



**NIAUR**  
**Social Action Plan**  
**Workshop**  
**1 June 2009**





# Introduction

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Northern Ireland Electricity (NIE) is the “wires” business of the Viridian Group. We own the electricity infrastructure that transmits and distributes electricity in Northern Ireland. That is, we are responsible for getting electricity from the generators to homes and non-domestic premises across the country.

NIE is not a supply company – we do not bill end users for electricity. Of course the costs of running the network are included in electricity bills (NIE’s costs account for c21% of your bill).

Our primary responsibility is to develop and maintain that electricity infrastructure efficiently and economically and we are accountable for that to the Utility Regulator.





# Standards of Service

NIE operates to a range of statutory standards of customer service, for example:

- restoring electricity supplies within 24 hours following a fault
- restoring 87% of all customers within 3 hours following a fault

NIE also operates to a range of statutory standards. If we fail to meet these standards you will be due a payment from NIE. These are our commitments to you, the payments due and the action you need to take.

OUR GUARANTEED STANDARDS AT A GLANCE			
Guaranteed standard	Timescale	Payment Due on Default	Action
1. Replacing your main fuse	3 hours during a working day 4 hours on any other day	£25	no action - payment is automatic
2. Restoring your electricity following a fault	24 hours	£50 (domestic) £125 (non-domestic) (extra £25 for every 12 hours your electricity stays off after first 24 hours)	you must make your claim within 1 month of electricity being restored
3. Installing a meter and turning on your supply. Keeping an agreed appointment	2 working days (domestic) 4 working days (non-domestic)	£25 £50 (domestic) £125 (non-domestic)	no action - payment is automatic
4. Providing you with a cost estimate for a new electricity supply	7 working days (small jobs) 15 working days (larger jobs)	£50	no action - payment is automatic
5. Notifying you of a planned interruption in your electricity supply	3 days	£25 (domestic) £50 (non-domestic)	you must make your claim within 1 month of the date of interruption
6. Dealing with a complaint about your electricity voltage	7 working days to make an appointment 5 working days to offer an explanation if a visit is not required	£25 £25 (appointment not kept)	no action - payment is automatic
7. Meter accuracy queries	7 working days to make an appointment 5 working days to offer an explanation if a visit is not required	£25 £25 (appointment not kept)	no action - payment is automatic
8. Queries about your bill and standard payments	5 working days 5 working days to make a refund if this is due	£25	no action - payment is automatic
9. Keeping an appointment	AM (8.30am - 1.00pm) or PM (12 noon - 5.00pm)	£25	no action - payment is automatic
10. Making standard payments	10 working days	£25	no action - payment is automatic
11. Dealing with a problem with your pre-payment	3 hours during a working day 4 hours on any other day	£25	no action - payment is automatic

While we do our utmost to meet or exceed these standards, some situations are outside our control and therefore these standards will not apply. Examples of such circumstances include severe weather, industrial action, civil unrest, actions or defaults by others and the inability to gain access to premises.

Issued by Northern Ireland Electricity, 120 Malone Road, Belfast, BT9 5HT. A member of the Viridian Group PLC





# Maintenance and Investment

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NIE is committed to providing a reliable supply of electricity to its customers. In order to achieve this, NIE has an ongoing programme of maintenance to its network which includes refurbishing the overhead lines and extensive tree cutting.

## **Example – 11,000 volt network**

On average over the course of a 15 year cycle, NIE aims to refurbish the 11,000 volt network (c21,000km of overhead line and 250,000 poles). Other maintenance/ investment is carried out as required within the 15 year cycle.





# Failure of Supply

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Regardless of how much we invest in the network, failure of supply is on occasions inevitable.

NIE has a particular concern about vulnerable customers who depend on their electricity supply for use of medical equipment such as:

- oxygen concentrator
- personal suction machine
- home dialysis
- peg tube feeding pump
- electric hoist
- ventilator
- nebuliser
- electric pressure relieving mattress
- household lift





# Critical Care Registration Form

*NIE In Touch with you* **Critical Care Register**

## Critical Care Customers



**“ Being informed  
allows me to be  
in control ”**

**Critical Care Register**

Northern Ireland Electricity offers a critical care information service to customers who are dependent on life supporting electrical equipment.

**Life supporting electrical equipment**

If you depend on electrical equipment, that is vital to your health, we would like you to register with us. We can provide you with the most up to date information during a power cut or a planned interruption.

**Customer Helpline**  
**08457 643 643**







# Critical Care Register

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## What is it?

- Priority information service for customers dependent on life supporting electrical equipment.
- For registered customers, we will recognise their telephone number when they call us and their call will be given priority.
- We will provide regular updates throughout the duration of the power cut.
- This will help customers make an informed choice whether to make alternative arrangements (customers need to have their own emergency plan in place).





# Critical Care Register

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## **Planned interruption of supply**

In the event of an interruption planned by NIE we will contact Critical Care Customers at least three days beforehand and inform them of the expected duration of the interruption; in writing and by telephone.

## **Nominated carer**

Critical Care Customers can provide us with details of a relative or carer as an alternative, if we are unable to make direct contact with them.

## **Confidentiality**

Customers are assured that the register is confidential and that their details are kept private and that only nominated NIE staff have access to their information.

## **Annual update**

We contact customers annually, in writing, to confirm if any of their details have changed and need to be updated.





# Critical Care Register

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## **How do we communicate the services available?**

Details of how to join NIE's Critical Care Scheme are outlined on the NIE website ([www.nie.co.uk](http://www.nie.co.uk)).

Customers who contact NIE during a fault and who have a critical requirement for electricity, are added to our Critical Care Register.

Where, during our daily interaction with customers, we identify a critical requirement for electricity, then these customers are added to our Critical Care Register.





# Critical Care Register

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## **How do we communicate the services available?**

The number of customers on the Critical Care Register has increased steadily over recent years (currently c2,600) but we need to manage the 'criteria' so as to maximise the level of service that can be provided to customers on the register.

NIE has, in the past, issued critical care leaflets to Health Trusts and to hospitals, however a more coordinated approach with all relevant bodies would help to target those customers who would benefit most from this service.





## Other Services Provided by NIE

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Personal safety is of major concern to many vulnerable customers. We have all heard at least one story about a vulnerable person who has been robbed by someone claiming to be an NIE or other utility employee.

Staff identification - all staff carry an official ID pass, marked with their name and company logo. Customers are encouraged to report any suspicious callers to the PSNI or to contact Northern Ireland Electricity on 08457 643643 to confirm staff identification.

We also work with the PSNI 'QUICK CHECK' service and specific schemes offered by electricity suppliers, for example, NIE Energy's password scheme where customers can provide a password which will be confirmed by the meter reader when they call.





# Other Services Provided by NIE

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## **'Help the Aged' Magazine Article January '09**

### **Knock, knock?**

**Who's there? That's the question that Northern Ireland Electricity is encouraging all householders to ask when a caller comes to the door.**

**Due to increasing incidents of criminals claiming to be from NIE calling at homes around Northern Ireland, the company has issued additional advice on how to identify a genuine meter reader or electricity worker. The company is strongly urging householders to confirm the identity of anyone on their property.**

**All Northern Ireland Electricity staff carry an official identification pass, marked with the company logo. Firstly, check the picture matches the caller. If you're still unsure, ask the caller to pass you the badge and call the NIE Customer Helpline on 08457 643643. The call handler will be able to check the details on the pass.**

**"We take the safety of our customers very seriously. Our staff expect to be asked for ID and will offer it readily, so please don't be embarrassed to check."**





## Regular Advice Issued to Media

### NIE issues new advice after bogus callers in Lisburn

NORTHERN Ireland Electricity are urging householders to be on the alert for bogus callers and ask all callers for identity after two incidents in Lisburn last week.

And following the incidents NIE is issuing additional advice on how to identify a genuine meter reader or electricity worker.

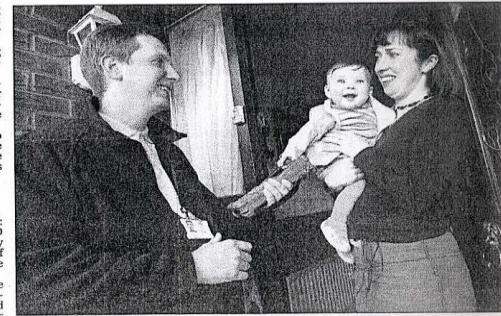
The company is strongly urging householders to confirm the identity of anyone on their property and say all their staff carry an official identification pass, marked with the company logo.

You can check this by asking the caller to pass you the identification badge and call the NIE Customer Helpline on 08457 643643. The call handler will be able to check the details on the pass.

#### Safety

Tom Doran, Metering Manager said: "Homeowners should always ask to see an ID card before allowing entry. We take the safety of our customers very seriously. Our staff expect to be asked for ID, so please don't be embarrassed to check."

"Recent incidents appear to be targeting the elderly so we would ask friends and neighbours to be particularly vigilant and would



### 'Always ask to see ID' - NIE

FOLLOWING concern from residents in the Lisburn area, Northern Ireland Electricity has issued advice on meter reading for local customers.

Tom Doran, Metering Manager said: "All Northern Ireland Electricity staff carry an official identification pass, marked with

their name and Company logo. Homeowners should always ask to see this ID card before allowing entry."

Customers are encouraged to report any suspicious callers to the PSNI or to contact Northern Ireland Electricity on 08457 643643.





# Other Services Provided by NIE

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**Minicom 24 hour service for customers with hearing difficulties.**

**Publications in other languages for ethnic groups:**

- Code of Practice on Making a Complaint
- Customer Charter
- Customer Standards of Service

**Contact Details for NIE:**

- Stephen Harper – Distribution Service Centre Manager
- David Keys – Customer Relations Manager