



Complaints Handling Procedure

DOC-020322-HKD

**Distribution System Operator
ESB Networks**

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Revision History of this Document

Revision	Date	Compiled by	Description
Revision 0	18/09/01	Cormac Madden	Version submitted for consultation
Revision 1	1/3/02	Siobhan Wynne	Amendments made to cover the Commission's comments

1.0 About this document

Under the terms of the Distribution System Operator (DSO) licence, ESB is required to prepare a Complaints Handling Procedure and submit it to the Commission for approval.

1.1. Context

The Distribution business of ESB has had a defined Complaints handling Procedure for some time. In late 1997, ESB appointed a Complaints Arbitrator with staff and facilities and implemented a complaints information system.

With the establishment of the Commission for Electricity Regulation 1999, customers have a new recourse in the event of a complaint. Since market opening in 2000, ESB as Distribution System Operator has provided distribution services to a new type of 'customer': electricity suppliers.

With these changes, it is important that the Complaints Handling Procedure is re-formulated and a version be approved by the Commission.

1.2. Scope

The Complaints Handling Procedure covers the 'services provided to customers and users by the Licensee's Distribution Business.'

Customers and Users covered under the Procedure:

- Demand customers connected to or applying for connection to the Distribution System.
- All suppliers of such customers.
- Generators connected to or applying for connection to the Distribution System.

Services covered under the Procedure are all those services involved in the operation, maintenance and development of the Distribution System:

- New connections
- Network repairs
- Outages
- Metering
- Communications with customers and users
- Service levels.

1.3 Associated Documentation

Documents associated with the is Procedure are:

Table 1. Documents associated with this Procedure

No.	Document	Source	Comment
1.	Distribution System Customer Service Code ('Customer Charter')	ESB	
2.	Distribution System Operator Licence granted to Electricity Supply Board.	Commission for Electricity Regulation	

2.0 Glossary of Terms

A glossary or terms is listed in Table 2.

Table 2. Glossary of Terms

No.	Term	Definition	Reference
1.	Demand Customer	The occupant of a premises connected to the Distribution System and importing electricity through the connection point or the owner of a premises seeking such a connection. In the cases of unoccupied installations, the business or person operating the installation. For simplicity, the customer is the person with whom ESB has a Connection Agreement.	
2.	User	Any party using the Distribution System e.g. demand customer, generator or supplier.	

3.0 Main principles

The principles behind this Procedure are listed in Table 3. In deciding on the correct response to a complaint, these are the principles that will be taken into account.

Table 3 Main principles

No.	Principle	Description
1.	Fairness	ESB has an obligation not to discriminate unfairly between persons or classes of persons.
2.	Courtesy	Customers and users are entitled to courtesy in their communications with ESB.
3.	Ethical behaviour	ESB will operate in an ethical manner at all times.
4.	Safety	Safety of customers, users, the public and employees is paramount. Responses to complaints will not compromise safety.
5.	Security	ESB has an obligation to operate a secure system.
6.	Reliability	ESB has an obligation to operate a secure system.
7.	Economy	ESB has an obligation to operate its business in an economical manner.
8.	Efficiency	ESB has an obligation to operate its system in an efficient manner.
9.	Confidentiality	DSO will preserve the confidentiality of the details of the complaint unless the Customer or User requests otherwise.

4.0 Detailed Procedure

The detailed aspects of the code are set out below.

Table 4 Notice of de-energisation

No.	Step	Comment	DSO response
1.	Initial complaint Complaints in relation to regulatory or ring-fencing issues	<p>For efficiency and speed, it is preferable to make your complaint to the person who provided you with a service or his/her local management or the contact centre in the first instance. Most complaints are resolved at this level.</p> <p>Early communication of your complaint is recommended while memories are fresh. The Complaints Arbitrator operates a time limit of 6 months.</p> <p>If a complaint is in relation to a regulatory or ring-fencing issue, it can be referred directly to the Commission.</p>	<p>Listen. Carefully gather as much information on the circumstances as possible.</p> <p>Identify the ESB record, if any, of the original service call or job, etc. Seek to resolve the complaint at this stage.</p> <p>Otherwise, record the complaint on the Complaints System. Transfer the complaint to the appropriate person for information or approval.</p>
2.	Escalated complaint	If the complainant is not satisfied with the response, s/he will be advised to escalate the complaint to the next level – senior local contact.	If possible resolve the complaint at this stage.
3.	Complaints Arbitrator	A dissatisfied complainant may then take the complaint to the Complaints Arbitrator who will adjudicate on any dispute. The decision of the Complaints Arbitrator will be binding on ESB but not on the Customer or User.	Provide copies of all information on the service call or job to the Complaints Arbitrator's office. Co-operate with the Complaints Arbitrator.
4.	Records		<p>Records are maintained of all complaints and their handling.</p> <p>The Complaints Arbitrator reports on numbers categories and trends in his Annual Report.</p> <p>DSO to provide annual report on Escalated Complaints to the Commission.</p>
5.	Service improvement		The root causes of

Table 4 Notice of de-energisation

No.	Step	Comment	DSO response
			complaints are studied in order to establish if process improvement can 'design the problem out'. If so, the business process concerned is modified.

Note: Customers and Users have the right at any stage to bring their complaint to the Commission for Electricity Regulation.