



Utility Billing and Customer Service Course: Meter Reading, Complaints and Arrears



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Introduction:

Utility billing and customer service, from meter reading to complaints and arrears, is a 5-day course for billing, account, complaints and collections managers in electricity and water utilities that ends with a Billing and Customer Operations Improvement Plan. Utilities lose customer trust and cash when estimated bills pile up, billing exceptions sit unworked, connections stall and arrears grow without fair payment arrangements. Nominees already supervise read cycles, bill runs, account queues or debt recovery and work through case studies built on bill registers, complaint logs and debt ageing reports. CoreConcept Training Center delivers this utility billing and customer service course.

Course Objectives:

- Map the account lifecycle of an electricity or water customer from service application and move-in to final bill and account closure
- Plan meter reading cycles and walk routes and set estimation and customer self-read rules that keep estimated bills under control
- Validate bill runs with pre-release checks, work billing exception queues and issue rebills and credit adjustments with an audit trail
- Resolve billing complaints and disputes using ISO 10002 complaints handling principles and a tiered escalation path
- Apply disconnection, reconnection and payment arrangement rules that protect revenue while safeguarding vulnerable households
- Build a Billing and Customer Operations Improvement Plan with service-standard KPIs, owners and review points

Target Audience:

- Billing operations managers responsible for read-to-bill cycles, bill run quality and billing exception backlogs
 - Customer account managers responsible for new service connections, move-in and move-out processing and account changes
 - Complaints and customer relations managers responsible for billing disputes, escalations and ombudsman-style referrals
 - Credit and collections managers responsible for utility arrears, payment arrangements and disconnection decisions
 - Customer operations performance managers responsible for service-standard reporting and improvement initiatives
 - Customer information system process owners responsible for billing rules, workflows and data quality in the utility
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Course Outline:

Day 1: Utility Customer Account Lifecycle and Current Performance

- SIPOC Map of the Utility Read-to-Bill-to-Pay Cycle
- Customer Account Lifecycle From Application to Final Bill
- Residential, Commercial and Bulk Account Segmentation for Service Design
- Customer Information System Modules Supporting Billing and Accounts
- Billing and Customer Operations Health Check Scorecard

Day 2: Meter Reading, Bill Calculation and Service Standards

- Read Cycle Calendar and Walk Route Sequencing Methods
- Estimation Rules Using Historic Consumption and Customer Self-Reads
- Bill Calculation Logic for Block and Time-of-Use Charges
- ISO 10002 Complaints Handling Principles Applied to Utility Bills
- Service-Standard Charter With Response Times and Compensation Triggers

Day 3: Bill Validation, Connections and Complaint Resolution

- Pre-Release Bill Checks for High, Low and Zero Bills
- Billing Exception Queue Triage, Ageing and Work Allocation
- Rebill and Credit Adjustment Approval With Audit Trail
- New Service Connection Workflow From Application to Energisation
- Move-In, Move-Out and Change of Occupier Final Readings

Day 4: Disputes, Arrears, Vulnerable Customers and Control Risks

- Billing Dispute Investigation Using Read History and Site Checks
- Arrears Ageing Segmentation and Payment Arrangement Design
- Disconnection and Reconnection Policy With Notice and Exemption Rules
- Priority Services Register for Medically Dependent and Vulnerable Households
- Prepayment Account Handling Under the Standard Transfer Specification

Day 5: Case Study: Billing and Customer Operations Improvement Plan

- Case Utility Estimated Bill Backlog Root Cause Analysis
 - Case Utility Complaint Log Pareto and Escalation Review
 - Case Utility Arrears Portfolio and Payment Arrangement Strategy
 - Service-Standard KPI Dashboard Design for the Case Utility
 - Billing and Customer Operations Improvement Plan Completion and Panel Review
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Skills You Will Gain:

- Read Cycle Planning
- Bill Run Quality Control
- Billing Exception Management
- Service Connection Process Control
- Complaint Investigation
- Arrears Segmentation
- Vulnerable Customer Safeguarding
- Service-Standard Performance Reporting

Why Attend This Course:

- Deliver a Billing and Customer Operations Improvement Plan for a case utility to the head of customer services and the finance director for approval
- Decide when an estimate is acceptable, when a rebill is justified and when a disconnection should be paused for a vulnerable household
- Avoid repeat complaints, write-offs and service-standard penalties caused by unchecked bill runs and ageing exception queues
- Coach billing, account and collections colleagues using exception triage rules, dispute checklists and payment arrangement templates

Conclusion:

Back at work, the participant presents the Billing and Customer Operations Improvement Plan to the head of customer services and the finance director. Leadership uses it to approve read cycle and estimation rules, bill validation checks, complaint escalation tiers, payment arrangement and disconnection policy and the service-standard KPI set. After the first full billing quarter under the plan, the utility should review estimated bill share, exception queue age, complaint volumes, arrears movement and disconnection outcomes for vulnerable households, then adjust the weaker controls.

Frequently Asked Questions FAQ:

What should participants know before a utility billing and customer service course?

Participants should already supervise meter reading, bill production, customer accounts, complaints or collections in an electricity or water utility. An anonymised bill register, exception report or complaint log from their own organisation helps during the case study day.

How does utility billing and customer service differ from a revenue protection or tariff design course?

It covers running the customer account day to day: read cycles, bill validation, connections, complaints, arrears and vulnerable customers. Revenue protection courses focus on losses, theft and inspections, while tariff courses set the prices that the billing engine later applies.

Why do estimated bills cause so many utility billing and customer service complaints?

Estimated bills drift from real consumption when reads are missed for several cycles. When an actual read arrives, the catch-up bill can be large and unexpected. Clear estimation rules, customer self-reads and prompt rebills keep the gap small and reduce disputes.

What do participants take back from the utility billing and customer service course?

Participants take back a Billing and Customer Operations Improvement Plan with estimation and validation rules, an exception triage method, a complaint escalation path, payment arrangement and disconnection guidance and a service-standard KPI dashboard they can adapt to their own utility.
