

REVIEW GROUP REPORT 0091R

"OPENING READ PROCESS - TOLERANCE CHECKING"

1. INTRODUCTION

As part of the preparation for Phase II of domestic competition a modification was approved which resulted in tolerance validation being overridden for those meter points where that tolerance is based on a default AQ or a default 1/3/96 Network Code opening read.

The review group has been asked to look at 5 areas in considering the effectiveness of this change for DCIII.

- Number of reads failing tolerance
- Problems caused by not rejecting these reads
- Any further validation changes required
- Should the same rules apply for Domestic and I&C
- Should this change be temporary for the initial stages of further phases of domestic competition

2. NUMBERS OF REJECTED READS

There are two stages in the domestic opening read process where individual items can reject. These are the Load Validation stage, which is preliminary validation prior to Sites and Meters, and the main validation within Sites and Meters itself.

The volume of rejected opening reads, in the Phase II area, as at June 27th, 1997 is as follows:

- Load Validation - 7503 rejections

The two most common reasons for opening reads failing at this stage are:

- No confirmation for shipper (1182)
- Read Request not found (1222)

In both cases the error is produced as a result of the shipper submitting their reads too early.

- Sites & Meters Validation - 77259 rejections

There are 3 principal causes of rejected opening reads from the main sites and Meters validation.

1. Read Already Processed (E150)

This accounts for 51155 (66%) of the domestic opening read rejections received since the start of Phase II.

This error only arises when shippers submit multiple reads for the same meter point. One shipper in particular is a major contributor to this problem, having submitted 20634 duplicate opening reads since the start of Phase II. This represents 40% of all of the E150 errors and 27% of all Sites and Meters errors.

2. Number of Dials/Digits Differs (E114)

This error type accounts for 15410 (20%) of the domestic opening read rejections received since the start of Phase II.

3. Failed tolerance Checks (E193)

To date, as part of Phase II, there have been 2797 (4%) tolerance rejections, where the opening read has failed tolerance validation. In addition to this a further 433 have generated tolerance warning messages, because of default A.Q's or a default start of Network Code opening read. This represents 433 reads which have loaded, but would have failed validation had the additional checks not been in place.

The pattern of rejected opening reads has not changed since the group presented it's interim report in May, and 86% of all domestic opening read rejections are as a result of E150 and E114 errors. Transco has reporting in place to monitor all domestic rejections and copies of these reports are now being passed to OFGAS on a monthly basis.

3. PROBLEMS CAUSED BY LOADING THESE READS

Any problems with loading these reads will not surface until the first cyclic read is received. It is too early to say whether or not problems will arise. The full implications will not be understood until a full six month read cycle has been completed.

Transco will continue to monitor the progress of this, both in terms of the volumes transferring and subsequent problems caused.

4. FURTHER VALIDATION CHANGES

As stated two error messages account for 86% of all domestic opening read rejections:

- Read already received
- Number of dials invalid

Where shippers submit a read for a meter point where one has already been loaded that read is rejected by the Sites and Meters system. This rejection occurs either because the read is not submitted by the shipper until after D+10 and an estimated read has satisfied the read request, or because the shipper is transmitting reads for the same meter point more than once. This rejection accounts for 66% of all domestic opening read rejections. Transco is working with the shippers with a view to eliminating this type of rejection.

A difference in the number of dials for the reading submitted by the shipper and the base data held on Sites and Meters accounts for 20% of all domestic opening read rejections. Provision of the number of dials to the shipper to enable some validation of reads before submission to Transco is being evaluated as part of review group 71R.

4. SHOULD THE SAME RULES BE APPLIED TO DOMESTIC AND I&C

The view of the review group is that they should. If a tolerance is based on a default AQ or a default 1/3/96 opening read then it is likely that Transco staff will look at the read in line with any previous history on the site and load the read manually. Lifting the validation will only result in a delay in that read being received by the shipper and additional clerical effort for Transco. As consumption history is built up and A.Q's are recalculated on the basis of that history the issue will be phased out.

5. SHOULD THE CHANGE BE TEMPORARY

The opinion of the review group is that the existing validation should remain. As previously stated the validation has a finite life expectancy and will naturally become redundant as read history is built up and A.Q's become more robust.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The Review Group has now concluded its investigations and believes that the existing validation should remain. Indeed, the work has highlighted that the volume of domestic opening read rejections would be reduced significantly if shippers introduced more checks into their own systems to prevent duplicate reads being sent to Transco.

Further unnecessary rejections would be prevented if shippers were able to carry out their own validation prior to submitting the read to Transco. This supports the approach being

proposed by Review Group 0071, as discussed in the Review Group 0071 June Monthly report.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Review Group is now closed and recommends that:

- Shippers implement checks to eliminate the submission of duplicated opening reads
- The provision of information to enable shippers to carry out some validation is being evaluated by Review Group 0071
- Transco should continue to monitor the rejection rate for domestic cyclic reads
- The existing Transco validation should remain unchanged
- The validation checks in place should apply to both the domestic and the I&C markets

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