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Meter accuracy matters

Energy Commission tests 170 digital meters in Klang Valley

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THE Energy Commission (ST) has stepped up inspections following complaints of excessive electricity charges after Tenaga Nasional Bhd (TNB) switched to digital meters.

"The commission has been carrying out random inspections and testing of the new meters," said ST Enforcement and Regional Coordinator Department director Othman Omar.

"Priority is given to those who have lodged complaints," he added.

During site inspections, Othman said the Portable Test Set for Electricity Meter was used.

"The allowable accuracy range is $\pm 3\%$. At least three readings will be recorded for each meter; the final result will be derived by averaging the readings. The electricity supply must also be in regular use to get an accurate reading."

Othman said single-phase meters were typically used in residences, while a three-phase meter was usually used for commercial premises.

"To improve the transparency and effectiveness of the meter accuracy monitoring programme, the Energy Commission had appointed Sirim to undertake testing of the digital meters," said ST chief executive officer Datuk Ahmad Fauzi Hasan.

"Some 170 samples from digital meters at various consumers' premises throughout the Klang Valley were checked for their accuracy by Sirim QAS International and ST.

"The results revealed that all the meters were within the allowable accuracy range of $\pm 3\%$," he added.

According to the Commission, a total of 7.8mil TNB meters have been installed, of which 4mil are digital meters.

TNB commenced the installation of digital meters in 2003, and initiated the replacement exercise in 2011.



Checking its accuracy: Othman showing how the Portable Test Set for Electricity Meter is used to test the accuracy of consumers' electrical meters during a site inspection of electricity meters at a commercial premises in Taman Kajang Sentral, Kajang.

"Following disputes by consumers on the accuracy of meter readings, the Commission took several measures to strengthen the testing and verification process of electricity meters since early last year," said Fauzi.

The Guideline for Electricity Meter: Testing and Initial Verification Requirements was drawn up to improve the regulatory mechanism for electricity meter accuracy.

The guideline requires each electricity meter model and manufacturer's laboratory to get the necessary accreditation and certification from organisations such as the National Metrology Laboratory, Standards Malaysia, ST and Sirim QAS International.

"Meters that have fulfilled all the required testing and verification processes will be given approval by ST to have the ST-Sirim label on each unit," he said.

Fauzi added the Guideline for Electricity Meter: Testing and Initial Verification Requirements was enforced in Jan 1 this year while all approved new electricity meters had to have the ST-Sirim label from June onwards.



Commercial vs residential: A three-phase electricity meter is commonly used for commercial premises.

"ST will ensure that existing digital meters that are found to have its accuracy outside the allowable range are immediately replaced.

"The Guideline on Periodic

Testing and Verification of Old Meters is in the process of being drafted and is expected to be completed by end of this year," he added.