NAPIT | trade association

Presentation to DCP 390 Working Group:

Survey Results of Members experiences when requesting the removal of the Service Cut-Out Fuse for a domestic property

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- Founded in 1992, The National Association of Professional Inspectors and Testers has been offering tradespeople a voice in their industry for over 25 years.

- Members of the association are also members of third party accredited schemes, run by NAPIT Registration and Certification such as:
  - UKAS Accredited, Government Authorised Competent Person Schemes
  - PAS 2030
  - Microgeneration Certification Scheme

Results from **620** Registered, Competent Electrical Businesses

When asked what the most common problem, contractors face when contacting a supplier regarding removing and replacing service cut-out fuses was, the results showed:

- Finding the right number to call: **24%**
- Getting through to the correct department: **17%**
- Speaking to someone who understands the problem: **42%**

- Other: 17%

(below is a snapshot of the most common answers)

Expensive

Advised to contact DNO

No good in case of emergency

Time frame/getting a realistic date

They state they can only deal with the homeowner

Delayed Response for urgent isolation

All of the above. The suppliers say it is not their responsibility to remove and replace the fuse, they say it is the responsibility of the grid. You phone the grid and they tell you it is the suppliers responsibility. You end up going round in circles trying to be safe, competent and carry out your work scope correctly

25% of respondents confirmed a supplier had refused a request from them to temporarily isolate an electrical supply, for the following reasons:

- not enough engineers available and had a huge waiting list
- admin/staff problems
- Didn’t understand the requirements
- Told to just remove seals
- Told they did not have anyone available, and they suggested I just remove it myself
- Person on phone not understanding what I was asking of them
- Too busy, only responding to emergencies
- They used COVID as an excuse
- The call handler couldn't understand the request
- Said it was the DNO's responsibility
- They told me by email that I could fit it.
- No engineer available I’m area for a considerable period of time - 8 weeks plus

When asked how often in a typical year you require the services of a supplier to remove the service cut-out fuse to allow you to work safely:

- 36% of respondents noted between 1-5 times
- 21% noted between 6-10 times.
- 19% requiring this service between 11-20 times
- 6% between 21-30 times and
- 9% requiring it more than 30 times a year

When asked how much time this takes to arrange with the supplier:

- One call - Less than 15 minutes- 7%
- One call - More than 15 minutes- 9%
- One call - More than 30 minutes- 13%
- Two calls - More than 15 minutes in total- 12%
- More than two calls- 21%
- I get the customer to make the arrangements and save myself time- 26%

33%

The average wait for a supplier to arrange a visit to the site to remove the service fuse cut-out varies massively:

- 32% of respondents noted it takes between 1-2 weeks
- 30% of respondents noting it takes between 2- 4 weeks
- 13% of respondents reported a wait of beyond 4 weeks
- whilst 11% reported within 1 week

53% of respondents noted that wait times have been impacted by the Covid 19 pandemic.

Does the supplier charge for removing and replacing the service cut-out fuse for safe working?

- 40% of respondents reported that the supplier does not charge for removing and replacing the service cut-out fuse for safe working
- 7% noted they are typically charged up to £50
- 15% noting they are typically charged between £50-£75
- 22% noting they are typically charged between £75-100
- 16% noting they are typically charged over £100.

There is a huge disparity in the cost of this service.

Does the supplier offer to install a double-pole isolator when you request temporary isolation?

- Yes- 14%
- No- 51%
- Sometimes- 35%

If requested to enable safe working, does the supplier charge to install a double-pole isolator?

- 12% said no
- 4% responded typically up to £50
- 22% said they are charged between £50-£100
- 25% of respondents said they are typically charged more than £100

When asked if contractors have experienced suppliers fitting double-pole isolation switches as standard during the Smart Meter roll out?

- 22% said yes
- 64% said no
- 14% were unsure

Have you ever been undercut on a job due to an electrician removing the fuse illegally themselves rather than following the correct route?

- 50% said yes
- 34% were unsure

How often do you come across a cut-out fuse which has not been sealed?

- 97% of respondents have come across a cut-out fuse which has not been sealed
- 37% advised they come across this up to 10 times a year
- 26% of respondents reporting this happens between 11-20 times a year
- 12% noting they find unsealed cut out fuses over 50 times a year

Conclusions

- It is evident from our survey that the current situation is very confusing, disparate and causes a lot of frustration within the industry.

- Multiple respondents to the survey were told to ‘remove the seals’, some via email, which completely contradicts the guidance and gives a very confusing message to the electrical contactor.

- Lack of dedicated phone numbers, and staff who understand the request being made, causes a lot of wasted time and frustration- this needs urgent consideration to streamline an overly bureaucratic process.


thank
you