



Customer Code of Practice and Security of Supply Standard Distribution Licence Conditions 8, 9 & 10 and Quality of Service Guaranteed Standards.

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1. Introduction

This Code of Practice explains our policy toward security of supplies in respect to electricity distribution networks throughout the UK owned and operated by Optimal Power Networks Ltd (OPN) that provide a supply of electricity to customers' homes and business premises. This Code of Practice is prepared in a format approved by Ofgem.

Licence Obligations

This statement sets out OPN'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 OPN's electricity distribution licence issued under the Electricity Act 1989 (as amended by the Utilities Act 2000).

OPN has responsibilities to its customers for:

- Safety and Security of Supply
- Contacting OPN
- Provision of Special Services for domestic customers who are blind or deaf, of pensionable age, disabled, chronically sick or vulnerable.
- Interruptions to Supply
- Accessing your premise.
- Complaints and Customer Satisfaction

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

Whilst OPN 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 OPN puts the above responsibilities into practice.

Electronic copies of this Code of Practice are available to read and download from our website or by emailing your request to OPNGeneralEnquiries@sse.com. One paper of the code of Practice will be provided free of charge per request by contacting us on 0345 078 3237 or by post, fax or email (details of which are outlined in Section 3 below).

OPN 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 is 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 OPN's distribution system; or

- arises from or in connection with the operation of, or otherwise relates to, OPN's distribution system and which causes danger or requires urgent attention or is likely to cause danger or require urgent attention.

OPN provides an emergency fault reporting service which is continuously staffed and can be contacted on 0800 107 6930, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Enquires 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 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 Ofgem and publish on OPN's website.

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 OPN.

Loss of Electricity Supply

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

Urgent Information

If customers have information concerning the safety or security of their supply or of OPN cables, lines or substations, customers should telephone our emergency telephone number 0800 107 6930

Enquiry Service Staff

Call handlers 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 call handlers during widespread interruptions. If technical advice or assistance is required, the enquiry will be passed to an appropriate specialist.

Non-discrimination

OPN 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.

Change of Address or Telephone Number

If we change the address or telephone number of the service, we will take steps to inform stakeholders using the service as soon as is practicable, but in any event prior to such change becoming effective. Changes will be notified on our website, optimalpowernetworks.com, and social media channels twitter.com/op_networks/ and linkedin.com/company/optimal-power-networks/.

3. Contacting Optimal Power Networks

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 emergency regarding the safety of the meter, simply call the National Emergency number 105 from your landline or mobile at any time of the day or night 365 days of the year. Our telephone number: 0800 107 6930, which can be used anytime.

Our Normal Hours Service

To enquire by telephone about our non-emergency services, or if you wish to make a complaint, please telephone us Monday to Friday between 8:30 and 17:00 (8:30am and 5:00pm) on telephone number: 0345 078 3237.

Deaf and Hard of Hearing or Blind and Partially Sighted Customers

If you are a customer who is deaf or you have difficulty hearing, you may contact OPN. When requested we will respond in using a preferred format that suits your needs e.g., Braille, SMS text, audio CD or Easy Read.

Customers whose first language is not English

Customers will be able to contact OPN and ask to speak to someone with who they can discuss their questions or concerns in their first language.

Other Correspondence

To write to us, our address is:

Optimal Power Networks Ltd
1 Forbury Place
Forbury Road
Reading
Berkshire
RG1 3JH

For all other queries please contact our general enquiries telephone service on 0345 078 3237, lines are open 08:30 to 17:00 Monday to Friday. Call charges may vary dependant on your phone contract, please contact your provider for details.

To contact us by e-mail our address is:

For general enquiries - OPNGeneralEnquiries@sse.com

For emergencies - OPNEmergencies@sse.com

For connections - OPNConnections@sse.com

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

The Optimal Power Networks Ltd 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, of pensionable age, disabled, chronically sick or depend on electricity for medical reasons you or a person acting on your behalf 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 (PSR), 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 and how best to prepare.
- 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 unplanned interruption of supply.
- notifying and providing updates of when the supply is likely to be restored and any help that may be able to be provided.

To register with us free of charge please telephone 0345 078 3237 during the hours of 8:30am to 5pm or e-mail OPNGeneralEnquiries@sse.com.

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.

5. Interruptions to Your Supply

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. WE will also publish details of any planned outage on our social media channel twitter.com/op_networks/

Please note that where the interruption of supply is caused by an issue outside of OPN's 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.

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 Healthcare provider 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 you may have. 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 Healthcare provider.

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.

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 for routine maintenance or inspection purposes.

The visit will either be made by one of our staff or a contractor working on our behalf. 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:

- All OPN employees and contractors will show an OPN 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 OPN employees and contractors will be able to inform you of OPN emergency telephone number or general enquiry telephone number.
- All OPN employees and contractors will be able to give you explanations and information on matters relevant to the purpose of their visit.
- OPN 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. OPN 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 appropriately qualified and fully trained for the purpose of their visit and will be 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 4:00pm.

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

Passwords

If you are recorded on the priority services register 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. Once registered, any member of our staff or (our agents) who visits your home, will give the agreed password to prove they are genuine.

To set up your personal password with us please telephone 0345 078 3237 during the hours of 8:30am to 5pm. 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. OPN or our agents will only exercise these rights in extreme situations e.g., inspection of the cable entry point 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

Complaints

We will handle complaints from customers in a sensitive way that seeks to resolve matters at the earliest opportunity.

If you are dissatisfied with OPN for any reason, please feel free to contact us, either by telephone, e-mail or by letter using the general enquiries 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. These are set out in our Appendix A and payments for failing to meet this standard can be checked by visiting [Notice of Rights \(energynetworks.org\)](https://www.energynetworks.org).

If you are concerned about your meter, or your electricity bill please call your Electricity Supplier. You can usually find their contact telephone number for these type of enquiries on your latest electricity bill.

Our members of staff are trained to listen carefully to your complaint in a polite and understanding way. They will give their name (if requested) and may ask you further questions to assist them in fully understanding your complaint or query. If your complaint is relating to a more specific incident or technical enquiry, we may need to pass this on to one of our specialists. Where this is proposed, you will be given their name, designation and an anticipated timescale they will be in contact.

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 these 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 endeavour to 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 OPN in resolving your complaint, you can, at any time, escalate the matter. Full details of how we manage your complaint can be found by visiting [Optimal Power Networks Complaints Procedure - Optimal Power Networks](#). Here you will find out Complaint Handling Statement. If you do not have access to the internet, please call our general enquires team who will be able to arrange a hard copy of the Complaint Handling Statement to be sent out to you.

Appendix A Guaranteed Standards of Service

Guaranteed Standards

OPN are responsible for the safe delivery of electricity through their networks to properties across Great Britain. This appendix explains what the standards of service you can expect from OPN are and outlines the inconvenience payments you could receive if we fail to deliver these standards. It is written in accordance with the Electricity (Standards of Performance) Regulations 2015.

Any payments that you receive under this scheme will not prejudice your entitlement to any other action that you may be entitled to take as a result of failure on our part in accordance with Section 39A(5) of the Electricity Act 1989 (as amended by the Utilities Act 2000).

OPN does not sell electricity directly to consumers but ensures that it is delivered to you. The companies that sell electricity to consumers and send out bills are called electricity suppliers. If you have an enquiry about your bill, your meter or the supplier's Priority Services Register, please contact your electricity supplier. Contact details can be found on your latest electricity bill.

Sometimes the guaranteed standards may not apply due to events beyond our control, such as the actions of third parties, being unable to gain access to our own equipment, being unable to identify the customers affected by supply interruptions and, in some cases, severe weather. If any of these exemptions are invoked, we will need to demonstrate that we had taken all reasonable steps to prevent the exceptional circumstances occurring and to prevent failure of the relevant standard. If you are supplied via a landlord's private cable or a private network (i.e., one that is not operated under an electricity distribution licence), these standards do not apply.

Regulation 5 Supply Restoration – Normal Conditions

If your supply is interrupted due to a problem on our system, we will restore it within 12 hours of becoming aware of the problem.

Payment for failing to meet this standard can be checked by visiting [Notice of Rights \(energynetworks.org\)](https://www.energynetworks.org). This payment must be claimed within three months of supply being restored unless you are a registered priority services customer where we will arrange for you to receive your payment.

Regulation 6 Supply Restoration – Normal Conditions: Incidents affecting 5,000 customers or more

Where under normal conditions, your supply is interrupted and is due to a single failure of, fault in or damage to OPN's distribution system where more than 5,000 properties are affected, we will restore the supply within 24 hours from the time OPN was made aware of the fault.

Payment for failing to meet this standard can be checked by visiting [Notice of Rights \(energynetworks.org\)](https://www.energynetworks.org). This payment must be claimed within three months of supply being restored.

Regulation 7 Supply Restoration –Severe Weather

If your electricity supply fails because of a problem on our distribution system due to severe weather we will restore it within the period prescribed by the Regulations, dependent on the scale of the event.

Category of severe weather	Definition
Category 1 (medium events)	Lightening events – when a distributor experiences at least 8 times the normal amount of higher voltage faults in 1 day, supplies will be restored within 24 hours.
	Non-lightening event – when a distributor experiences 8 or more but fewer than 13 times the normal amount of higher voltage faults in 1 day, supplies will be restored within 24 hours.
Category 2 (large events)	Non-lightening events – when a distributor experiences at least 13 times the normal amount of faults in 1 day, suppliers will be restored within 48 hours.
Category 3 (very large events)	For severe weather events affecting a very large number of customers as specified in the Regulations – supplies will be restored within a period as calculated using a formula based on the number of customers affected as set out in the Regulations.

Payment for failing to meet this standard can be checked by visiting [Notice of Rights \(energynetworks.org\)](http://energynetworks.org).

Regulation 8 Supply Restoration- Rota Disconnection

On very rare occasions there may be supply shortages in your locality and your electricity supply may need to be interrupted on a rota basis in order to share the available load. We aim to minimise the amount of time that your supply would be affected in such cases. If your supply is interrupted as a result of rota disconnection actioned by OPN, we will restore supply within 24 hours of the rota block disconnection ending.

Payment for failing to meet this standard can be checked by visiting [Notice of Rights \(energynetworks.org\)](http://energynetworks.org). Payments must be claimed within three months of the incident.

Regulation 10 Supply Restoration- Multiple interruptions

If your supply is interrupted for three hours or more on four separate occasions in one 12-month period (beginning on 1st April), you are entitled to make a claim.

Payment for failing to meet this standard can be checked by visiting [Notice of Rights \(energynetworks.org\)](http://energynetworks.org). You will need to include the address affected and the dates on which the failures occurred on your claim. Incidents for which a payment has already been made, or where we have provided prior notice of the interruption cannot be included in your claim.

Regulation 11 Distributor’s Fuse

If you report information that leads us to believe that the main fuse between the incoming supply cable and your meter has or might have failed, we will attend your premises within 3 hours on weekdays if you notify us between 7am and 7pm. At weekends and on bank holidays we will attend within 4 hours if you contact us between 9am and 5pm. If you notify us outside these times, we will treat your call as if we had received it at the start of the next day.

Payment for failing to meet this standard can be checked by visiting [Notice of Rights \(energynetworks.org\)](https://energynetworks.org).

Regulation 12 Notice of Supply Interruption

We will give you at least two calendar days' notice if we intend to switch off your supply to carry out work on our network.

Payment for failing to meet this standard can be checked by visiting [Notice of Rights \(energynetworks.org\)](https://energynetworks.org). If for some reason we are unable to give you two days' notice of an interruption to your supply, we will give you as much notice as possible. This payment must be claimed within one month of the planned supply interruption.

Regulation 13 Voltage Complaints

If you contact us to report that your supply is or was outside the permitted voltage range, or if an event that you report leads us to believe that your supply is or was outside the permitted voltage range, we will either offer to visit your premises within seven working days, or if a visit is not necessary dispatch an explanation within 5 working days.

Payment for failing to meet this standard: £30 for both domestic and non-domestic customers.

Regulation 17 Making Appointments

If we need to visit your property, or if you request a visit from us, we will offer you a timeslot within a reasonable period, either in the morning or the afternoon. Please note that this regulation does not apply to a visit arising out of the application of the Electricity (Connection Standards of Performance) Regulations 2015.

Payment for failing to meet this standard can be checked by visiting [Notice of Rights \(energynetworks.org\)](https://energynetworks.org).

Regulation 19 Payments owed under the Guaranteed Standards

Where a payment becomes due under regulation 5 to 8 (inclusive) 10, 11, 12, 14, 15 and 17 we will make it either to you or your supplier within 10 working days of being made aware of the failure or 10 working from the date we receive your claim. In the case of Regulation 7 (Supply Restoration – Severe Weather) we will make the payment within a reasonable period.

Payment for failing to meet this standard can be checked by visiting [Notice of Rights \(energynetworks.org\)](https://energynetworks.org).

Claiming a Payment

If you would like to make a claim under Regulations 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 or 12, please contact us in writing using the address listed in this document and include as much information as possible regarding your claim to enable us to process it promptly. If you disagree and cannot reach agreement with us about whether you should receive a payment, you may refer the case to the Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (Ofgem), the independent regulator for the electricity industry, to request a formal decision.

Exceptional Circumstances

The Electricity (Standards of Performance) Regulations 2015 detail a number of circumstances where the Guaranteed Standards may not apply. These include:

- Where you inform us that you do not want us to take any action or further action.
- Where you agree that any action we have taken (or promise to take) meets the requirements of the guaranteed standard. If we have promised to take action as part of this exemption, we shall do so promptly.
- Where, if we need information from you in order to meet our guaranteed standard, you either telephone a number or send the information to an address other than the one we have provided.
- Where, in the case of voltage complaints, you contact us outside our working hours.
- If supply is to an island via an underwater cable and there is no other alternative means of connection normally available to us, where the failure, fault or damage on the cable is below the high-water mark of spring tides.
- Where we could not have reasonably been expected to meet the guaranteed standard (despite efforts on our part) due to –
 - Severe weather;
 - Industrial action by our employees;
 - The action of a third party;
 - Inability to gain access to relevant premises;
 - The likelihood of us breaking the law if we complied;
 - The effects of an event for which the emergency regulations have been made under part 2 of the Civil Contingencies Act 2004;
 - Other exceptional circumstances beyond our control.

If we invoke any of the exemptions laid out in the Regulations, we are required to demonstrate that we have taken all reasonable steps to prevent failure.