

Memo

To All metering equipment providers
Copies All retailers
From Grant Benvenuti
Manager Market Operations
Date 26 July 2017
Subject Expectation on use of the AMI flag in the registry, and determining if an AMI meter is non-communicating

One of the attributes recorded in the registry by metering equipment providers (MEPs) is the “AMI flag”. The AMI flag indicates that a metering component is an advanced metering infrastructure component. Under clause 7(1) of Schedule 11.4 of the Electricity Industry Participation Code 2010 (Code), a MEP must provide to the registry the information indicated in Table 1 as being “Required”. Row 18 of Table 1 of Schedule 11.4 of the Code requires MEPs to populate this flag in the registry.

AMI meters

An ATH must identify the services access interface when it certifies a metering installation. The “services access interface” is the point at which a trader can access services from the metering installation. If raw meter data can be accessed from a MEP’s back office system, eg, an AMI component that is being used to provide half hour raw meter data, the services access interface will usually be the MEP’s back office system.

This is due to the programming, mapping, and interrogation requirements that are usually unique to a MEP’s back office system and the configuration of the meter. If the services access interface is at the MEP’s back office system, then the meter is an AMI meter and the AMI flag must be set to “Y”.

Non-AMI meters

For non-AMI meters (including “C&I” meters):

- the raw meter data may be accessed from either the meter registers or from a modem
- programming, mapping, and interrogation are not tied to the one system.

Non-AMI meters must have the AMI flag set as “N”.

Meter reads from AMI meters

The AMI flag on the registry is used to indicate that a component within the metering installation is AMI. For meters with an AMI flag set to “Y”, the trader will expect to obtain access to raw meter data from the MEPs back office system. If a metering installation with an AMI flag set to “Y” fails to communicate, a trader can expect that a MEP will manually read the meter and provide reads via the services access interface (ie, the MEP’s back office system).

Investigating communications issues

The Code does not directly specify the timeframe the MEP has to investigate failed communication attempts and to determine whether the meter is non-AMI. However, the maximum interrogation cycle specifies the time in which the meter must be read. A determination must be made before this date to ensure the trader knows who will be responsible for meter reading.

Additionally, clause 11.2 of the Code requires MEPs to correct information provided to the registry, if necessary, as soon as practicable.

As the smart meter rollouts have progressed there is an increasing expectation of meters being interrogated and data being made available more regularly than once a month. Also, there are more retailers reliant on very regular data flows and communication with the meter. As a result, the Authority believes that the maximum interrogation cycle is too long to be the default timeframe for failed communication investigations.

Expectations for investigation and updating of the registry

The Authority expects that failed communication attempts will be investigated in a timely manner. Clause 11.2 (2) requires corrections to the information in the registry 'as soon as practicable'. The Authority considers that, unless exceptional circumstances apply, it is reasonable to expect that 'as soon as practicable' means:

- Where meters are interrogated daily, MEPs will trigger an investigation of repeated failures to communicate after no more than one week with no communication.
- Where meters are not interrogated daily, MEPs will trigger an investigation of repeated failures to communicate after no more than three consecutive failed attempts, but within 31 days of the first communication failure.
- Investigations should begin immediately and conclude within three business days even if a site visit is required. If site access is not available and the meter is still not communicating, the meter should be designated as AMI="N" until a site visit can be arranged.
- If communications cannot be restored and the services access interface will not be the MEP's back office system, the registry should be updated as soon as practicable after the investigation is completed, but within three business days.

The Authority intends to propose a Code change to clarify the timeframes for completing an investigation and updating the registry, and will be using the above expectations as the basis for consultation on the proposed Code change.