

REF: 511 FAULTY ELECTRIC METERS

Note:

This Fact-Sheet should be read in conjunction with Fact Sheet - Excessively High Electric Bills.

Apart from faults with card meters and meter tampering, faulty meters resulting in high electricity bills are very rare. There is a rigorous system of checking all meters before they are installed.

Meters that do have a fault are more likely to go slow, so the consumer's bill is actually reduced. However, if you do come across a case of mysteriously high electricity consumption, then the procedures listed below should be followed.

Check meter

This involves a separate meter being wired up by the electricity supplier in parallel with the suspect meter. This is kept in place for at least three weeks to see if both meters register the same number of meter units used. This determines whether there is a fault with the permanent meter during that period.

Note

If no fault is found the consumer will be charged a fee, so it is advisable to refer the dispute to Energywatch (An independent consumer organisation, created by Government to protect, the interests of all domestic, commercial and industrial gas and electricity consumers) who can arrange for the meter check to be carried out free of charge as part of their complaint investigation process. Before asking Energywatch to intervene on behalf of the consumer you must contact the fuel supplier and give them the opportunity to sort out the problem. Energywatch can be contacted by telephoning 0845 9060708 or 0845 6013131 or by e-mailing them at enquiry@energywatch.org.uk

Independent Meter Determination

If the customer is still not happy Energywatch can arrange for an Independent Meter Determination. This costs the consumer nothing but can take several months to do as the meter examiners have a UK remit. A Government department employs meter examiners. The meter is removed, taken to bits and thoroughly tested. Thorough questions are asked about electricity use etc. The meter examiner builds up a picture of the previous year's consumption and makes an assessment of whether the meter has been faulty at any time during the past year or longer. The decision of the independent meter examiner is binding.

In cases of disputed accounts, a pending meter determination takes the pressure off the consumer paying excessive sums to the electricity supplier. However the customer is advised to pay a reasonable amount towards the account in dispute and must pay all current usage based on bills produced from the check meter readings.

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Mission Statement

SCARF aims to work through partnership to promote sustainable use of energy, eradicate fuel poverty and create sustainable employment and training opportunities.

Core Objectives

- + To provide free impartial and accessible energy efficiency advice and information services to help save energy, save cash and help save the environment.
- + To encourage investment in energy efficiency and renewable energy measures and grant take up for property improvements to achieve affordable warmth.
- + To create sustainable employment and training opportunities.

SCARF Provides

One Stop Energy Advice Shop offers free impartial advice and information:

- + Energy efficiency in the home, business and the community
- + Renewable energy in the home, business and the community
- + Grants for loft and cavity wall insulation
- + Grants for draughtproofing
- + Grants for central heating
- + Grants for renewable energy installations
- + Paying for fuel and fuel suppliers
- + Choice and operation of heating and hot water systems

SCARF also offers:

- + Home visits
- + Home energy checks
- + Presentations and informal training
- + NVQ and City & Guilds Qualifications