

Electricity distribution planning and service standards

In March 2004 the Government commissioned an independent panel to review Queensland's electricity distribution system. This was in response to concerns expressed about the performance of the distribution system, or network, during the series of storms and hot weather in January and February 2004.

The independent panel looked at the performance of the two distribution companies (ENERGEX and Ergon Energy), their expenditure programs, and their internal and external communication systems and processes.

The panel made 44 recommendations, which are contained in its detailed report Electricity Distribution and Service Delivery for the 21st Century.

Government's action plan

The Queensland Government, ENERGEX, Ergon Energy and the Queensland Competition Authority (QCA) worked together to develop an action plan to address the recommendations made by the independent panel. The resulting plan of action included new monitoring and reporting requirements on the two distribution companies, and new standards for reliability of supply. These new requirements were placed in the Electricity Industry Code, and involve the following:

1. ENERGEX and Ergon Energy developing Summer Preparedness Plans. The plans commit the businesses to increase vegetation management, target capital expenditure to improve key parts of the distribution systems and to develop more effective customer communication strategies.



2. Mandatory minimum service standards that ENERGEX and Ergon Energy must deliver. These standards will ensure that ENERGEX and Ergon Energy improve their reliability performance across their networks.
3. A comprehensive monitoring and reporting framework to provide increased public accountability for ENERGEX and Ergon Energy's service performance.

Network Management Plans

Under the Electricity Industry Code, ENERGEX and Ergon Energy are also required to deliver Annual Network Management Plans, providing detailed information about their plans for maintaining their networks and catering for the needs of Queensland electricity consumers in the next five years.

Minimum service standard and guaranteed service level rebates for small customers

You may qualify for a rebate from ENERGEX or Ergon Energy if:

- your electricity is not connected (or reconnected) on time
- your electricity is wrongfully disconnected

- you do not receive a timely response to a loss of hot water supply inquiry
- an appointment you made is not kept
- you are not warned about a planned interruption to electricity supply to your home or business
- you have more than a specified number of eligible power outages in a financial year or
- you experience a single eligible outage for longer than a specified time.

Automatic rebates

You should automatically receive a rebate if these guarantee service levels are not met. Clause 2.5 of the Electricity Industry Code sets out the guarantee service levels for each service category and the rebate amounts payable under each category.

For a summary of the rebates you may be entitled to, visit www.deedi.qld.gov.au/energy and download the guaranteed service levels fact sheet.

ENERGEX or Ergon Energy will identify that a rebate is payable and will credit it to the next electricity bill via your retailer. If the value of your rebate exceeds the amount owing on your next bill, the balance will be deducted from future bills.

If you think you are entitled to a rebate and it has not been credited to your bill, you may contact ENERGEX or Ergon Energy directly to make a claim.

Where Ergon Energy customers are on card-operated meters, it is not practical for Ergon Energy to automatically identify if a rebate is payable. Therefore, customers on card-operated meters are required to make a claim for any rebates to which they may be entitled.

Even though the distribution companies must endeavour to automatically pay the rebates, customers can make a claim where a distribution company has not done so. However, customers must make a claim within three months of the event giving rise to the claim, except for claims relating to outage frequency, which can be lodged within three months of the end of the relevant financial year.

With the exception of rebates for wrongful disconnection, you are not entitled to receive more than \$416 worth of rebates in one financial year for each electricity account. It is important to note that in making a claim for a rebate, you are not affecting any legal rights you may have to seek compensation for damage or losses caused by electricity supply interruptions or other supply problems.

More information

For details of your entitlements under the Electricity Industry Code visit the Queensland Competition Authority website www.qca.org.au

Phone:

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