

## THE ROUGH GUIDE TO MTCs

### Introduction

The Supply Number (MPAN) is a key element in the arrangements for electricity supply competition. It provides a unique reference number for each Metering Point and contains information to enable Suppliers to give quotations for the supply of electricity to prospective customers without the need, in most cases, to seek information from other sources.

The Meter Timeswitch Code (MTC), formally known as Meter/Timeswitch Class Id (J0220), is a three-digit code, included in MPAD, which forms part of the Supply Number and was designed to assist Suppliers to quote well founded charges to potential Customers. Suppliers, by requesting the Supply Number from the Customer, are able to ascertain the MTC allocated to that customer's Metering Point and then, by reference to code look-up tables, are able to establish the type of metering equipment serving that customer's premises and the details of any associated Time Pattern Regime (TPR). The MTC also indicates whether the Metering Point is related to any other i.e. whether the Supplier needs to register another Metering Point simultaneously (this is the case, for example, where a restricted hour tariff is used). The MTC will also indicate if the customer pays through a pre-payment meter.

There are two types of MTC: common codes, which are available to all DNOs, and specific codes made available by DNOs in their own areas. These are further sub-divided into normal and related:

000 – 399	DNO Specific
400 – 499	Reserved
500 – 509	Common Codes for related Metering Points
510 – 799	DNO Codes for Related Metering Points
800 - 999	Common Codes

There have been a number of discussions over the last few months with regard to the use of MTCs. The Customer Transfer Programme included them in the specification for Electricity Central Online Enquiry Service (ECOES), IREG investigated the possibility of updating a 1998 CIDA document and also issued an MTC DART, Elexon issued CP 1136 for consideration and MEC raised an MRA Change Proposal to remove the MTC from the PC/SSC/MTC combination validated by MPAS. None of these appear to have reached a conclusion that addresses the confusion surrounding MTCs.

### History

Meter Timeswitch Codes (MTC, J0220) were designed by an OFFER facilitated Expert Group established in February 1997 who published two papers later in 1997 setting out the design of the Codes.

Early in 1998, the Design Solutions Team (DST) took over responsibility for, and the formal definition of, Meter Timeswitch Codes, publishing them in paper CIDA<sup>1</sup> 10381 (Meter Timeswitch Codes: Summary & Details of Overall Approach). The DST responsibility was endorsed by Industry though the Change Control Group's approval of Working Practice 18 in

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1 Central Integration and Design Authority.

March 1998 which made each PES responsible for producing a MTC Reference Table conforming with CIDA 10381.

In December 1998, responsibility for MTCs was transferred to the Managing Out Project (MOP) and CIDA 10381 was reissued in February 1999 as MOP 20016 and handed over to the Pool. WP Change Request 20 (February 1999) withdrew WP 18 as part of the rationalisation of documentation.

The Pool agreed that MTCs become part of MDD as a means of centralising their availability, notwithstanding that they are not used in Settlements. Separately the Managing Out Project agreed to hold, but not maintain, the MTC Summary & Details of Overall Approach document as CIDA was being wound up. It is no longer clear where ownership of this document resides.

### **Use of MTCs**

The MTC is described in the DTC as a “Unique identifier of an indication of the charging regimes that a meter at a metering point will support and an indication of the switching behaviour of the meter through time for the register of meter consumption.” The MTC additionally indicates the type of payment the meter will support (credit or pre-payment).

By using the MTC and the associated Reference Tables, Suppliers can identify the metering at a Customer’s premises and the details of any associated Time Pattern Regime (TPR), allowing them to formulate and quote appropriate charges. The MTC also indicates if there is a Related Metering Point that the Supplier needs to register simultaneously.

Hence the MTC allows the Supplier to determine whether they can support the rate structure of the metering configuration and payment preference of the Customer.

MTC reference tables are published by the ex-PES DNOs in their SLC 4A Statement. Suppliers must ensure that in their registration (D0055) or registration update (D0205) a valid combination of MTC, Profile Class and Standard Settlement Configuration is used so that an appropriate Line Loss Factor, and DUoS tariff, can be applied by the Distribution Business. Failure to provide the appropriate combination may result in Suppliers being charged inappropriate DUoS charges. In addition, validating the combination will enhance data quality.

The functionality to validate combinations of MTC/PC/SSC was included in version 3.1 of St. Clements’ MPRS but has only been switched on by CE Electric in Northern Electric (NEDL) and Yorkshire Electricity (YEDL). MEC have requested the other users of MPRS not to switch on validation until the numbers of registrations with invalid combinations fall to an acceptable level. Companies report to MDB on a monthly basis on the numbers of Metering Points with invalid combinations. It should be noted that The PowerSystem MPRS as used by SP Manweb and SP Distribution already has active validation.

At market startup, MTCs were applied and managed by the PESs as the only meter providers. It is no longer clear who is responsible for managing MTCs; nor is it clear to what extent Suppliers use MTCs in the setting and quoting of supply prices, or DNOs in attributing LLFCs and DUoS charges. New entrants have queried the value of MTCs.

## Recent Developments

### New Codes

Six new codes (866 - 871) were recently introduced to identify export MPANs where micro-generation is used. These new MTCs indicate the type of micro-generation at the premises, which is a move away from original thinking on the use of MTCs.

### I REG DART

In April 2005, IREG issued a DART seeking information on the use of MTCs by Suppliers and Distributors. In summary the responses were:

#### Suppliers' Comments

- The large number of codes causes confusion;
- Their use by Domestic Suppliers tends to be limited to identifying whether there is a prepayment meter or Related Metering Point (although even this is inconsistent as some parties mark both as Related, in other cases only the 'child' is marked);
- Confusion is compounded as the same MTC in different GSP Groups can relate to different metering/timeswitch arrangements;
- There is insufficient data on D0149/D0150 to accurately assign a MTC;
- There may also be a number of codes in a GSP Group with common metering arrangements;
- It was noted that any change to MTCs might impact on the Radio Teleswitch Agreement;
- In the non-Domestic market, Suppliers rely more on the MTC; to understand the metering arrangements and in particular the number of registers so that appropriate charges can be quoted;
- There are problems where the MTC is incorrect, especially where the Supply Number indicates a HH meter is installed and it is actually NHH (& vice versa);
- Some Suppliers expressed concern about how MTCs are allocated and whether they should reflect the meter's current functionality, or its capability. This has been debated previously by the D0149/D0150 Working Group who proposed that MTCs should reflect the current functionality but that a new data item "*Metering Equipment Capability*" be added to D0150 (subsequently rejected). Comments to the DART are that Suppliers would prefer the MTC to identify the metering's capability; and
- MTCs will also inform of the operation regime of unmetered supplies.

#### Distributors Comments

- Some Distributors use MTCs in the allocation of DUoS tariffs; others do not;

- For those that do use MTCs, there is a problem when Suppliers do not keep them up to date;
- One respondent replied that as they now bill the metering charge separately, they no longer use MTCs;
- One respondent queried whether the MTC should reflect the functionality or capability of the metering and therefore who should be responsible for updating MDD, Suppliers or MOPs?;
- New iDNOs, who are not a party to the selection of metering chosen by a Customer and their Supplier, cannot predict what MTCs might be required;
- New iDNOs are unlikely to act as MAP/MOP and have no requirement for MTCs;
- iDNOs are likely to operate in several GSP Groups and will wish to have a small number of Common MTCs rather than 'PES Specific' codes;
- In the Scottish Power / Manweb GSPs, invalid combinations will lead to rejected registrations and increased numbers of DTN flows, prolonging the Customer transfer process, but improving data quality.

### MEC Review

MEC have been reviewing the use of MTCs and concluded that the justification for the association of them with Profile Class (PC) and Standard Settlement Configuration (SSC) is not compelling in the market today.

Consequently, MEC issued a change proposal<sup>2</sup> to remove MTC from MPAS validation, stating that:

*The use of the data item MTC has devalued since Market Start-Up (when it was introduced). Consequently, provided that a valid PC and SSC exists, Supplier notifications should not be rejected. Rejections prevent/delay CoS transfers which has a negative effect on Customer experience*

*The data item only passes in flows sent to and from MPAS. Other market participants do not use (or are notified of) the MTC and the data item is not used in Settlements - therefore the issue is confined to Suppliers and Distributors, and not market inter-operation as a whole.*

*Market Participants, in both the Supplier and Distributor categories have changed their business use and value for this data item, such that there is an inconsistent market-approach to administering them.*

*The diversity of values and combinations used in different geographical areas has resulted in complexities in maintaining this data item, leading to a loss of confidence in their accuracy.*

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<sup>2</sup> MRA CP164

*The cost benefit of a market-wide review to clarify and rationalise MTCs has not been proven.*

The Change was rejected at MDB in August 2005 where it was proposed that a workshop be held before September's meeting to consider the issues raised. However, it was subsequently agreed that the issues are too involved to be covered at an MDB workshop and Scottish Power and EDF Energy Networks proposed<sup>3</sup> to MDB that an Expert Group be formed to fully consider the future of MTCs.

#### BDCP40/01 CP 1136

Concurrently, Elexon have issued CP 1136 to extend the number of common related MTCs. The change has been placed 'on-hold' pending the outcome of the MTC Expert Group deliberations.

#### **MTCs – The Future**

The Expert Group has been formed to consider the future of MTCs. The Group has been charged with considering the use of MTCs across industry, whether their use raises any issues that might justify some action and propose recommendations as to what those actions might be.

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<sup>3</sup> Paper MDB\_05\_09\_15 – Review of Meter Timeswitch Codes.

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## Appendix 1 – DFlows

Meter Timeswitch Code (J0220) appears in the following flows

D0050	Registration of Supplier to Specified Metering Point
D0057	Rejection of Registration
D0089	Notification from MPAS of Changed Metering Point Details
D0091	Notification of Removal of a Registration Objection
D0203	Rejection of Changes to Metering Point Details
D0204	Selective or Full Refresh of MPAS Details
D0205	Update Registration Details
D0213	Advice from MPAS of Changed Metering Point Details
D0217	Confirmation of the Registration of a Metering Point
D0259	Notification to New Supplier of Future Changes
D0260	Notification from MPAS of Old Supplier's Registration Details
D0269	MDD Complete Set
D0270	MDD Incremental Set
D0311	<i>Notification of Old Supplier information</i>

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