

Damaged Electricity Meters

Policy

Date effective: 18 November 2016

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline responsibilities for the repair and replacement of damaged electricity meters in Department of Housing and Community Development ('the Department') dwellings.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all Department dwellings. It applies equally to prepaid and credit type meters.

Power and Water Corporation owns electricity meters, while the Department owns the meter box backboard, circuit breakers and meter base. These components sit together on dwellings, so when one part of the fixture is damaged other parts are frequently also affected. This policy outlines responsibility for the repair or replacement of each part of these fixtures.

3. Policy

3.1. Damage caused by tenant

Where damage to an electricity meter, the meter box backboard, circuit breakers and/or meter base is intentionally or negligently caused by the tenant or a visitor who is at the premises with the tenant's consent, the cost of repair or replacement will be the tenant's responsibility. Power and Water Corporation will recover the cost of repair of the electricity meter directly from the tenant, while the Department will recover the cost of repair of the meter box backboard, circuit breakers and meter base from the tenant.

The Department will repair or replace the meter box backboard, circuit breakers and/or meter base (as required) as soon as it is safe and practicable to do so. The tenant can either pay for the repairs or replacement upfront, or may enter an Agreement to Pay. For further information, see the Debt Management policy.

Where the electricity meter needs repair or replacement, tenants must either pay the full cost of repair or replacement, or enter a payment arrangement with Power and Water Corporation before electricity supply will be restored.

3.2. Damage by criminal activity

3.2.1. Damage to the electricity meter

Where damage to the electricity meter is caused through criminal activity, Power and Water Corporation is responsible for:

- restoring the electricity supply;

- recovering the costs of repair or replacement of the electricity meter from the Department; and
- notifying the Department of disconnection of electricity supply to the property as soon as reasonably practicable.

3.2.2. Damage to a meter box backboard, circuit breakers and meter base

Where damage to the meter box backboard, circuit breakers and/or meter base is caused through criminal activity, the Department will repair or replace the meter box backboard, circuit breakers or meter base as required with no charge to the tenant.

The tenant should provide the following documentation to support claims of criminal damage by others:

- a Police Case Summary Report which names the Department as victims in the matter and identifies the offences committed; or
- a copy of the statement provided to police to enable the matter to proceed to court.

In cases where there is no police presence, the tenant should provide statutory declarations, or support letters from other Northern Territory Government departments, which may be accepted as proof that the criminal damage was caused by someone who the tenant did not consent to being on the premises.

The Department will attempt to recover the cost of repairing damage that is caused by criminal activity from any person convicted of causing the damage.

3.3. Damage caused by major weather events

Damage that is the result of a major weather event will be repaired at no cost to the tenant. That is:

- the electricity meter will be repaired by Power and Water Corporation; and/or
- the meter box backboard, circuit breakers and/or meter base will be repaired by the Department.

3.4. Electricity supply critical to maintain life

The tenant should inform Power and Water Corporation if they or a recognised occupant requires electricity to maintain life.

If there is a disruption to supply in a household where electricity is critical to maintain life, the tenant must notify Power and Water Corporation immediately. Power and Water Corporation will advise the Department if there is damage to the meter box backboard, circuit breakers or meter base. The Department will repair any damage to the meter box backboard, circuit breakers and meter base and Power and Water Corporation will repair or replace the electricity meter and restore electricity supply as soon as practicable and safe to do so.

4. Timeframes

The failure or breakdown of the electricity supply to the premises is an 'emergency repair' under section 63 of the *Residential Tenancies Act*. The Department must make arrangements for the emergency repairs (and notify the tenant of those arrangements) within 5 business days after the tenant has given notice that the repairs are required. The repairs must be completed within 14 days of the tenant notifying the Department of the fault.

5. Discretionary decision making

Discretion can be applied to this policy using the Discretionary Decision Making policy. In particular, discretion may apply when considering whether supporting documentation to show proof of criminal damage is sufficient for the purpose.

6. Complaints and/or appeals

If a client is not satisfied with either a decision or action of the Department, they can access the Department's complaints and/or appeals processes. For further information, please refer to the Complaints and/or Appeals policies.

7. Review of the policy

If at any time the legislative, operating or funding environment is so altered that the policy is no longer appropriate in its current form, the policy shall be reviewed and amended accordingly. This policy will be reviewed within two years of release.

8. References

Legislation

Electricity Reform Act

Housing Act

Residential Tenancies Act

Policies

Appeals policy

Complaints policy

Debt Management policy

Discretionary Decision Making policy

Tenant Damage policy

9. Document change control table

Release Date	Version Number	Approved by (position)	Section amended	Category
18/11/2016	1.01	Director Policy	all	Editorial amendments
7/08/2015	1.00	Chief Executive Officer	all	New