



Northern Ireland Residential Electricity Customers

# Code of Practice for Services to Prepayment Meter Customers

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## Code of Practice for Services to Prepayment Meter Customers

This Code of Practice outlines services provided for Pay as You Go Keypad Meter customers by Electric Ireland. This Code applies to Northern Ireland Residential customers only.

Electric Ireland provides Pay as You Go Keypad Meter meter arrangements for customers. Using a KeyPad prepayment meter provides an easy Pay As You Go method of purchasing your electricity – similar to Pay As You Go mobile phone payment arrangements.

Any domestic customer can choose to have a Pay As You Go solution installed – please contact our Customer Service team on 0345 600 5335 (Mon - Fri 08:30 - 19:00) who will arrange an appointment with NIE to install a Pay As You Go Keypad meter subject to suitable wiring, quickly and without disruption to your electricity supply.

Pay As You Go meters allow you to take control of your energy requirements. For elderly or disabled customers Electric Ireland will arrange for the provision of special controls or adaptors and repositioning of meters to enable the customer to operate the meter, if required.

### Some of the advantages of Pay As You Go meters are:

- ▶ In-home display of electricity usage to monitor and manage usage. Most meters can hold up to 13 months of data.
- ▶ In-home display of remaining credit to manage purchases.
- ▶ Audible alarm and emergency credit facilities built in.
- ▶ Top ups are available from a range of local sources.
- ▶ Pay As You Go Keypad Meters are installed free of charge. (Note: Installation is dependent on suitable wiring in your home and may not always be possible.)
- ▶ No security deposit is required to get electricity supply.
- ▶ No guarantor is required to get electricity supply.
- ▶ No additional charges apply for using Keypad Meters

### Pay As You Go Keypad meters may not be suitable for all customers. Some issues include:

- ▶ Not suitable for some customers with medical or other special needs e.g. sight problems, hearing difficulties, medical equipment installed at home.
- ▶ Unable to install in homes with unsuitable wiring. NIE will advise suitability after a visit to your home.
- ▶ Customers with long distances to travel for top-ups
- ▶ The range of Payment Outlets may be limited.

## Prepayment – how it works

### Pay As You Go Electricity Card:

You will be provided with a plastic Pay As You Go Electricity Card with your Premise Number printed on it. This Pay As You Go Electricity Card is used to purchase “top ups” and ensures that your purchase is properly allocated to your account. It is important to use the specific plastic card and/or Premise Number for your property. If you lose your card please contact our Customer Service team on 0345 600 5335 (Mon - Fri 08:30 - 19:00) to arrange a replacement free of charge.

### Top ups:

Top ups can be done in a number of ways:

- **Paypoint Outlet** – many local shops provide this service. View a list of Paypoint outlets in your area by using the following links: <http://www.paypoint.co.uk/locator.aspx>
- **Telephone** - Top ups can also be arranged by Debit Card and Switch Card if required. Automated top up available 24/7 at 0345 600 5335. If you need to speak to an Advisor they are available Mon - Fri 08:30 - 19:00
- **App** - Top Up with no fuss with our simple keypad top-up app, available on iPhone and Android
- **Online** - Visit [www.electricireland.com](http://www.electricireland.com) and top up using a credit or debit card.

Minimum top up is £5, but multiples of £1 are available thereafter, providing greater flexibility to suit your budget. Maximum top up is £150. You will be provided with a 20 digit number each time you top up (called a PowerCode) which is simply keyed into your meter when you return home. If the PowerCode is lost – simply visit the agent where the payment was made and the PowerCode will be reissued free of charge. Alternatively, you can call our automated line 24/7 to retrieve the PowerCode, dial 0345 600 5335 (available 24 hours), Select Option 1 for Keypad, then select Option 2 to hear your most recent Code

### Remaining credit & credit warnings:

The remaining credit on your account can be obtained by the push of a single key on your meter – the # key. The average number of days credit remaining can also be obtained by pressing the # key followed by the 1 key.

If your credit reduces to £1 your meter will emit an audible alarm. The alarm will continue for 2 minutes and repeat every half hour, except during the hours of 10pm to 8am. The alarm can be silenced by pressing any button on the meter.

### Emergency credit & friendly credit:

When the alarm is silenced, you will automatically get £1 “emergency credit”. This should allow time to Top Up in one of the ways detailed above. Automated Telephone Top Up is available 24 hours a day, with a Debit or Credit Card.

If you do not silence the alarm, your electricity supply will switch off. If your electricity supply is switched off in this way, pressing any button on the meter will automatically restore power and your £1 Emergency credit will apply.

If this “emergency credit” runs out extra emergency credit called “Friendly Credit” is provided on the following basis:

- ▶ After 4pm – electricity will not be cut off until 11am the following day.
- ▶ After 4pm on Friday – electricity will not be cut off until 11am the following Monday.
- ▶ 25th December, 1st January, 17th March & 12th July – electricity will not be cut off until 11am the following morning.

(Note: All times stated are Greenwich Mean Time – please add 1 hour in Summer)

Any emergency credit or friendly credit used will be automatically deducted from your next topup.

### Electricity price changes:

When top-ups occur after a change in electricity prices, customers will be given a 40 or 60 digit PowerCode to enter into the meter instead of the usual 20 digit PowerCode. This longer PowerCode sets up the top up and reconfigures the meter for the new electricity rates.

### Statement of account & payment arrangements:

Although Pay As You Go metering removes the requirement for paper billing, we will provide a yearly statement of account to all customers. If your Pay As You Go meter has been installed as part of a payment arrangement for collection of arrears, an agreed percentage of each top up goes towards clearing the arrears. We will inform you when all arrears have been cleared.

### Meter reading:

NIE will continue to read your meter on a quarterly basis. Please assist NIE with access to your property when required. All NIE personnel carry appropriate identification. See the User Guide below for details on how to read your meter and obtain other useful information from your meter. If required, you can provide us with a meter reading by calling 0345 600 5335.

### Moving house:

If you are moving house you should inform your supplier you are leaving and provide a meter reading and details of any credit left on the meter. Contact details are usually provided on the card. You should try to avoid topping up more than you need to if you are arranging to move. You should leave your Customer Card at the old address as the card is property locked and can therefore only be used for one property.

When you move in to your new address you should always register with your supplier and provide a meter reading as soon as possible. If the previous occupier has not left their Customer Card, or you wish to have a KeyPad meter installed, please call us on 0345 600 5335. If the new property is not supplied by Electric Ireland we can also arrange a transfer for you on request.

Where Electric Ireland becomes aware that an existing Pay As You Go customer is experiencing difficulties physically using the meter or accessing top up facilities, we will work with the customer to make an alternative arrangement for payment. Please contact us at 0345 600 5335 (Mon - Fri 08:30 - 19:00) to discuss.

Other useful information and advice is available from the Consumer Council:

The Consumer Council  
Floor 3 Seatem House  
28-32 Alfred Street  
Belfast, BT2 8EN

Tel: 028 9025 1600

Email: [contact@consumercouncil.org.uk](mailto:contact@consumercouncil.org.uk)

Web: [www.consumercouncil.org.uk](http://www.consumercouncil.org.uk)

If we fail to meet any of the commitments outlined in this Code, then you will be entitled to compensation under the terms of our Customer Charter.

Copies of our Customer Charter and other Codes can be obtained in the following ways:

phone: LoCall 0345 600 5335 (08:30 – 19:00 Monday to Friday)

By post: Electric Ireland  
1st Floor,  
1 Cromac Quay,  
The Gasworks, Belfast  
BT7 2JD

By email: [customerservice@electricireland.com](mailto:customerservice@electricireland.com)

Online: [electricireland.com](http://electricireland.com)



## Switching Process - Pay As You Go Meters

A special arrangement is in place with NIE transmission and Distribution (NIE T&D) for handling transfer of your Pay As You Go meter from your current supplier to Electric Ireland. The process is fairly straightforward and is detailed below:

- DAY 1: Agree your new contract with Electric Ireland.
- DAY 1-15: 10 working day "Cooling off" period – where you have the opportunity to change your mind. An appointment will be made with NIE T & D on your behalf, who will contact you to complete your switch.
- DAY 15-20: NIE T&D contacts the customer to complete the transfer. You must be at your meter during the call from T&D and this call may take up to 15 minutes.
- DAY 20: Receive your new Electric Ireland Pay As You Go top-up card in the post.

Please Note: You will be given your unique Electric Ireland Premise Number once the transfer is done by NIE T&D and will be able to vend immediately at Payzone or Paypoint outlets or by telephone.

If NIE T&D is unable to contact you between Day 15 and Day 20 your transfer may time out and you must start the application process again from Day 1.

## User Guide -Prepayment Pay As You Go Meters

### Entering top up PowerCodes:

Your Paypoint or Payzone outlet will provide you with a 20 digit Powercode each time you top up which is simply keyed into your meter when you return home. Follow the guide below to enter the PowerCode into your meter:

- Step 1: Press the # key once on the keypad. The message "Key Code" will be displayed.
- Step 2: Type in all digits of the top up code. If a wrong digit is entered press the \* key to go back.
- Step 3: Once all 20 digits (or 40/60 digits if a electricity price change is included) of the PowerCode are entered press the # key. The message "Sending" will be displayed. After a few seconds one of the following messages will be displayed:
- "Accepted" The top up amount will appear, followed by "Account" and the total credit on the meter.
- "Rejected" Wait until the rejected message clears and start again from Step 1.
- "Duplicate" You have entered this top up code before and cannot use it again.
- "Incorrect" The top up code has been entered incorrectly or is for another property.

- “Error” Top up code is missing a number or has been entered too slowly.
- “Kblock” Top up code entered incorrectly five times. Contact customer service.
- “Wrong Tar” The price of electricity has changed. You must enter the special 40/60 digit top up code.
- “CreditHI” There is too much credit on the meter. Wait for 1 week and reenter code.

### Keypad Buttons:

- \* Press before entering top up code.
- # Press after entering top up code – or to see amount of credit remaining.
- 1 Average credit time left in days. This is a guide based on last week usage.
- 2 Cost of previous days, weeks, months usage (press repeatedly)
- 3 Unit rates and number of units used. \*\* see below
- 4 Details of last five top up codes used.
- 5 Total money entered into meter.
- 6 Present usage in kilowatts. (1 kilowatt for 1 hour = 1 unit of electricity)
- 7 Standing charge rate per day – if applicable.
- 8 Highest usage in any half hour in last 24 hours and when it occurred.
- 9 Total units used. (Use this button if asked to provide a meter reading)
- 0 Displays test, time and date.

\*\* For prepayment meters installed in premises with Economy 7

Key 3 – Unit rates DL (Domestic) CH (Central Heating) and HW (Hot Water). Also standing charge rate per day.

