



# Customer Service Code of Practice

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## **Introduction**

Western Power Distribution (WPD) looks after the safe delivery of electricity through the electricity network in the Midlands, South Wales and the South West to your home. Your supplier bills you for your electricity, is responsible for your meter and also operates a range of services through its Priority Services Register. If you have an enquiry about your bill, your meter or the supplier's Priority Services, please contact your supplier. Contact details can be found on your latest electricity bill.

This leaflet tells you about the following services:-

- 1. How to contact Western Power Distribution**
- 2. How to join the Priority Service Register**
- 3. Power cuts – helpful advice**
- 4. Planned interruptions to your electricity supply**
- 5. When we visit your home**
- 6. Complaints – how to contact us**

Please ask us if you would like a copy of this leaflet in large print or braille, on audio tape, in Welsh or in another language. You can also download a copy from our Customer Service page on our website at [www.westernpower.co.uk](http://www.westernpower.co.uk). The website is available in both English and Welsh language versions.

**To contact us in Welsh:** We have Welsh speakers at our South Wales Call Centre. If you write to us in Welsh, we will respond in Welsh.

### **1. How to contact Western Power Distribution**

**Emergencies:** To tell us that you have no power or to report a potentially dangerous situation involving our equipment, please call our 24 hour/7 days week freephone emergency service on

#### **Single Emergency National No: 105**

105 is the new, free, national number to call for customers to report or get information about power cuts as well as report damage to electricity power lines and substations that could put themselves, or someone else, in danger. When calling 105, customers will be routed automatically to their local DNO. The service is available to people in England, Scotland and Wales from most landlines and mobile phones from 6th September. The number is easier to remember than current 0800 numbers and therefore helps customers to know who to contact and the number to call when experiencing a power cut or electricity emergency.

It will not replace WPD's existing emergency number 0800 6783 105 and WPD customers will still be able to use the existing website and social media channels as means of contact. General enquiries and Priority Service numbers are unaffected.

When you call we will play you a message if we are already aware of problems in your area. We use these messages to keep customers up-to-date with when we expect the electricity will be back on. Don't assume that we know you have no power. Please ring us as soon as possible. **If you have information that we are not aware of please wait to speak to an operator.**

**Power Cut Reporter App:** We have launched a mobile App that enables customers to report a power cut at the touch of a button. It will also provide instant, up-to-date access to information on power cuts affecting our distribution area.

The Power Cut Reporter app is free, quick and simple to use. It also enables customers who may require a priority service, to register, and includes safety tips and has the capability to store

multiple postcodes. The Power Cut Reporter app is available to download on the [App Store](#) and [Google Play](#).

**Enquiries:** To ask about a service that WPD provides (during office hours 8am - 6pm weekdays) please telephone us on 0800 096 3080.

If your first language is not English and you experience difficulty when you contact us on the numbers above, we will be happy to provide a translation service to enable you to talk to us.

**Deaf/hard of hearing customers:** if you are deaf or hard of hearing you can call any of the numbers in this document via your Textphone, using Text Relay via

- a) Dial 18001. The 18001 informs the telephone network that a call is being made from a textphone and the Text Relay Operator will then join the line.

**Minicom:** BT 'Typetalk' on 0345 601 2318 or text 'Power Cut' **and your postcode and house name/number to 07537 402 105 24 hours a day**

### **Additional Contacts;**

Twitter: @wpduk - available 24 hours

Webchat: [www.westernpower.co.uk](http://www.westernpower.co.uk) – available 8am to 8pm

### **To write to us:**

Western Power Distribution  
Records Team  
Herald Way  
Pegasus Business Park  
Castle Donington  
Derbyshire DE74 2TU

Western Power Distribution  
Records Team  
Ffynnon Mentor  
Phoenix Way  
Swansea Enterprise Park  
Llansamlet  
Swansea, SA7 9HW

Western Power Distribution  
Records Team  
Lostwithiel Road  
Bodmin  
Cornwall PL31 1DE

Email: [info@westernpower.co.uk](mailto:info@westernpower.co.uk) (general enquiries)

## **2. How to join the Priority Service Register**

If you depend on electricity for medical reasons, have a specific communication need when contacting us or could find a power cut difficult to cope with due to age, disability or illness, for example, you can join our free register.

Please call us on 0800 096 3080 or email [wpdpriorityservices@westernpower.co.uk](mailto:wpdpriorityservices@westernpower.co.uk)

Or you can visit our website at [www.westernpower.co.uk](http://www.westernpower.co.uk) and click on "Priority Customers" on the homepage.

Or you can write to us at the address above.

Please tell us your name, address, telephone number, details of any electrically dependent equipment and how regularly you use it. We will pass your details on to your supplier, with your agreement.

You can also register your details by contacting your supplier who can also register you for their other services under their Priority Services Register. Their number is on your latest bill. Your

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supplier will then pass your details on to us.

## **What we offer our Priority Services customers**

If you are medically dependent on electricity;

- We will let you know in advance of a planned interruption to your electricity supply.
- We will provide you with a special telephone number so you can get straight through to a person at WPD if you have a power cut.
- Where possible, we will keep you informed if you tell us you have lost your electricity supply.
- For customers who rely on oxygen for medical reasons, we work with oxygen providers to provide assistance during longer power cuts.
- We aim to contact all medically dependent customers within three hours of an unplanned power cut between the hours of 9am-8pm.

Support for all vulnerable customers during power cuts;

- We can agree a pre-arranged password with you to ensure any visitors to your property are legitimate WPD employees.
- We work with the British Red Cross to provide assistance for older, disabled or other vulnerable customers who have no access to hot food or drinks during longer power cuts.
- **We aim to contact all registered customers during prolonged outages and major incidents:** For example, during exceptional weather conditions, we will attempt to contact customers to ensure they are not experiencing any difficulties and to offer relevant support
- In the event of an emergency we may share your information with other responding agencies.

## **3. Power cuts - helpful advice**

### **Be prepared for a power cut:**

- Keep wind-up/battery/solar powered torches ready. Don't use candles or paraffin heaters.
- Keep a wind-up/battery/solar radio ready.
- Many modern telephones, especially digital or cordless ones won't work in a power cut. Keep an ordinary one to use.
- Protect sensitive electrical equipment such as computers & faxes with a surge protector plug or an Uninterruptible Power Supply (UPS). Please see our website [www.westernpower.co.uk](http://www.westernpower.co.uk) for more details.
- If you have a mains operated stair lift, check to see if there is a manual release handle that can be used to return the stair lift safely to ground level if it stops working.
- Many stair lifts have battery back-up. If yours does not, it may be possible to get one fitted. Contact the manufacturer for details.
- If you or a member of your family has a serious health problem please ensure that you have plans in place in the event of a long power cut. Make sure any medical equipment has a battery back-up.

### **What to do during a power cut:**

- Check to see if your neighbours have lost their supply. If they have not, the problem could be with your own fuses.
- Check your trip switch is in the 'on' position. If your trip switch has operated, switch off all your appliances and try to reset the trip. The supply may then come back on.
- If the trip switch has not operated, and you can find no other reason, please let us know.
- Turn off and unplug any electrical appliances that get hot, as you may forget they are switched on when the power comes back.
- Turn off and unplug any appliances that you are not using and any sensitive equipment such as computers or faxes.
- Keep your freezer shut – depending on the type of freezer you have, the contents can stay frozen for up to 12 hours. You may be able to claim for spoilt freezer contents on your Home Insurance.
- During cold weather dress warmly using several layers of clothing.
- During bad weather, for technical reasons we can't restore supply to just your property. We aim to restore supplies to everyone as quickly as we can. If you are having difficulties, please call us.
- If you have no gas for cooking, your neighbours may be able to help you with warm drinks and hot food.

## **4. Planned interruptions to your electricity supply**

Sometimes we have to interrupt the electricity supply to carry out maintenance on our network. We will write and tell you about a planned interruption to the electricity supply at least two days in advance. If you are blind, partially sighted or if interruption of supply to your medical equipment would be life threatening (kidney dialysis, life support equipment), and you are registered with us, we will also telephone you.

If you need any further information or advice about a specific planned interruption please contact us using the phone number on the top of the notification letter advising of the interruption.

Please note it is not possible to guarantee a constant supply of electricity and it is *essential that you have alternative arrangements to fall back on.*

## **5. When we visit your home**

We make most visits to your home when you have made an appointment with us. Sometimes we may need to visit your home to inspect or maintain our equipment without an appointment.

Visits will either be made by one of our staff or a contractor working for us. WPD follows a code of practice so that customers can be sure that all WPD visits are made by properly trained, genuine staff or contractors:-

All WPD employees and contractors will show an identity card showing their Company name, their own name and reference number and a colour photograph of the individual. Always check a caller's identity card before letting them into your home.

- Where possible, all vehicles used for visits to customers' premises will carry the WPD or contractor's logo.
- Where possible, all WPD employees will wear clothing indicating they are from WPD.
- All WPD employees and contractors will be able to inform you of the relevant emergency telephone number upon request.
- WPD employees will be able to give you explanations and information on matters relevant to the purposes of their visit.
- WPD will take all necessary steps to ensure that all ID cards are returned when an employee leaves the Company or following the expiry date of the card.

**If you have any doubts about whether a caller is genuine do not let them into your home.**

WPD will ensure that its employees and contractors are aware of the contents of this Code and will comply with it at all times. They will be suitable, appropriately qualified and fully trained for the purpose of the visit and will be courteous at all times in their dealings with you and give clear and accurate explanations as well as respecting your premises.

### **Passwords**

If you are blind, have poor sight or you would just like to feel more secure, you can agree a password with us when you make an appointment.

### **Keeping appointments**

If we agree an appointment with you, we will do our best to keep it, unless we agree an alternative date with you.

We are able to offer 'am' and 'pm' appointments when we arrange to visit you. The 'am' slot means that we will arrive between 8am and 12noon, the 'pm' slot means that we will arrive between 12noon and 4.30pm. You can also ask for a more specific appointment time within a two-hour time band.

## **6. Complaints - how to contact us**

At WPD we are committed to providing you with excellent customer service, first time every time. However sometimes things do go wrong. We want to know when this happens, so that we can sort out any problems as quickly as we can.

**Telephone:** please call us on **0800 0556833**.

**Email:** you can email us at [complaints@westernpower.co.uk](mailto:complaints@westernpower.co.uk) Please tell us your address including postcode with a contact telephone number in your email.

**In writing:** to Tony Taylor, Information Centre Manager at Avonbank, Feeder Road, Bristol BS2 0TB. Please tell us your address including postcode with a contact telephone number in your letter.

Personal visits: you can also visit your local WPD office. Please contact us first to make an appointment to ensure that the right person is available to speak to you.

## **Other sources of advice and information**

These organisations may be able to provide you with independent information and advice.

Citizen's Advice – [www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk) to find your nearest branch, or call 08454 040506.

Age UK – [www.ageuk.org.uk](http://www.ageuk.org.uk) to find your nearest branch.

*Western Power Distribution (East Midlands) plc. Registered in England and Wales No 2366923.*

*Western Power Distribution (West Midlands) plc. Registered in England and Wales No 3600574.*

*Western Power Distribution (South West) plc Registered in England and Wales No 2366894.*

*Western Power Distribution (South Wales) plc Registered in England and Wales No 2366985.*

*Registered Office: Avonbank, Feeder Road, Bristol, BS2 0TB*

Website: [www.westernpower.co.uk](http://www.westernpower.co.uk)

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