

**Application 1361950 DERS Billing Process Technical Workshop – Meeting Notes**  
**Thursday February 17, 2004**  
**20<sup>th</sup> floor ATCO Office Edmonton, Alberta**

**Attendance**

Gary Newcombe – DERS  
Corinne Grudecki – DERS  
Tanis Kozak – DERS  
Bobbi Lambright – ATCO I-Tek  
Reg Swanek – ATCO I-Tek  
Vivian Cheng – ATCO I-Tek  
Mike Hagan – EUB  
Heather Gnenz – EUB  
Jim Graves – First Nations  
Azad Merani – CG (CCA)  
Jim Stephens – CG  
Greg Matwichuk – City of Calgary  
Randy McCreary – CG (AUMA)  
Bob Bruggeman – CG (AUMA)  
Russ Bell – CG (UCA)

These meeting notes are intended to cover major issues and discussions that arose during the meeting and are not intended to provide for a complete summary of all material or questions covered during the workshop.

**Questions**

- What specific Act or Regulations outlines all the transactions that retailers and distributors must follow?

The AESO System Settlement Code and the EUB Tariff Billing Code provide for the transactions and dictate the process flow for the transactions presented in the diagrams shown. The flow diagrams provide for general industry practice and structure in Alberta and are not intended to be the exact representation of all billing and customer care functions provided by ATCO I-Tek on behalf of DERS.

- Volume of transactions that DERS processes on a monthly basis.

The volume of transactions that DERS processes will differ from month to month and is dependent on various factors. As one example, DERS would receive approximately 1 million DCM or DIM transactions over the course of a month. A data transaction is defined as a single piece of data moving from one entity to another.

- With no System Settlement Code (SSC) on the gas side, does DERS perform the same validation and exception processes even through there are no regulations or code that mandate it?

To service the gas core market in Alberta, retailers have for a number of years been required to perform enrolment, de-enrolment, meter reading and billing transactions that are similar to those required on the electric side. Although the gas transaction format has not been mandated through legislation to be identical to the electric rules, there are significant cost benefits and advantages to this approach. Also, in developing the electric code and regulations, the government signaled to industry that the expectation should be that gas would follow the same approach as electric. This was further reinforced in the development of the AEUB Tariff Billing Code where industry participants noted that requirements should be the same for both industries.

DERS has developed the same systems, processes and validation for gas billings to align with those currently in place on the electric side. This approach allowed DERS to capture efficiencies in dealing with these types of transactions as well as minimizing future rework given the expectation that similar requirements will be developed for natural gas.

- Why is the misalignment of consumption between the retail section and distribution section of a customers bill an issue for DERS?

The misalignment of consumption occurs as a result of the separation between the distributor and retailer functions. In the unbundled model, the distributor bills the retailer and the retailer must then create a combined bill for distribution and retail services to send to the customer. Currently, the regulated retailer and the regulated distributor may or may not have aligned billing cycles. Even if they start out with aligned billing cycles, certain situations will cause this misalignment to occur such as the distributor changing meter read cycles or billing cycles. When this happens the retailer has no way of knowing the change has occurred and a customer's consumption may be misaligned. This means that when a customer receives their regulated retail bill, the distribution consumption shown on that bill may not align with the retail consumption shown on the same bill. This is extremely confusing for customers and may cause them to question the accuracy of their charges.

The RDS legislation mandates the matching of billed usage on the retail and distribution sections of the bill for electric customers. DERS has already put in place processes to align billing cycles and consumption with ATCO Gas and ATCO Electric and will be fully compliant by April 1, 2005.

- If the sale to DERS never occurred, would AE and AG have similar billing processes?

AE and AG stated in the retail sale application that they would have gone through a similar process of separating retail and distribution services to comply with government legislation and regulations. This would have required separate retail and distribution environments including separate infrastructure, systems, databases and business processes and would be similar to the measures put in place for DERS.

- Does the ATCO CIS handle all the business processes on the flow diagrams?

No. CIS is one of the tools used to perform the business processes required by DERS. However, as is outlined in the process document, a number of manual processes are also required and other systems are also used to perform some of the billing and customer care tasks.

The retail CIS module used to perform some of the billing functions included in the business processes was developed and built by ATCO I-Tek. The retail CIS system used by ATCO I-Tek to perform billing and customer care for DERS is a completely separate system from the ATCO CIS that is used by ATCO Gas and ATCO Electric for distribution functions.