

PRESS RELEASE

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STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE NEEDED TO ELIMINATE DISPUTE ON METER TAMPERING ISSUE

Association of Water and Energy Research Malaysia (AWER) has been following the media reports on the meter tampering issue for some time. Based on our consultation with the relevant stakeholders, there are few acts by unscrupulous traders whom sold equipments and services used to tamper meter. The common tampering acts are disc bending, use of magnetic 'interference' sticker, tampering meter dials and so on.

In fact, there is legal provision provided by the government for Tenaga Nasional Berhad (TNB), a licensee, to take action against those who tamper the electricity meter. The Electricity Supply Act 1990 (Act 447) has stipulated clearly on type of tampering and collection of evidence. However, if the meter is faulty (not tampered with), TNB is only allowed to backdate a 3 months claims. Unfortunately, most of the cases highlighted in the media show many different methods and solutions which are not uniform in handling the meter tampering issue.

Few months ago, AWER has proposed some suggestions to the Ministry of Energy, Green Technology and Water (KeTTHA), Energy Commission (ST) and TNB in setting up a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) to streamline and smoothen the eradication of meter tampering issue. Some of the suggestions are as following:

- I. For field investigation, TNB officer must be accompanied by at least **ONE** ST enforcement officer. For example, photograph of the meter and the tampered situation must be recorded with the present of ST enforcement officer. This is to ensure that the investigation is not questioned by any party.

- II. Since the ST enforcement officer attends the field investigation, the officer must ensure the suspected tampered meter is sent for testing and verification just like any other investigation method in place. **Verification must be done via an INDEPENDENT LABORATORY.**
- III. Once the investigation confirms tampering has taken place, the account holder can be issued a payment request. The calculation of the projected payback amount must be standardised based on a calculation formula approved by ST.

The SOP must be published in relevant websites and made known to public. This will ease all the miscommunications that are arising now. The public must understand that, stealing electricity is an offence. If the electricity theft issue is not solved, all of us have to pay for some irresponsible wrongdoers. At the same time, the SOP can prevent innocent people from being wrongly accused of electricity theft.

AWER was also informed by ST and KeTTHA that they are revisiting the procedures carried out by TNB. In addition to that, AWER would also like to suggest that the enforcement officers under ST to be increased to reflect the enforcement powers vested under Electricity Supply Act. These officers will also be needed to prevent counterfeit and fake electrical products as well as other enforcement duties under ST.

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