How to read your electricity meter

Keeping track of your electricity bills is very important. Whether you pay by direct debit or quarterly bills, most bills are based on estimated readings. This means that you could be paying too much, or sometimes too little, in which case you might be in for a nasty surprise.

➢ Unless you are on a pre-payment meter or a Smart meter, there are four main types of electricity meter:

- ❖ The single rate digital meter
- ❖ Two rate digital meter
- ❖ Two rate single display meter
- ❖ The dial meter

➢ This guide tells you how to read these types of meter. Increasingly, energy companies are fitting Smart meters which should send in automatic readings. You can still read these yourself, but there are many different kinds of Smart meter and your supplier will need to tell you how to read these meters.

➢ The following instructions have been taken from the Citizens Advice Website:

https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer/energy/energy-supply/your-energy-meter/how-to-read-your-energy-meter/

Single rate digital meter

➢ A digital meter will have an electronic or digital display, showing five numbers in black or white, which may be followed by one or more red numbers – see Figure 1.
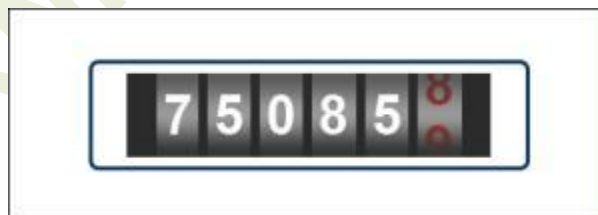

Figure 1 – Single rate meter

➢ To read the meter:

- ❖ write down the five numbers shown from left to right
- ❖ ignore any other numbers which may be shown in red

➢ In the diagram, the meter reading is **75085**.

Two rate digital meter

➢ If you get lower price, off-peak electricity, your meter may have two rows of numbers – see Figure 2.

Figure 2 – Single rate meter

➢ The top row (marked low or night) shows how many units of off-peak electricity you have used. The bottom row (marked normal or day) shows how many units of peak electricity you have used.

➢ To read the meter, read both the top and bottom rows:

   ❖ write down the numbers shown left to right
   ❖ ignore the last number(s) which may be shown in red.

➢ In the diagram, the readings are **75085** and **48124**. You need to give both readings to your supplier.
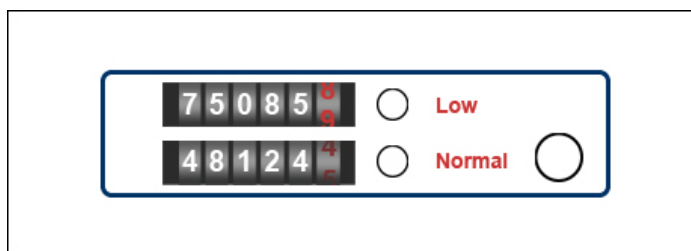
Two rate single display meter

➢ Some two rate meters only have one digital display. They will either flash up the different rate readings in a cycle or have a button that you need to press to make the display cycle through the readings for the different rates – see Figure 3.

Figure 3 – Single rate single display meter

➢ To read the meter write down the numbers shown left to right, for each row.

➢ In the diagram, the readings are **24504** and **54250**. You will need to give both readings to your supplier.
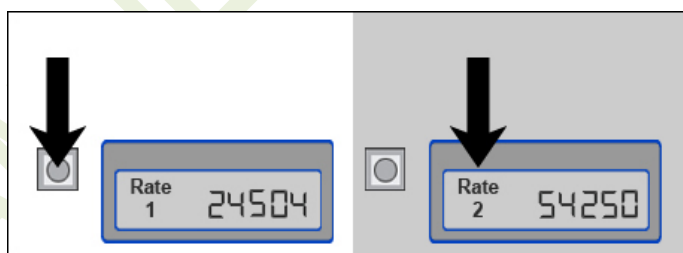
Dial meter

➢ A dial meter has five or more dials, which each turn to point to a number between 0 and 9 – See Figure 4.

➢ To read the meter:

   ❖ read the first five dials from left to right
   ❖ ignore the dial marked 1/10 (if there is one)
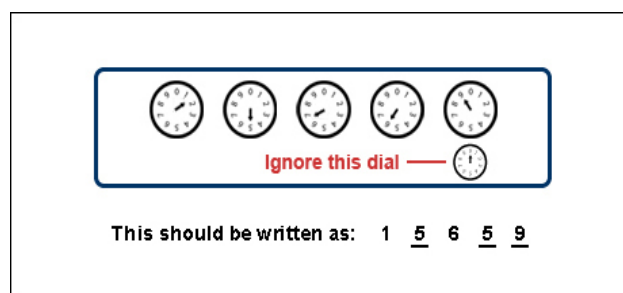   ❖ write down the number that the pointer has just passed

Figure 4 – Dial meter electricity

- ❖ if the pointer is exactly over the number, write it down and underline it. If you have underlined a number, check the next dial to the right. If the pointer on that dial is at 9 you need to reduce the number you have underlined by one. For example, a 6 followed by a 9 should be written as a 5 and underlined.
- ❖ In the diagram, the meter reading is **15659**

If you have a Smart meter

- ➤ Smart meters are designed to automatically communicate with your supplier, so you shouldn't need to submit readings. Most offer a display unit that means you can keep an eye on your consumption.

- ➤ However, you should be aware that there are relatively high error levels in the display unit which means that unless you read the actual meter, which is what determines your bills, you may not be seeing the correct consumption data.

- ➤ To read the Smart meter, how you do this depends on the type of Smart meter you've got. This site explains how you can do this:

  https://smarterbusiness.co.uk/blogs/how-to-read-a-smart-meter/#:~:text=How%20to%20read%20smart%20electricity%20meter%20with%20a,are%20your%20meter%20reading%3B%20in%20this%20case%2C%20

- ➤ If you are thinking of getting a Smart meter fitted, make sure to get a second-generation Smart meter, known as a 'SMETS2" meter. Older Smart meters can cause some problems if you decide to switch suppliers.

- ➤ Whatever kind of meter you are on, if you are a pensioner, have long-term ill health, are registered disabled or have a hearing or visual impairment, you may be eligible for additional help with energy issues. See Factsheet 8, *Priority Services Register*.

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