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From: GSH
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Cc: Director
Subject: REPLACEMENT OF ELECTRICITY METERS FOR NON-DOMESTIC CONSUMERS



REPLACEMENT OF ELECTRICITY MET...

PRESS BRIEFING ON REPLACEMENT OF ELECTRICITY METERS WITH NEW INTERVAL METERS FOR NON-DOMESTIC CONSUMERS

1. Introduction

The Energy Market Authority (EMA) is restructuring the electricity market to enable consumers to buy electricity from retailers of their choice at competitive prices. Under the new electricity retail market, more consumers will be able to choose from a range of electricity supply companies starting with the large industrial consumers and eventually all households. The EMA will run programmes to inform and help prepare all consumers to enter the new retail market.

2. The New Electricity Retail Market

Currently, consumers with a maximum power requirement exceeding 5 MW can buy electricity from electricity retailers of their choice. The electricity retail market will be further opened to competition in three phases:

Initially, all high tension and extra high tension consumers, and non-domestic low tension consumers with an annual consumption exceeding 240,000 kWh would be able to choose their retailers at the end of this year.

In Phase II, non-domestic low tension consumers with an annual consumption exceeding 120,000 kWh would be able to choose retailers in the first half of 2002.

The rest of the one million consumers would be open to competitive retailing in Phase III by 2003.

3. Need to Install Interval Meters

To prepare for Phases I & II of retail competition, the existing electricity meters at the premises of the relevant consumers will have to be replaced by new meters which can measure electricity consumption at half-hourly intervals and have this data read remotely.

These new meters (ie the interval meters) will also enable the retailers to offer a host of customer services such as price-induced load management and risk management in the liberalised retail market.

4. Meter Replacement Schedule

Currently all high tension and extra high tension consumers already have interval meters. In April 2001, PowerGrid Ltd has commenced replacing the existing meters of large low-tension consumers under the Phase I programme with the new interval meters. The meter replacement for Phase II will be carried out later this year.

For the rest of the one million small consumers, mainly households under the Phase III programme, pending further study a decision will be taken later on whether their half-hourly electricity consumption would be measured using interval meters or approximated from their monthly consumption by profiling their loads.

5. Telephone Lines for Remote Reading of Interval Meters

Interval meters are read remotely each day through telephone lines. As part of the exercise to replace the meters, PowerGrid Ltd will also bear the cost for connecting the new interval meters to consumers' telephone lines within the same building for remote reading. PowerGrid Ltd will inform the consumers of the schedule to install the new meters and connect them to the consumers' telephone lines.

Should any of these consumers decide to connect their telephone lines to the new meters after the dates scheduled by PowerGrid Ltd, they will have to make their own arrangements for the connection at their own cost.

Separately, EMA will be contacting the relevant consumers at a later date to brief them and help them prepare to buy electricity in the new electricity market.

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For enquiries, please contact:

Mrs Choo Wai Chan, Head (Public Relations)

Tel: 8358011 Email: choo_wai_chan@ema.gov.sg

Ms Angela Soo, Senior Officer (Public Relations)

Tel: 8358012 Email: angela_soo@ema.gov.sg