



Ontario  
Energy  
Board | Commission  
de l'énergie  
de l'Ontario

March 30, 2020

BY EMAIL AND WEB POSTING

**To: All Licensed Unit Sub-Meter Providers  
All Other Interested Parties**

**Re: Guidance to Unit Sub-Meter Providers on Providing Relief to Customers  
During the COVID-19 Emergency**

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Many unit sub-meter providers (USMPs) have taken or are looking into taking voluntary steps to help alleviate the financial burden on their customers resulting from the COVID-19 emergency. The purpose of this letter is to provide guidance in that regard.

### **Disconnections**

On March 19, 2020, in response to the COVID-19 emergency, the Ontario Energy Board (OEB) extended the winter disconnection ban applicable to electricity distributors until July 31, 2020 and broadened it to include not only residential customers but also other low-volume customers ([EB-2020-0109](#)). Although the ban does not apply to USMPs, the OEB is aware that some USMPs have announced a temporary moratorium on disconnections. In these times, the OEB expects USMPs to focus on promoting solutions for customers that have arrears, and to take steps to increase awareness of assistance or support that may be available through the Low-Income Emergency Assistance Program and the Ontario Electricity Support Program.

### **Customer Service Rules**

It should be emphasized that the customer service rules set out in the Unit Sub-Metering Code (Code) generally establish minimum requirements. As noted, USMPs should focus on promoting solutions for customers that have arrears, including greater

flexibility in payment terms and in offering customers arrears payment agreements (APAs), such as waiving the waiting period under section 4.6.19 of the Code for customers who did not fulfil the requirements of a previous APA. USMPs can also consider extending the 20-day minimum payment period under section 4.5.3 of the Code.

### **Material Change Reporting**

A standard condition in USMP licences is the requirement to “notify the Board of any material change in circumstances that adversely affects or is likely to adversely affect the business, operations or assets of the Licensee”. OEB staff confirms that there is no need for USMPs to make a filing to notify the OEB of the COVID-19 emergency.

### **Emergency TOU Prices**

On March 24, 2020, the Government of Ontario announced as an emergency measure that Regulated Price Plan (RPP) customers on time-of-use (TOU) pricing will pay the off-peak electricity price of 10.1 ¢/kWh at all times, for 45 days (i.e. until the end of the day on **May 7, 2020**). As noted in the [guidance letter](#) sent the same day to licensed entities including USMPs, USMPs are reminded that they must pass on the savings resulting from the Emergency Order to their customers. Where a building served by a USMP is on RPP TOU prices, the USMP must ensure that the lower prices for on- and mid-peak that will be reflected on the bulk bill from the distributor are flowed through to the USMP’s customers. In communicating the emergency price change to their customers, USMPs may adapt the sample messaging in the guidance letter for their own use.

### **Closing**

Any questions relating to this letter should be directed to the OEB’s Industry Relations Enquiry e-mail at [IndustryRelations@oeb.ca](mailto:IndustryRelations@oeb.ca). Please include “COVID-19 Emergency” in the subject line.

Yours truly,

*Original Signed By*

Brian Hewson  
Vice President  
Consumer Protection & Industry Performance