



Meter Chamber Debris & Cover Guidance

Metering Committee Quick Start Project 6: Hard to Read Meters

Version 2.1 – January 2024



Meter debris and cover guidance

Purpose

This guide aims to increase the number of successful meter reads entering the non-household (NHH) market by clarifying whether a retailer (or their agent) or wholesaler is responsible for clearing the debris or lifting a cover from a meter chamber in a range of scenarios.

This guide has been developed by the Metering Committee on behalf of the Strategic Panel. Trading parties are encouraged to use this guide and the examples included as a reference to help resolve issues. All bilateral requests should be complete and include photographic evidence.

Background

Retailers are required to read NHH customers' meters at least once a year. Common reasons why meters are not read successfully is because of 'debris in the meter chamber', or the cover cannot be lifted which a Retailer will raise a bilateral request for a Wholesaler to resolve.

The Wholesaler is responsible for ensuring the meter is accessible, the cover meets the applicable British Standard and that the chamber is free from large amounts of debris that cannot be easily removed by the Retailer, their agents, or NHH customers.

However, whether the volume or nature of the debris is sufficient to prevent a meter reading being taken within a reasonable timeframe (e.g. <10 minutes), or the meter reader has the correct lifting equipment and therefore whose responsibility it is to resolve the issue, can be a subjective area.

As always, trading parties are expected to continue working together constructively to address metering issues appropriately and in accordance with the responsibilities and obligations set out in the market codes. Where a customer's actions prevent access to the meter, then the Wholesaler and Retailer must work together to resolve.

Responsibility for meter readings

Water wholesalers in the non-household (NHH) market are responsible for owning and maintaining infrastructure assets including meters. Retailers are responsible for reading customers' meters and often use specialist contractors to do so on their behalf.

Wholesalers *can* take meter readings and enter them directly into CMOS (i.e. via a 'W read'), but it is not an obligation. Customers can also submit meter readings to their Retailers.

Meters and their chambers/covers should always be installed in such a way to always aid the reading of that meter. This may also include the use of technology such as Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI/'smart'), Automatic Meter Readings (AMR) or wall-mounted boxes. Wholesalers should work closely with their New Connections teams to ensure this is the case.

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Compacted, dangerous and contaminated material

The Wholesaler is responsible for the meter chamber and therefore should support the Retailer in removing any compacted or contaminated material.

Certain materials such as petrochemicals, sharps (i.e., hypodermic needles) or asbestos may pose a risk to the water supply, human health and/or the environment if not disposed of correctly.

If a Retailer (or their agents) find contaminated materials in a meter chamber when taking a reading, they should notify the Wholesaler as soon as possible via the MOSL Bilateral Hub. The Wholesaler will have procedures in place to safely and effectively clear and dispose of such contaminated materials.

When not to deem a meter 'hard to read due to debris'

A meter should not be deemed as 'hard to read due to debris or cover' in instances where the meter read provider is not carrying the appropriate equipment.

A useful reference document is the [RWG Metering Standards Good Practice Guide](#), which provides guidance in relation to meter reading services with a view to encouraging a standardised and consistent approach where possible. It also includes roles and responsibilities for reading meters, including the health and safety aspects.

Please also note that:

- Where there has been a period of heavy rain fall and the chamber is flooded then the initial advice should be to attempt to read again later rather than raise a request straight away
- Reference should be given to issues such as overgrown hedges and including the scenario where the customer does not realise the chamber and cover belong to Wholesaler and has exchanged it themselves for a heavy non-standard cover which neither party is able to access the chamber/site. All parties should work together to resolve.

Feedback

This document will be reviewed annually. If you have any feedback or wish to provide examples of debris in meter chambers or difficult to lift covers that would be helpful to add, please email comms@mosl.co.uk. Please note that we will need photographs.

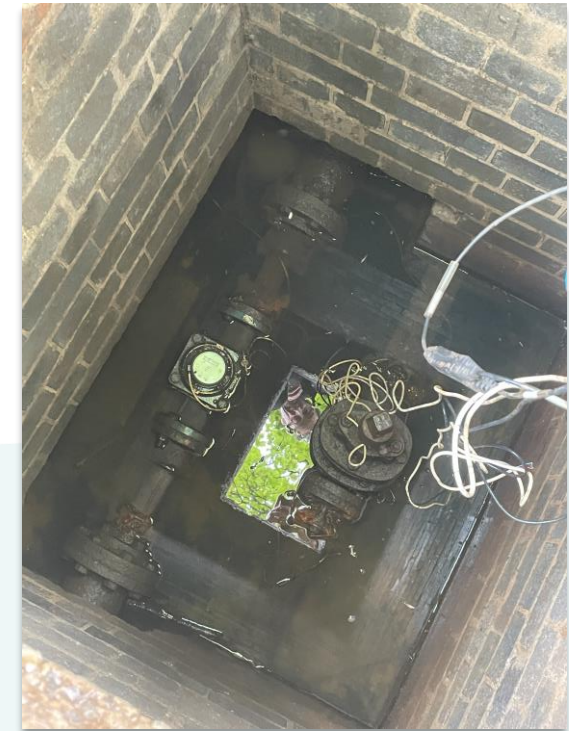
Issue 1:	Significant rock/stone/concrete debris in chamber
Responsibility:	Wholesaler
Rationale:	There is a greater amount of compacted debris than a meter reader should be expected to remove or clear.



Issue 2:	Significant soil debris in meter chamber
Responsibility:	Wholesaler
Rationale:	There is a greater amount of compacted material than a meter reader should be expected to remove or clear.



Issue: 4	Significant water in meter chamber <u>over</u> 1m in depth
Responsibility:	Wholesaler
Rationale:	<p>Greater amount of water than a meter reader should be expected to pump out or clear to access the meter.</p> <p>Please note: where there has been a period of heavy rain fall and the chamber is flooded, the reader should attempt to read the meter a few days later</p>



Issue:	Water in meter chamber <u>under</u> 1m in depth
Responsibility:	Retailer
Rationale:	An amount of water and at a depth that it is reasonable to expect a meter reader to be able to pump out to clear.



Issue: 5	Significant material covering the meter chamber
Responsibility:	Retailer to lead resolution
Rationale:	<p>The retailer’s customer has covered the meter with an amount of material that a meter reader could not be reasonably expected to move/remove.</p> <p>Wholesalers are expected to support where the material on top of the chamber belongs to a third party and not the customer being supplied via the meter. These are examples where wholesalers and retailers working together will benefit all parties.</p>



Issue:	Where the meter is over 1.2m deep or requires working at height
Responsibility:	Wholesaler
Rationale:	Meters should be easily accessed. Where the meter is deeper than 1.2m or requires a working at height assessment then alternative methods of read should be put in place, e.g. AMR/AMI/Raise or Lower Meter



Issue:	Chamber Covers Bolted in Place (updated)
Responsibility:	Wholesaler
Rationale:	Chamber covers should be easily lifted using standard lifting equipment. Where covers must be bolted down then alternative methods of read should be in place, e.g. AMR/AMI/Change location



Issue:	Non-Standard Lift Chamber Covers (updated)
Responsibility:	Wholesaler
Rationale:	Chamber covers should be easily lifted using standard lifting equipment (including 2 person lifts). Where a heavy-duty cover has sections that are bolted in place or tripods are required to lift covers then alternative methods of read should be in place, e.g. AMR/AMI/Change location





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