

## **Guideline: Interruption to Electricity Supply**

### **1. Background**

Interruptions to electricity supply of consumers can be categorized into two, one is Planned Interruptions and the other is Unplanned Interruptions. Distribution Licensees (DLs) require Planned Interruptions for the following purposes:

- a) To carryout distribution planned maintenance and development programs
- b) To carryout inter-licensee distribution system planned programs
- c) To carryout upstream (Transmission) failures maintenance programs

The Unplanned Interruptions are due to Breakdowns of the distribution system, defaults by consumers or offences committed under the Act such as felling of trees/branches of trees on electricity lines, illicit tapping of electricity etc. and switching off of the electricity supply to avoid danger to human life and property during disastrous situations such as tsunamis, cyclone, flood and any other similar situations. The Breakdowns are due to:

- d) Distribution system faults
- e) Inter-licensee distribution faults

Breakdowns and Planned Interruptions can be controlled and minimized by DLs through their efficient planning and operational activities that can minimize the number of consumers affected and the frequency of interruptions. Such actions will not only minimize the inconveniences of the consumers and loss of economy of the country, but also will enhance the revenue of the DLs.

### **2. Breakdowns**

Breakdowns are due to system faults (generation, transmission and/or distribution) contributed by various factors such as inadequate capacity of the system or equipment, aging of equipment, defects in material or workmanship, vegetation etc. Faults/defects with respect to distribution system can be controlled by DLs by recording and analyzing each breakdown, identifying the causes for such breakdowns and taking preventive measures for such faults/defects not to happen again, except situations where distribution licensees have no control over them.

However, in the event of any breakdown, to minimize inconveniences to consumers, DLs are required to take the following actions:

- a) Provide “Call Centre” facility by which consumers can lodge their complaints (24x7hrs) and obtain acknowledgements.
- b) Take every endeavor to register all tariff customers for value added services, to provide information (such as in 2 c)) by text messages instantly and promptly, which will not only minimize inconveniences to them but also reduce the number of complaints.

- c) Inform all registered customers the expected earliest time to restore the power supply (Part II, H, 13 of Rights and Obligations of Electricity Consumers (ROEC)).
- d) Provide alternative supply to affected consumers as maximum as possible, rectify the fault and restore the supply as quickly as possible.
- e) Record all breakdowns with details such as outage time, cause/s of the breakdown, number of customers affected etc., analyze such data, identify and carryout preventive measures to be taken, monitor and repeat preventive actions at regular intervals in order to minimize and bring the number of occurrences of such breakdowns, the number of affected consumers, the number of hours of power supply lost by customers etc. to the accepted standards specified in Performance Standards Regulations.

### **3. Planned Interruption**

DLs are required to design their distribution system with adequate switching arrangements in such a way to provide alternative power supply to those consumers affected by the planned interruptions as much as possible.

DLs are required to take following actions, when they plan or carry out interruptions:

- a) Plan activities and deploy all resources required in order to optimize the published/scheduled interruption period without extending it for additional period of time or postponing it for additional interruption/s.
- b) Inform all consumers of any planned interruption at least forty eight (48) hours in advance, by newspaper advertisements, loudspeaker announcement, letters or notices. The licensees shall not undertake any switching operations/outages outside the announced plan (Section 4.6 of Distribution Code). Also, include the contact persons and contact telephone numbers in the newspaper advertisements/letters/notices for the affected consumers to obtain further information on the planned interruption.
- c) If the location to be interrupted is covered with less number of consumers, notify them by loudspeaker announcement or by placing printed notices in their premises/letter boxes.
- d) If the affected consumers are in large numbers, notify them by printed media of popular newspapers and/or electronic media.
- e) If any cancellation of such notices or deviations to the date and time of interruption/ restoration of power supply are made, the affected consumers shall be notified, as

they have the right to know the same (Part II, H, 12 of ROEC).

#### **4. Dispute Resolution**

Any dispute arising under Items 2 and 3 above can be referred to the respective Deputy General Manager of the Ceylon Electricity Board or Head of Operations of the Lanka Electricity Company (Private) Limited as a Dispute Resolution Officer under PART I of the Electricity (Dispute Resolution Procedure) Rules Published in Gazette Extraordinary No. 1951/1 dated 25<sup>th</sup> January 2016.

Where the parties to a dispute referred fail to reach a settlement which is acceptable to both parties, either party to the dispute may inform the Commission and call upon to resolve the same through mediation under Part-II of the above Rules.