

POLICY		 NRCS national regulator for compulsory specifications	
Policy Number	LM-P-026-04-12	Compiled by:	Signature: 
Effective Date	2012-04-11		
Version No:	0		
File name:	LM-P-026-04-12- Gas meters for domestic use	Approved by:	Signature: 
			Signature:

Background

Type approval and verification of domestic gas meters according to the requirements of Regulation 81 of Part II of the Trade Metrology Regulations has been compulsory since the 1970s. Although such meters were in use long before this and new meters continue to be installed these requirements have never been actively regulated due to infrastructure constraints, thus rendering currently installed meters technically illegal. The requirements of the regulations have never been upgraded to keep pace with technological advancements and they are currently outdated and not suitable for use. Gas meters other than domestic gas meters are presently formally exempted by regulation from compliance with the requirements of the Act and Regulations.

An enquiry has been received for type approval of a domestic gas meter but it is not practical to request that this meter be modified/re-designed to meet the outdated requirements. There is currently a programme to replace Regulation 81 with the latest OIML requirements to which the latest gas meters used for legal measurements internationally would comply.

In November 2010 a Risk assessment was carried out at a meeting of stakeholders including suppliers and users of gas meters but, unfortunately, not all local government agencies who were invited, attended. The risk assessment concluded that all gas meters used in trade should be regulated using OIML requirements as the technical regulations and that all such meters should be subjected to type approval and initial verification.

The NRCS is now busy converting OIML requirements to a format suitable for adopting in a national standard and drafting national regulatory requirements as required in the OIML wording (national interest requirements).

A working group meeting will be called to discuss the implications and implementation of the proposed new policy with stakeholders. This would also include requirements for type approval and verification of domestic gas meters.

1. Scope

This policy describes how the Legal Metrology Division of the NRCS will apply the provisions of the Trade Metrology Act to domestic gas meters until the new technical requirements are published in the Government Gazette and become compulsory.

2. Reference documents

Trade Metrology Act, Act 77 of 1973

3. Policy

Until the new technical regulations covering domestic gas meters have been made compulsory under the Trade Metrology Act by means of a notice in the Government Gazette, domestic gas meters that have not been type approved or verified in South Africa may be installed and used for trade purposes under the following conditions:

- a) They shall be type approved for trade use in their country of manufacture or some other country. Such type approval should preferably be according to the requirements of OIML R 137 -1 (see clauses 7.3 and 7.4)
- b) They shall be initially verified for accuracy by the manufacturer according to national requirements in the country of manufacture or some other country. Such verification should preferably be according to the requirements of OIML R 137 -1 (see clause 7.5)

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This relaxation from the current South African Regulations is on the understanding that the full South African requirements for type approval and verification will become applicable to all new and repaired meters once the new regulations for gas meters become compulsory. These requirements include the following:

- a) All new domestic and other gas meters shall be covered by a South African Type approval certificate.
- b) All new domestic and other gas meters shall be initially verified by a SANAS accredited verification laboratory before being used in trade.
- c) All repaired domestic and other gas meters shall be re-verified by a SANAS accredited verification laboratory before being used in trade.
- d) All domestic and other gas meters shall be re-verified by a SANAS accredited verification laboratory at the intervals that may be specified by regulation. (It is envisaged that domestic meters will not be subject to subsequent verification until a later date still to be determined)

Implications for suppliers are:

- a) New meters will need to be covered by a type approval certificate by a date set by regulation
- b) Verification laboratories accredited by SANAS will need to be established by the date the regulations become compulsory. Verification procedures will be prescribed in the national standard covering technical requirements.