



Notice

7 November 2022

Synergy

Type 1 licence contravention

The Electricity Generation and Retail Corporation (trading as Synergy) has contravened its electricity retail licence ERL1 by removing a customer from its life support equipment register in error, which is a breach of the [Code of Conduct for the Supply of Electricity to Small Use Customers 2018](#).

Clause 7.7(1)(a) of the Code requires that if a customer provides the licensee with confirmation from an appropriately qualified medical practitioner that a person residing at the customer's supply address requires life support equipment, the licensee must register the customer's supply address as a life support equipment address.

On 26 October 2022, Synergy notified the ERA that it had contravened clause 7.7(1)(a) of the Code, which is classified as a Type 1 licence obligation. The licensee must report Type 1 contraventions to the ERA as soon as they become known, as a contravention can cause major disruption to a customer.

Details of the contravention

Synergy reported that a registered life support equipment customer was removed from the register on 4 October 2022 and remained deregistered until 12 October 2022.

On 4 October 2022, the customer contacted Synergy to query their bill amount. Synergy removed the customer from the register in error when addressing the customer's query. Synergy notified Western Power on the same day that the life support registration was no longer required for the customer's supply address.

The customer was notified in writing that they had been removed from the life support equipment register. The customer contacted Synergy on 12 October 2022 asking why their life support equipment registration was removed when they had not requested it. Immediately after receiving the call from the customer, Synergy:

- a) Re-registered the customer's supply address as a life support equipment customer.
- b) Notified Western Power of the life support re-registration.
- c) Sent the customer a letter confirming that the customer's supply address has been re-registered, and that Western Power had been notified of the re-registration.

Impact on the customer

Synergy advised that the customer was not at risk of disconnection during the de-registration period, as the customer's account was in credit and Western Power confirmed that during the de-registration period there were no planned or unplanned outages at the customer's supply address.

Preventative actions taken by Synergy

Synergy has implemented, or intends to implement, several actions to prevent the contravention from reoccurring, including:

- Synergy has amended the life support de-registration procedure to require life support team members to check another team member's proposed de-registration of a life support equipment customer. Synergy will assess the effectiveness of this new control at the end of 2022.
- Synergy has amended its life support task template to require an assessment of an officer's performance when dealing with a life support equipment customer, with results to be reported to senior staff. Synergy has also increased the volume of monitoring of life support equipment customer related calls for life support de-registration. This will be an ongoing activity.
- Synergy has issued training material to customer service team leaders and officers reiterating the importance of accessing, understanding and acting consistently with life support equipment procedures.
- Synergy will update its life support equipment customer training module to ensure the life support equipment removal function in its customer relationship management system (SAP) is used correctly and populated with the required information. Synergy will also review the life support functions in SAP. This is due to occur by December 2022.
- Synergy will provide training on life support equipment customers to new officers in their induction. This will be an ongoing activity.

ERA's response to the contravention

Synergy promptly re-registered the customer after becoming aware of the contravention and advised the ERA accordingly.

The ERA considers that the actions Synergy has taken, and intends to take, to prevent a recurrence of the contravention is an appropriate response.

The ERA will monitor Synergy's progress in completing the outstanding preventative actions and seek updates on the effectiveness of those actions.

Further information

General enquiries

Alex Kroon

Ph: 08 6557 7989

info@erawa.com.au

Media enquiries

Danielle Asarpota

Ph: 0428 859 826

media@erawa.com.au