

# Meter reading disputes and anomalies

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Even with the best systems in place, meter readings sometimes go wrong — a digit gets transposed, a dial gets misread, or a smart meter drops off the network for a while. This guide covers how to identify reading anomalies, how to handle disputes when a customer challenges a reading, and when to escalate.

## What counts as an anomaly?

A reading anomaly is any submitted reading that looks inconsistent with a customer's normal consumption pattern. Common examples include:

- A reading significantly higher or lower than the previous one, with no obvious explanation
- A reading that would imply zero or near-zero consumption over a long period
- A reading lower than the previous reading (meters don't run backwards — this usually means a digit was misread or transposed)
- A jump consistent with a meter rollover (when a meter reaches its maximum and resets to zero)

Kraken will flag many of these automatically, but not all. If something looks off when you're reviewing an account, trust your instincts and investigate.

## Common causes

### Misread meters

The most frequent cause. A transposed digit, a misread dial, or a customer who accidentally read the wrong display can all result in an anomalous figure. Always ask the customer to re-read their meter if a submitted reading looks wrong.

### Estimated reads carried too long

If a customer hasn't submitted a reading in a long time, estimates can drift significantly from actual consumption. When an actual reading eventually comes in, the correction can look dramatic — but it's the estimates that were wrong, not the new reading.

### Meter rollover

Older meters with five-digit displays eventually reach 99999 and roll back to 00000. This looks like a massive drop in the reading. If you suspect a rollover, check the meter type and age in Kraken — this will help confirm whether a rollover is plausible.

### Smart meter comms failure

If a smart meter stops sending readings, the account may revert to estimates. When the meter reconnects and sends a catch-up read, it can appear as a sudden spike. This isn't a billing error — but it does need clear explanation to the customer.

## Handling a reading dispute

A reading dispute occurs when a customer believes a reading on their account is incorrect and wants it investigated. When this happens:

1. **Listen first.** Let the customer explain why they think the reading is wrong. This often contains useful clues – for example, "we were on holiday for three weeks" or "nobody's used the heating since the summer."
2. **Check the account history in Kraken.** Review the last several readings. Look for the point where consumption appears to diverge from the pattern.
3. **Ask the customer to take a fresh reading.** A current reading gives you a baseline to work from and often resolves the dispute quickly.
4. **Compare against industry average consumption.** A typical household uses around 3,500 kWh of electricity and 12,000 kWh of gas per year. High consumption isn't always wrong – but it's a useful reference point.
5. **Document everything.** Log the dispute in Kraken, including the readings discussed, the customer's account of events, and any actions taken.

## When to request a meter inspection

If you can't resolve the dispute through readings alone, a meter inspection may be needed. Consider requesting one when:

- A customer consistently disputes their consumption and manual reads don't resolve it
- There's reason to believe the meter itself may be faulty
- A meter appears to be running faster or slower than expected

Meter inspections are carried out by a third-party engineer. If the meter is found to be faulty, the customer's bills will be recalculated. If the meter is found to be accurate, the inspection fee may be passed on to the customer – make sure to communicate this possibility before raising the request.

**Watch out for this:** Never void or override a reading in Kraken without manager authorisation. Even well-intentioned corrections can cause downstream billing problems if not handled through the proper process. When in doubt, log it and escalate.