

Electricity sub-metering

New residential units and office buildings

What is an electricity sub-meter?

An electricity sub-meter measures and records the electricity usage for each individual unit or storey in a building, rather than having a single meter which only measures the total electricity use of the whole building.

What is the requirement for electricity sub-meters?

Electricity sub-meters are required to be installed to new multi-unit residential buildings (class 2) and office buildings (class 5). These requirements apply to each individual unit, or for each storey in an office building where individual lettable areas have not been identified at the time of the building development approval.

This standard has been required since 1 March 2010 under the *Queensland Development Code—4.1 Sustainable buildings* (QDC 4.1).

What are the benefits of electricity sub-metering?

Sub-meters allow for accurate billing to ensure owners or tenants only pay for the amount of electricity they use. Each tenant or unit owner can be individually billed for the actual amount of electricity used, which can provide an incentive for occupants to reduce their electricity usage.

Previously, costs may have been unevenly shared between occupants based on the lettable floor area or lot entitlements of units.

Are electricity sub-meters required when renovating an existing building?

The installation of electricity sub-metering is required with the design and construction of a new building. It does not apply when undertaking renovations or additions to an existing building.

Where does each sub-meter need to be located?

The electricity sub-meter for each unit or storey must be installed in a common area e.g. foyer, shared car park. It must also be located in an easily accessible area for persons that are authorised to read the meter e.g. electricity retailer, body corporate. For example, a sub-meter located inside a unit that only the tenant can access would not comply.

How can a unit or storey be identified on the sub-meter?

Each electricity sub-meter must have a label that identifies that it is for an individual unit or storey. The meter label must be affixed to or located adjacent to each electricity sub-meter. The meter label must be made of white heat-resistant material with black lettering to ensure it is easily identified.

How does the Queensland requirement for electricity sub-meters differ from those in the Building Code of Australia?

The Building Code of Australia (BCA) also contains requirements for electricity sub-metering in new class 2 and 5 buildings. These apply to sole-occupancy units in class 2 and 5 buildings both over 500 metres squared total floor area e.g. a room or a suite of rooms in the building.

However, Queensland requires sole occupancy units in a class 2 building to be sub-metered for electricity regardless of its size. In a situation such as this where the BCA is inconsistent with the Queensland standard, the Queensland requirement prevails to the extent of the inconsistency.

For a class 5 building where the total floor area is over 2500 metres squared, the BCA also requires other parts of the building to be sub-metered, such as the air-conditioning plant, lifts and the central hot water supply. For class 2 buildings, the same provisions apply, but only if the common area is more than 500 metres squared and the total floor area of the building is over 2500 metres squared.

Are sub-meters required where each tenant will be a direct customer of an electricity retailer?

No. In these circumstances electricity sub-meters aren't required to be installed in the building as they will be installed by the electricity retailer.

For more information

For more information about electricity sub-metering for new multi-unit residential buildings and office buildings refer to the department's website at www.hpw.qld.gov.au.