. Your correspondence will then be given a higher priority ensuring a quick response.

To write to us our address is:-

Business Operations Manager
ESP Electricity
Hazeldean
Station Road
Leatherhead
KT22 7AA

To send us a fax our number is:-

01372 377996

To contact us by e-mail our address is:-

electricity@espipelines.com

4 Provision of 'Priority Service' for Domestic Customers who are Blind or Deaf, of Pensionable Age, Disabled or Chronically Sick.

The ESP Electricity Priority Service Register.

We are aware that some of our customers have special requirements and need a priority service. If you are blind, partially sighted, deaf, have hearing difficulties, are of pensionable age, are disabled, are chronically sick or depend on electricity for medical reasons you may register your details with us.

Some examples of what we mean by "medical reasons" are if you have a kidney dialysis machine, a ventilator, a stair-lift or a bath hoist.

We can keep your information on our Priority Service Register and this will help us to meet your needs. Examples of what our Priority Service Register provides are:

- advance notice of planned interruptions to your electricity supply
- a password facility to enable you to recognise our engineers should they have a need to visit your home (either at your request or in a case of an emergency). This is in addition to the photographic ID cards we already provide to our engineers.
- providing advice on how to best prepare for an expected shutdown and manage in an unexpected shutdown

To register with us **FREE OF CHARGE** please telephone 01372 227560 during the hours of 8am to 6pm or write or e-mail to the addresses given in Section 3 above.

We need to know your name, address, telephone number and details of your special needs or special equipment and how regularly you use it.

Your details will be kept in strictest confidence and only passed on to other organisations for energy-related purposes e.g. a meter company who would need to know your special requirements should they require access to your home to read the meter. We will inform your Electricity Supplier, who can also register you under their own Priority Service Register.

Alternatively, if you register with your Electricity Supplier, they will pass on your details to us.

Please note that it is not possible to guarantee a constant supply of electricity and it is essential that you have alternative arrangements to fall back on. If a constant supply is essential for you, please ask us about other arrangements you may be able to use if your electricity supply goes off unexpectedly.

5 Interruptions to Your Supply

Ensuring that customers have adequate warning if we have to interrupt the electricity supply to their home or business premises

Sometimes we have to switch off the electricity supply to carry out essential planned maintenance of items on our electricity network or to connect new customers. We will either write to you or deliver a card showing the details of the times of interruption at least 2 days in advance.

If you are blind, partially sighted or if the interruption of supply to your medical equipment (e.g. kidney dialysis) would be life threatening and you are registered on our Priority Service Register (and having provided details of your telephone number to either your supplier or to ESP Electricity) we will also telephone you at least 2 working days in advance of the interruption to advise you of the outage.

Please note that where the interruption of supply is caused by an issue outside of ESP Electricity control e.g. emergency street works that require a cessation of electricity or a fault on another organisation's network that is connected to ours, we will endeavour to inform you within 2 days of receiving the advance notification ourselves.

Our written notice delivered directly to your home will provide a telephone number to use if you wish to call us to obtain further details or to advise us of any other specific problems.

Please note that it is not possible to guarantee a constant supply of electricity and it is essential that you have alternative arrangements to fall back on.

Ensuring that if a fault occurs on our distribution network, we will seek to restore supplies as soon as practically possible

Although we will notify you in advance of planned outages, we are not able to give notice of 'emergency outages' or 'dangerous situation outages'. Switching off the supply of your electricity during this type of emergency would be necessary should there be a danger to human life or to vital equipment.

We make every effort to ensure that if a fault occurs, your electricity supply is restored as soon as practically possible. Where you have special needs and rely on electrical equipment for medical needs, it is essential to have made alternative arrangements, such as a back up battery supply to assist you in an emergency. Your Doctor or hospital will be able to advise.

If you have registered on our Priority Service Register we will endeavour to keep you informed of progress in restoring supply and will discuss any special requirements with you. Please note, however, that we are not able to provide you with advance warnings for major emergencies or widespread fault situations. If you feel at risk, please contact your local hospital.

If your electricity supply is lost (commonly known as a power cut) then we recommend you read the following advice:-

- Check to see if your neighbours have lost their supply. If they have not, the problem causing your loss of supply may be the result of one of your own fuses blowing.
- If you have a trip switch, check to see if it has operated. If it has, switch off all your appliances and try to reset the trip. The supply may then come back on.
- If the trip switch has not operated, and you can find no other reason, there may be a problem with the electricity supply. In which case, please call our emergency number listed above.
- If you have a battery operated radio, please listen to the local radio station as it may be possible to keep informed of the more widespread electricity supply problems, particularly during times of severe weather.

Further advice on how to manage during a loss of supply is available via our website at www.espelectricity.com. A written copy of this advice is also sent out directly to you when we have the need to write to you to advise you of a planned shutdown e.g. in the event of maintenance.

6 Entering your home

Respecting the privacy and security of your home

Many appointments will be made at your request, but sometimes we may need to visit your home to inspect or maintain our equipment or to install, change or maintain your meter.

The visit will either be made by one of our staff or a contractor working for us. When this happens we want customers to be assured that the visitor is either a genuine member of staff or a genuine contractor working for us. To provide this reassurance:

- Wherever possible, all ESP Electricity employees and contractors will show an identity card showing their Company name, their own name, date of issue and a colour photograph of the individual. For customers who are blind or partially sighted, we can also arrange for a password (chosen by yourself) that can be tested on the engineer to ensure their authenticity. Please refer to our Priority Service Register service detailed in Section 4 above and our section on Passwords below.
- All ESP Electricity employees and contractors will be able to inform you of ESP Electricity's emergency telephone number or general enquiry telephone number.
- All ESP Electricity employees and contractors will be able to give you explanations and information on matters relevant to the purpose of their visit.
- ESP Electricity will take all necessary steps to ensure that all ID cards are returned to the Company when an employee leaves or following the expiry of the card.

If you have any doubts about whether a caller is genuine, do not let them into your home.

ESP Electricity will ensure that all employees and contractors are aware of the contents of this Code of Practice and will comply with it at all times. They will be suitable, appropriately qualified and fully trained for the purpose of their visit and will be calm and courteous at all times in their dealings with you. They will respect you and your home and give clear and accurate explanations of the work they are to carry out.

In arranging for a visit, you will be offered a morning or afternoon appointment. The morning times are from 8am to 12 noon and the afternoon times are from 12 noon to 4.30pm.

If we agree an appointment, we will do our very best to keep it - unless we agree an alternative date with you.

PASSWORDS (providing you with additional security)

If you are blind, have poor sight or would just like to feel more secure, we can agree a password with you that we will use, if we need to visit your home.

Any member of our staff or agent who has to visit your home will give this password to prove they are genuine.

To set up your personal password with us please telephone 01372 227560 during the hours of 8am to 6pm. You may also write or e-mail to the addresses given in Section 3 above.

Alternatively, you may register a password with your Electricity Supplier and they will pass on that password for us to use.

This service is FREE OF CHARGE.

If you have registered a password with us you should always ask for the password before you allow access. If you have any doubts about whether a caller is genuine, do not let them into your home.

As an organisation involved in the provision of electricity we do have Rights of Entry under the Rights of Entry (Gas and Electricity Boards) Act 1954. ESP Electricity or our agents will only exercise these rights in extreme situations e.g. should there be a requirement to inspect your meter following an interruption in supply or disconnect the supply in an emergency situation. Our entry will be in strict compliance with the terms of the Act.

7 Complaints and Customer Satisfaction

Handling complaints from customers in a sensitive way that seeks to resolve matters at the earliest opportunity

If you are dissatisfied with ESP Electricity for any reason, please feel free to contact us, either by telephone, e-mail or by letter using the normal hours telephone number and addresses given in Section 3 above. We will respond to all forms of contact within 10 working days. Should we fail to respond within this deadline, we will provide you with a compensation payment in accordance with Ofgem's Guaranteed Standards. A full list of these standards is provided in Appendix A.

If you are concerned about your meter, or your electricity bill please call your Electricity Supplier. Their telephone number is on their latest bill.

Our members of staff are trained to listen carefully to your complaint in a polite and understanding way. They will give their full name and telephone extension and may ask you further questions to assist them in fully understanding your complaint or query.

They will seek to resolve your problem themselves, but sometimes a visit by another member of staff will be the best way of resolving the difficulty. Where this is proposed, you will be given the visitor's name and designation and an appointment will be arranged as indicated above. Further details of our home visit procedures are contained in Section 5 (Entering Your Home) of this document.

Where visits are made to assist in the resolution of your complaint, we will empower our member(s) of staff with the authority to make an 'on the spot' decision on the best course of action needed to resolve the issue to your complete satisfaction.

Many of our key electricity services are covered by guaranteed standards. Your complaint may be about one of these Standards. There is more information about this later in this document.

Where technical investigations are needed, for example if the voltage of the electricity supply to your premises is fluctuating outside the permitted limits, we aim to correct it within 6 months in line with Ofgem requirements. We may need to install recording or test equipment and these will be installed subject to the visits and appointment procedures outlined above.

Sometimes it is necessary to make significant alterations to our network and this work may take some time to arrange. However, we will keep you informed of progress at each stage of the process.

Escalating Your Complaint

If you are not happy with your initial response or any decision made by ESP Electricity in resolving your complaint, you can, at any time, escalate the matter further by:

Firstly, contact our Business Operations Manager (details provided in Section 3) explaining why you remain dissatisfied. She/he will endeavour to resolve your complaint promptly, however should she/he fail to do so, they will escalate the complaint directly to the Managing Director. Our Managing Director monitors our complaint statistics to ensure we are meeting our own key performance indicators.

In the unlikely event that you are still not satisfied with ESP Electricity's response, you may then refer the matter to **Consumer Direct**. Consumer Direct is the government-funded telephone and online service offering information and advice on

consumer issues to protect your interests. They offer free, independent advice and will look at your complaint, but they do expect us to try to resolve it first.

To contact Consumer Direct, you can either phone on one of the numbers listed below, or send an email to explain your problem.

- Call an adviser for help or advice: 08454 04 05 06
- Minicom users: 08451 28 13 84 - Consumer Issues only. For Energy and post issues - Typetalk is available by dialling 18001 followed by the full Consumer Direct number you wish to call.

Appendix A Guaranteed Standards of Service

Meeting the Guaranteed Standards of Service as agreed with energywatch and Ofgem

ESP Electricity aims to at least meet the Guaranteed Standards of Service that are required by Ofgem and energywatch. If we do not meet a standard, we will, subject to certain exclusions, make a payment to you via your Electricity Supplier.

Your Electricity Supplier usually sends you a copy of these standards at least once a year. However, we have provided a list of Standards applicable to ESP Electricity in this Appendix for your reference.

For example, according to regulation 5(2)a below, should you have a supply failure in normal weather conditions and the supply is not restored within 18 hours you will be entitled to a compensation payment of £54 if you are a domestic customer or £108 if you are a business (or non-domestic) customer.

You do not need to claim if we fail to meet a Standard. We will make the payment to you via your supplier within 10 working days.

Regulation	Description	Prescribed period	Prescribed sum (domestic customer)	Prescribed sum (non-domestic customer)
5(2)(a)	Supply failure – normal conditions	18 hours	£54	£108
5(2)(b)	as above - each 12 hours thereafter		£27	£27
6(2)(a)	Supply failure – more than 5000 customers	24 hours	£54	£108
6(2)(b)	As above – each 12 hours thereafter		£27	£27
7(4)(a)	Supply failure – Cat 1 severe weather	24 hours	£27	£27
7(4)(b)	as above - each 12 hours thereafter		£27	£27
7(5)(a)	Supply failure – Cat 2 severe weather	48 hours	£27	£27
7(5)(b)	as above - each 12 hours thereafter		£27	£27
7(6)(a)	Supply failure – Cat 3 severe weather	(Calculated by formula for each distributor)	£27	£27
7(6)(b)	As above – each 12 hours thereafter		£27	£27
8(2)	Supply failure – rota disconnection	24 hours	£54	£108
9(2)(a)	Supply failure – Highlands and Islands	18 hours	£54	£108
9(2)(b)	as above - each 12 hours thereafter		£27	£27
11(4)	Multiple interruptions		£54	£54
12(3)	Distributors fuse failure	3 hours - working day	£22	£22
12(3)	Distributors fuse failure	4 hours - any other day	£22	£22
13(2)	Provide estimate for LV connection (simple)	5 working days	£44	£44
13(3)	Provide estimate for LV connection (complex)	15 working days	£44	£44
14(4)	Failure to notify shutdown to customer	2 days	£22	£44
14(5)	Failure to notify shutdown to other distributor	5 days	£22	£44
14(6)	Failure to notify customer of upstream shutdown	2 days	£22	£44
15(2)	Voltage outside limits	7 working days	£22	£22
15(4)(a)	As above, failure to visit		£22	£22
15(4)(b)	Voltage outside limits, failure to explain	5 working days	£22	£22
19(2)	Failure to offer an appointment		£22	£22
19(3)	Failure to keep an appointment		£22	£22
21(4)	Failure to make a customer payment or to other distributor for onward transmission to customer	10 working days	£22	£22
21(5)	Failure to make a customer payment or to or the electricity supplier for onward transmission to customer	10 working days	£22	£22

End of document.